THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #328: Why You Think About Food Too Much

Hello! In just one month, registration for the next round of The Stop Binge Eating Group Coaching Program will be opening, on December 12th of 2024.

And if you join this round, you are going to set yourself up to end this year on a high note because you'll be getting immediate access to The Stop Binge Eating Course right when you register so you can get started on the work right away and, I'll be offering a limited time bonus for anyone who registers in the first few days that is going to be *really* helpful. If you want to make sure you don't miss it, join the waitlist now at coachkir.com/group so you'll get notifications via email about registration opening and the bonus details.

And then, we're going to begin 2025 with a bang. I'm going to help you to achieve all your eating goals and I'll help you to keep your motivation up as the year progresses so you don't quit on yourself in February….as many people do when they set goals at the beginning of the year.

We're going to take what you've learned on this podcast to the next level. If you've already found this podcast to be helpful, you're going to find this program to be even more helpful because when you and I work together, and you and I are having conversations, and you're getting personalized help and recommendations, you're going to progress even faster than you would doing this work on your own.

So let's work together. Get on the waitlist now at coachkir.com/group and you will get notified via email once registration opens on December 12th of 2024 so you can get started right away with the coursework and get that special limited-time bonus I'll be offering...and trust me, you're gonna want it.

2025 is gonna be your year and we're going to make it happen together!

Alright, now, let's talk about why you think about food too much.

But before we get into why you think about food t*oo much,* I want to start by normalizing thinking about food.

We all think about food several times throughout the day, even quote "normal" eaters do.

And it's because food is crucial to our survival.

If we didn't think about food ever, we wouldn't even think to eat it, so we wouldn't eat it, and we'd die.

So of course we are all going to think about when we're going to eat and what we're going to eat. And we're going to make plans for eating and we're going to think about how much is enough for us.

Everyone you know thinks about this stuff and if you're eating 3 meals a day plus a snack or two or three then you're going to be thinking about this stuff many times throughout your day.

But, many of you listening think about eating food way more than quote "normal." And I keep putting "normal" in quotes because there is no actual normal amount. It's just what we imagine to be normal and it's the best way I can think of to describe what you are wanting.

It seems to you that your food thoughts are excessive. They use up too much energy and space in your mind. And when you want to be thinking about other things, thoughts about food keep creeping in and taking over.

So you're wanting to think about food less and quiet the "food noise" and "food chatter."

You don't want to think about food as much as you do.

And in order for you to think about food less, you first have to know why you think about it as much as you do.

And there isn't just one answer for why.

There are several different reasons why someone would think about food more than a quote "normal" person and what I'm going to do today is go through 5 of the most common reasons why people think about food too much, explain why it causes too much food noise, and what you can do for each of those reasons to quiet your mind.

Now, some of you might recognize just one of these reasons as being the reason why you think about food so much but, many of you are going to see yourself in more than one.

So just take note of which resonate with you and then, you're going to get to work on them.

So the first reason I want to talk about is because you're being indecisive.

How much of your food noise is you asking yourself questions?

You keep asking yourself things like, "when am I going to eat?" or "what am I going to eat?" or "what should I eat?" or "should I eat this or this?" or "should I eat now or later?" or "how much should I eat?" or "am I hungry?"

Now, these questions in themselves aren't a problem. It's totally fine to ask yourself these questions. I encourage you to ask yourself these questions! But, it's when you don't actually answer them, or you just answer them with "I don't know" that they become a problem.

If you don't resolve your questions, if you don't give yourself answers, if you don't make a decision, then the questions will come back. And they will keep coming back until you answer them.

Your brain wants answers. It doesn't like to not have answers.

So if you want your brain to stop asking you the questions, answer them.

The sooner the better.

You're going to make the decision as at some anyway, right? At some point, you're going to decide what you'll eat or when you'll eat or how much you'll eat.

And maybe you think you'll get more information that will help you decide if you wait longer. But really, what you'll get if you wait longer is increased confusion, uncertainty, and mental exhaustion and that's going to make it even harder for you to access your true wants and make it harder to make a rational decision.

And even with the question of "am I hungry?" you might also think that saying, "I don't know" and waiting to get a stronger signal of yes or no will help. But it won't because the same reason I just mentioned.

And I totally get that you seriously might now know. The signals might not be clear. And if that's the case, here's how I like to handle unclear hunger signals.

