

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #333: How to Know If You're Being Too Restrictive With Your Eating

Hi! Only two more days until registration closes, on Thursday December 19th of 2024 at 12pm ET, for this coming round of The Stop Binge Eating Group Coaching Program.

If you're feeling hesitant to do it because you're doubting yourself, and think that you can't be successful with this, take a moment to consider why you think that. What are your reasons?

If you think nothing has ever worked for you, then maybe it's time to try something new and different that actually could.

If you think you've failed too many times, maybe that's only because what you tried wasn't the best method for you or because you're missing something that you haven't been able to see on your own.

If you think you've been doing it for too long, how long you've been doing it doesn't really matter. What matters is understanding why what you've been doing to try and stop for all those years didn't work and doing something differently in the present and future.

Whatever reason you have for why you're doubting yourself, question that reason.

Maybe you *can* do it if you got proper help. Maybe you *can* do it if you do something different than you have before. Maybe you *can* do it if you put less focus on the food and calories and put more focus on your thoughts and working on them so you *think* like a person who doesn't binge.

Don't let your doubt in yourself stop you from doing something that you want to do.

We can work on that doubt together. We can work on creating more hope and optimism. We can work on everything related to your binge eating together.

You don't have to do this on your own and if you think this program could be something that can help you to finally make the changes you want to make, come work with me.

You can register at coachkir.com/group and remember, registration will only be open for this round until Thursday December 19th at 12pm ET. And if you have any questions that aren't answered on that registration page, you can email them to info@coachkir.com.

You are capable, and I will help you prove that to yourself.

Let's make 2025 your year!

Alright, and now, let's talk about how to know if you're being overly restrictive with your eating.

Being overly restrictive with your eating is a cause of binge eating.

You can be too restrictive with how much or how often you're eating, so you end up not fueling your body properly.

Or, you can be too restrictive with what you're eating, so you're denying yourself of what you want.

And eventually, you can cause yourself to feel urges to binge on fuel for your body or to binge on the foods you want to eat.

But, those urges aren't going to appear just because you're restricting your food. It's only when you're being overly restrictive, too restrictive, excessively restrictive, and are being restrictive in ways that aren't aligned with what your body needs and with what you truly want.

When you restrict in ways that *are* what's best for your body, such as stopping when you're full and not eating when you're not hungry too often, not eating a lot of foods that don't react well with your body, then that's a good thing. That's going to help you to feel your best in your body.

And when you restrict in ways that are what's best for you, such as not eating a ton of sugar in one sitting, or not eating foods you aren't in the mood for, or not eating amounts of certain foods that affect your energy and mood, then that's a good thing. That's going to help you feel your best mentally and emotionally.

Not all restriction is bad and not all restriction is going to cause you to feel urges to binge.

If you're restricting in ways that you love, that helps you mentally feel your best and your body to physically feel its best, and it's what you truly want to be doing, then it's not a problem.

But, it's so important that you are 100% honest with yourself about this.

Sometimes, we think we're not being too restrictive. We think we are giving ourselves unconditional permission to eat what we want, but we're not. And we think we are making eating decisions we really

want to make, decisions that are totally aligned with our true desires, but we aren't. And we don't think we're being too restrictive, but we are.

And you might not notice it.

Until, you feel an urge to binge, and it doesn't seem like it's an urge to avoid emotions, or maybe it is an urge to avoid emotions but it seems like there's more to it, and you look back and see, "Ah, I've been forcing myself to not eat what I just binged on."

"I haven't truly been allowing myself to eat what I want."

"I've actually been saying no to myself without a lot of yeses."

Really take a look at how many times you've chosen to not eat something you were wanting. How many days in a row did you want it and tell yourself no? Or, maybe not days in a row but, how many times did you want it but you told yourself no?

And, when you tell yourself no, what is your reason for not eating it? Is it a reason that you love and that is an empowered choice or, did you say no because you thought you should or you told yourself you can't, or you told yourself it's too unhealthy, or you told yourself that you won't eat that food until you've lost x number of pounds?

Especially when losing weight is a factor, we can get caught up in "wanting to keep it going" so we stop eating some of the foods we love because we think it will impede our weight loss if we eat them. We deny ourselves, and tell ourselves "no" until we think we're at a point when it can be allowed again. But when you do finally allow it, how much desire for it has built up? How many times have you told yourself no? How badly are you wanting it at this point? Probably more badly than when you first wanted it. At this point, you might be urging for it.