If I'm not sure if I'm hungry or not, then I decide that I'm not. If I don't know, then I decide that I'm not.

If you don't know, if the signal isn't clear, then you can decide that you are not hungry right now.

And you can decide to check in later.

And you can decide to eat if you know for sure that you are hungry.

Do not settle for "I don't know" as an answer and stay in confusion and uncertainty and then have the question of "am I hungry" bounce around in your mind.

Do make decisions. Do answer your questions about what you are going to do or not going to do or what you are or aren't going to eat.

Make the decision as soon as possible. The sooner you decide, the sooner the questions will stop and the sooner you can stop thinking about the questions.

The second reason I want to talk about for why you think about food too much is because you are denying yourself of what you want.

When things that we want are scarce, we think about them more than if they are abundant.

What in your life do you have in abundance? Maybe it's time with your partner that you live with, maybe it's the availability of basic necessities, maybe it's clean water. I bet you don't spend a lot of time thinking about those things.

But if you're low on something you need or want, or you're completely out of it, and you don't know how you'll get more of it, I bet you're thinking about it a lot. You might even be stressing about it.

It could be money, it could be time with someone you love, it could be a basic necessity.

Now, there are things that are legit scarce. Remember when COVID started and certain foods and toilet paper were scarce? Like you legit could not find them in the store.

But then there are things that we perceive as scarce, and that's what you might be doing with food.

You might be making certain foods scarce in your mind when they really aren't.

What that means is that you're telling yourself that you're not going to allow yourself to eat certain foods for awhile, so you're making them scarce in your life. Or you're telling yourself you aren't allowed to eat certain foods so you're making them scarce for you.

You're creating lack.

And you're likely doing this because you have some diet mentality going on in your mind.

What that means is that you have beliefs about these foods that you have accumulated after years of dieting, doing different diets, and listening to people tell you what you should and shouldn't eat. And these beliefs are not aligned with you and what you want, they are instead rules you tell yourself you need to or should follow.

So you follow these rules that you don't want to follow, but you think you have to or should, most likely because you think you have to in order to control the size of your body.

But because these rules aren't aligned with your true wants, you end up feeling restricted and deprived.

You feel that way because you're denying yourself of what you want.

Those foods *are* available to you, you *could* just go to the store and buy them, you have the means to buy them, but you're telling yourself no.

You are depriving yourself of what you want and you're doing it because you're afraid of those foods, or you think those foods are bad, or you just think you shouldn't be eating them.

And the more you deny yourself of what you want, the more scarcity you create, the more you're going to feel deprived and the more you are going to think about those foods. You might even obsess about those supposedly forbidden foods.

When you see them, you keep thinking about them because you want them but are denying yourself of them.

When someone mentions them, you keep thinking about them.

Or maybe they just pop into your mind and you keep thinking about them.

All because you are creating lack, scarcity, and deprivation as you're denying yourself of what you want.

When you can't have what you want, you're going to think about it more.

But the truth is, you *can* have it, you're just not allowing yourself to have it.

So if denying yourself of what you want is causing you to think about food too much, then you need to stop denying yourself and eat what the heck you want.

If you create abundance with those foods, meaning that you are allowed to eat them at any time, which you truly are, then you won't be in that scarcity and lack mindset.

Now, it's important to know that you don't actually need to even eat the food to make this change.

What you do need to do though is change how you're thinking about the availability of the food in your mind.

Just giving yourself permission, even if you choose to not eat it, can decrease your food thoughts.

It's your mind that needs to change, it's what you're telling yourself about those foods that needs to change for you to think about food less.

So stop denying yourself of what you want and allow it.

The third reason I want to talk about is because you use food to control your emotions.

All of us feel a spectrum of emotions every day. We feel a range of positive emotions, a range of neutral emotions, and a range of negative emotions in different amounts and intensities each day.

On most days, you're going to feel uncomfortable, negative emotions, in different amounts and intensities.

And if you are unwilling to feel them, then you might be looking for a way to feel better or to avoid or distract from those feelings.

And food may be your answer.

And food may become your go-to way of handling your uncomfortable emotions.

So then, any time you feel an uncomfortable emotion, whether it be anxious, stressed, overwhelmed, nervous, sad, lonely, bored, or some other one, you're going to think about food.

If you've made eating food be your go-to solution for feeling better or for ignoring or numbing or distracting, then that's what you're going to think about when you're wanting to get out of your emotion.