So, the goal here is to catch yourself if you're being overly restrictive so your desire for certain foods, or your brain's desire for fuel for your body doesn't build and build until it becomes an urge to binge on what you've been denying yourself of.

And one thing you want to be on the look out for is what words you are using when you are deciding to not eating something.

If you are using words like, "can't," "shouldn't," "have to," "need to," or "bad," then you are likely being overly restrictive because, you're not making your own decisions. You're basing your decisions off of what diets have told you to do, what other people have told you to do, off of what you think is an obligation or is required.

You're not giving yourself full, unconditional permission to choose what you want. You are putting conditions on your choices, you are not allowing foods you want, and again it's because you think it's what you're supposed to do, or have to do, or should do, or can't do. Not what you genuinely want to do.

And if you keep doing that, your desire for what you genuinely want will likely not just go away, it will more likely grow into an urge to binge on it.

You might also be punishing yourself for overeating or bingeing or eating too many joy foods and punishing yourself isn't going to feel good and probably isn't going to create the outcome you're expecting. A lot of the time, punishing yourself, when it comes to eating food, isn't as effective at changing behavior as you think it will be. Taking away food from yourself in a punishing way probably isn't helpful. It can just lead to more feelings of being restricted and denied and deprived which can lead to urges to binge. And, it will likely make you feel bad about yourself too, which isn't going to be helpful either.

So instead of using those words, "can't," "shouldn't," "have to," "need to," or "bad," be honest about what you want, why you want it, and if there are reasons why you don't want it. And again, reasons that are your reasons, and that are aligned with you, not what you think you need to do.

It could sound something like, "I don't want to eat that because I've already eaten a lot of joy foods today and if I eat that too I won't feel very good in my body." Or, "I don't want to eat that because if I eat that now, I probably won't be hungry for dinner with my friends in a couple hours and I'd like to be hungry when I get there."

These are my choices, my reasons, and they're aligned with what I want. I want to feel good. I want to be hungry for my meal.

I'm not saying I can't eat that because it's bad. Or I have to eat something healthier. Or I shouldn't eat even if I'm hungry because I am trying to lose weight.

Notice the difference in the thinking.

How you think about your decisions to eat or not eat matters.

Make sure you're thinking about what you want and your reasons for wanting and not wanting. And make sure they're reasons you love that are totally aligned with you, your desires, your goals, and how you want to feel.

Another way you can notice if you're being too restrictive is by how your body feels when you tell yourself you're not going to eat something.

If you feel constricted in your chest, if you feel tight in your body, if your body feels uncomfortable when you say no, you might be being overly restrictive.

This is something I've definitely noticed for myself. It's happened after holidays when I'd eaten a few different desserts. The next day, I'd tell myself that I wasn't going to eat any joy foods this coming week and my body immediately tensed up. I noticed it, realized that was a reaction to being too restrictive with my decision, it was kind of like a slight bit of panic, and I decided to not be so restrictive. I instead decided that today, just that day, I was going to take a break from eating joy foods. I was just going to eat nutrient dense, nourishing food today, and tomorrow I could make a decision for that day.

And my body relaxed. I wasn't taking away a week of joy foods. I was doing what I genuinely wanted to do today. And it felt good to make that decision. And the next day, I could make a decision that felt good for that day.

And the important thing was that today and tomorrow, and every other day, I had permission to choose. I was allowed to eat as many joy foods as I wanted. And each day, I was going to make a decision based on what I wanted that day, not on what I thought I had to or should do because I had eaten so much dessert.

When the decision feels good in your body, it's likely a decision that is aligned with your true wants and not overly restrictive. So notice if your body tenses up when you tell yourself no and if it does, reconsider the decision you're making and your reasons for making that decision.

And along with how you feel, if you feel at all resentful because you're not eating what you really want, and maybe other people are or you think it's unfair or something else that's causing you to feel resentful, you're not aligned with what you really want. You're being overly restrictive maybe not with what you're choosing to eat but, how you're thinking about not eating something.

That's what really matters the most here when it comes to what you're eating. It's not so much about what you're eating or not eating, it's about what you're thinking about it.