You've made an association between feeling better emotionally and food.

And your brain has learned this.

So that's what your brain is going to offer you when you feel an uncomfortable emotion.

You feel it and your brain says, "eat food." And as long as you're feeling that way, your brain will offer the suggestion to eat food.

You'll keep thinking about it for as long as you're feeling how you're feeling.

So if you want to stop thinking about food so much when you're feeling uncomfortable emotions, you need to create a new association, a new go-to for your brain to offer.

And what I suggest is that you make your new go-to to be just simply feeling how you're feeling, processing through it, and working on your thoughts to feel better.

The reason why you feel how you feel is because of what you're thinking. Your thoughts cause your emotions so if you want to truly feel better, the solution is changing what you're thinking.

And before the thought shift happens all the way and before you do truly feel better, you're going to go through and feel the emotion you're currently feeling.

You're going to be willing to feel it.

If you're willing to feel your emotions and just let yourself be in them, then you won't be thinking about food every time you feel uncomfortable.

Instead, you'll think about just feeling.

This used to be a common thing for me. I would think about eating food whenever I felt emotionally uncomfortable.

But now that I've practiced feeling without eating, my brain doesn't usually go there any more.

It will once in awhile. It hasn't completely gone away but, it doesn't happen every time or even close to every time.

So I don't think about food too much when I'm feeling uncomfortable emotions. Most of the time it doesn't even come to my mind as an option. Because, I just feel it and then I work on shifting my thoughts to feel better.

And that's what you're going to practice doing too now.

Next, the fourth reason I want to talk about is because food is your main source of pleasure.

Similar to what I talked about with emotions, you're going to desire pleasure every day.

And if food is your go-to for pleasure, then that's going to be the main thing your brain will offer as a solution when you're desiring pleasure.

It may not have other ideas because you keep consistently choosing eating instead of choosing something else.

So your brain has a strong association with food and pleasure instead of something else and pleasure.

So when you are desiring pleasure, you're going to think about food. And you'll think about it until your desire for pleasure has been answered.

So if this is you, and you want to think about food less, you need to create new go-to's for pleasure.

Food can't be it, otherwise, it will always be what you think of when you're wanting pleasure and you are going to want pleasure every day. It's how us humans are.

Diversify your pleasure. Associate other things with pleasure.

And the fifth and final reason I want to talk about is because you are judging your thoughts about food.

As I said in the beginning of this episode, everyone thinks about food sometimes.

And some of you are naturally thinking about food a normal amount.

But, you *think* it's too much and then you judge yourself for how much you're thinking about food.

You're getting frustrated with yourself, you're getting angry or upset with yourself.

And when you do that, you're adding to the amount of time you're spending thinking about food.

You're thinking about it in a normal amount but then you're thinking about your thoughts about food and are compounding your food thoughts. It's normal food thoughts plus judgement of your food thoughts.

And this can also happen with any of the other examples I mentioned earlier. Say you're thinking about food a lot because food is your go to when you're uncomfortable and then on top of that, you're judging yourself for how much you're thinking about food. You're then adding to the amount of time you're spending thinking about food.

So if you are adding to the time you're spending thinking about food by judging your thoughts about food, strip away the layer of judgement.

Accept that you're thinking about food and once you accept that you're having thoughts about food, then you don't need to work through the judgement *and* the reason why those food thoughts are there...if they are actually excessive food thoughts. If they're truly just normal amounts of food thoughts then there is no problem, nothing to work on. You're just a normal human who thinks about when they're going to eat and what they're going to eat, as we all do.

So please stop judging yourself or getting upset with yourself and either allow yourself to think about food as much as a normal person or if your thoughts truly are excessive then you can get to work on the reason why and the added judgement won't add another layer of work for you to do.

So, which is your reason?

Once you know, you can solve it to think about food less.

Make decisions.

Allow yourself to eat the foods you want to eat.

Allow yourself to feel uncomfortable emotions.

Diversify your pleasure.

And don't judge yourself.

Alright, that is all for today and don't forget to get on the waitlist for the next round of The Stop Binge Eating Program so you can get notified as soon as registration opens and so you don't miss out on the pretty awesome limited time bonus I'll be offering for those who register in the first few days.

Go to coachkir.com/group to get all the info about the program and to join the waitlist and, I will talk to you next time. Bye bye!