If you're feeling resentful, you're probably also feeling obligated to eat how you're choosing to eat. And you're not obligated. You don't have to eat that way. You could eat that food you've told yourself you can't or need to not eat.

And if you are telling yourself that you won't eat it for a reason that is based in obligation, you're going to feel resentful.

But if you are doing it for reasons you like, and you really want to not eat that food, then acknowledge that.

Even if you are sensitive to that food, you've not obligated to not eat it or not eat a lot of it. You *want* to not eat it because of how you'll feel physically if you do.

And hey, if you don't care about how you'll feel, then you are welcome to eat it. You don't have to say no if you don't want to.

If you are feeling resentful, check your reasons for saying no. You're allowed to eat it. Why aren't you? Make sure your reason is based on what you want and don't want for yourself and then you won't feel resentful, which can lead to rebellion eating.

Another sign of being overly restrictive is if you are obsessing about food or certain foods. You're thinking about them a lot.

Now, this can also be a sign of you wanting to control your emotions with food. If you're feeling uncomfortable emotions a lot, and eating food is how you cope with and control your emotions and how you make yourself feel better, then you're going to keep thinking about food as long as you're feeling that discomfort.

But if you're not feeling uncomfortable emotions and you keep thinking about eating food, that can be a sign that you're being too restrictive.

One of my group members experienced this recently where she didn't notice much discomfort going on, she was feeling pretty good in general, but she kept thinking about cake and cookies and ice cream.

And when we dug into it, she realized that she hadn't been allowing them. She'd kept saying no. She had made them off-limits without really realizing it. And as she kept saying no, her desire for them grew and therefore her thoughts about them became more frequent.

So when she gave herself permission, she wasn't thinking about them as much.

And what's important to know is that it wasn't her actually eating the food that calmed her thoughts about it. It was her shifting from telling herself no in her mind to giving herself permission in her mind.

She gave herself permission, which doesn't even mean she chose to eat them, it just means she wasn't making them forbidden or off-limits.

It was changing how she was thinking about her allowance to eat them that changed the frequency of her thoughts about them.

So if you notice that you're thinking about food a lot and are obsessing about it, make sure you're giving yourself permission to eat it. You're allowed, make sure you know that.

And the last sign I want to talk about is if you are only eating certain foods when you binge and you never eat them outside of a binge.

When you're being overly restrictive and you feel an urging to binge, a lot of the time what you're really urging for is freedom to eat what you want.

And you might only give yourself that freedom when you binge. That's the time when you say, "screw the rules" and go against them all and eat all those foods you haven't been eating and it becomes a binge.

So if there are foods that you like, that you only eat when you binge, you might be overly restricting them.

And what's so interesting is that you might be overly restricting them *because* you only eat them when you binge.

You think that they are a binge food, and that if you eat them, you will binge. So you don't allow yourself to eat them.

But. What if part of the reason why you binge on them is *because* you don't allow yourself to eat them outside of a binge?

In this case, you're looking for freedom in your binge, right? Maybe you wouldn't be urging for freedom to eat those foods if you gave yourself freedom all of the time.

That doesn't mean you eat them all the time but, you give yourself freedom, permission, to eat them all the time and then you choose when you want to and don't want to.

Now, there could be other reasons why you binge on those foods in particular but, not giving yourself the freedom to eat them outside of a binge could absolutely be a main reason.

And you eating them only when you binge might be a sign that you are being overly restrictive with them.

So, those are some things you can look out for to see if you're being overly restrictive which can lead to feeling urges to binge which will drive you to binge.

So look out for them. Keep an eye on what you're feeling, what you're thinking, what you're doing.

Look for those signs and then intentionally speak to yourself about your eating decisions differently, being honest about what you want and don't want, and give yourself freedom and permission to make decisions based on what you want, for reasons that you like and you are 100% on board with.

And a final reminder, if you want help with letting go of your restrictions, or with identifying where you're being overly restrictive, and help with anything else that is causing you to binge, come join The Stop Binge Eating Program.

Again, registration is closing in two days, on Thursday December 19th of 2024 at 12pm ET and you can get all the info and register at coachkir.com/group.

Alright, that is all for today. I can't wait to see you in the program and, I will be back here again next week. Bye bye!