

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #335: If You Don't Believe You Can Stop Binge Eating

Hi! Last week on the podcast, in episode #334, I talked about making sure you have a compelling reason to stop binge eating that you are telling yourself every day, multiple times a day. This is an important part of your motivation to do the necessary work to stop binge eating. Sometimes doing this work can be hard, you might get tired of doing it, you might not feel like it, and having a compelling reason will help you to do it anyway.

When your reason to do this work is compelling, it's so much easier to be all in, to not let your excuses stop you, and to make this work a priority.

But, having that compelling reason is only part of your motivation.

The other part is your belief in yourself.

You'll feel motivated if you have a compelling reason to do something *and* if you believe that putting in the effort and the time and using your energy will be worth it.

And it will be worth it if you actually change, right?

It will be worth it if you actually do achieve the goal you have set out to do.

And if you don't change, and you don't achieve the goal, or you don't even get close to the goal, then you might think that all the effort and time and energy you used wasn't worth it.

And, if before you even start, if before you even put in the effort, time, and energy you don't believe you will change, or achieve the goal, or even get close to the goal, then you're probably going to think it's not even worth it to try.

You won't even start if you don't think it will be worth it.

And you'll think it's not worth it if you think you're not capable of doing it.

Why would you put in all that effort, time, and energy if you can't even do it anyway?

You probably wouldn't.

You wouldn't even try.

That may mean that you don't even try at all and you don't do anything to help you to stop binge eating.

Or, you do try but then if you binge, you give up on yourself and stop trying for a few days or longer....until you believe you can do it, you try again, but then you binge and you give up on yourself and stop trying for a few days or longer and the cycle continues.

And that's why it's so important that you *do* believe you can do it.

Not believing will lead you to quit, to stop trying, or to not try at all.

But believing you can will lead you to try, to keep doing everything you can, to get right back up if you fall, so you get right back to work if you binge, so you can keep progressing forward.

But it can be hard to believe you can do it if you have been trying without success for such a long time.

And it can be hard when you see yourself repeat the same patterns again and again.

I lost belief in myself sometimes when I'd not binge for awhile and then I'd binge again. And then because I lost that belief in myself, I wouldn't even try to not binge if I felt another urge the next day. I'd just let myself binge again.

And when I did finally stop binge eating, after I finally understood why the bingeing was happening and when I worked on the cause of my bingeing, my belief that I had finally found the solution for me, and that this would work, and that I was going to stop binge eating fueled me to keep going, even if I binged, which I did several times in that last leg of my process of stopping binge eating.

I didn't make the binges mean I couldn't do it, I instead saw them as part of the process and I didn't let them stop me from believing it was possible for me to stop binge eating.

But many of you do.

You binge and make it mean you can't stop binge eating, that history is repeating itself and will keep repeating, that you can't break the pattern, that it's not possible for you, and so you become full of doubt with no belief in yourself.

You are then hard on yourself, you tell yourself you're a failure, are too weak, are a lost cause, and it all stops you from doing something to progress forward.

So, believing you can do it is so important in this process.

But, how can you believe you can do it when you have been doing it for so long, and when you've tried to stop without success so many times, and when you see yourself repeat the same patterns again and again?

Well, I want to talk about two things that can help you.

The first is to take an honest look at what you've been doing to try and stop and what you've been doing to try and break the pattern.

What most of you have been doing isn't something that will address the cause of your bingeing.

You might be trying new diets that are likely perpetuating your bingeing because they're promoting restrictions that are causing you to feel urges to binge.

You might be not allowing yourself to eat the foods you binge on which also is restriction that causes you to feel urges to binge.

You might be trying to use willpower and just telling yourself that you're not going to binge any more without any real plan or strategy for how, which isn't going to work.

You might be trying to control what you're eating by counting calories or points but those limits don't stop you from bingeing if you feel an urge.

You might be trying to keep yourself busy but you can't stay busy to avoid bingeing 100% of the time.

These are all things I tried. Except, I didn't really get into all the different diets like so many people do, I basically just stuck to calorie counting because that was what helped me to control my eating when I lost a bunch of weight in college.

And none of those worked long term because they weren't helping me to stop being so dang restrictive with my eating, and as I said some of it perpetuated the restricting, and they didn't help me learn how to feel uncomfortable and stay present with myself and not escape by eating food.

And if those are things you've done too, you need to know that the problem here isn't that you're incapable of stopping binge eating. It's that what you've been trying was never going to help you to stop long-term.

It's not you, it's the method.

So again, take an honest look at what you've been trying in order to stop binge eating. Is it really getting to the root of the problem?

If it's not, it's important that you at least entertain the possibility that with a method that actually would get to the root of the problem that you might be able to stop binge eating.

And notice how I phrased that.

It's possible you might be able to do it.

It's not certain. It's not confident.

But, it's better than fully doubting yourself. It has hope and optimism and those will drive more action than doubt.

And it's okay if you feel both doubt and optimism at the same time.

Feeling some doubt is okay.

But, it's so important that you don't let your doubt override your hope or optimism. It's so important that you don't have *only* doubt.

There's going to be a huge difference in how you show up for yourself if you are thinking you can't do it vs thinking you're not entirely sure but maybe you can.

You'll at least try with the second thought.

So please know that. You don't have to 100% believe you can do it. Even some belief is better than none.

Now, what if what you've been trying *is* something that addresses the cause of your binge eating and you still haven't stopped.

There's likely two reasons why you haven't.

One is that you quit when it gets hard or if you binge. You keep doing exactly what I was talking about before where if you binge, which is part of the process, you beat yourself up mentally, are hard on yourself, call yourself a failure, and stop believing in yourself which leads to more bingeing.

And you keep repeating this cycle of trying and then quitting *and* you miss one of the most important things that you need to do which is reflecting on the binge and learning from it so you can do better.

When you're beating yourself up you're not learning anything. You're just making yourself feel bad. And then when you decide to stop doing that, you likely just try to move on and don't take the time to understand that binge you had.

But when you understand why it happened, you have something to work with. You can work on the lesson you learned.

But, here's the second reason why you haven't stopped even if your method addresses the cause of your binge eating.

You're not seeing what the lesson is that you need to learn from your binges or the strategy you come up with to work on that lesson isn't the proper strategy.

For example, you might think the lesson is that you need to not be alone with the food you binged on.

But if that's the lesson, and therefore the strategy is to never be alone with the food you binged on, you've created a solution that isn't going to stop you from bingeing on something else.

When you feel that urge to binge again, and you will because you haven't addressed the cause, you may not be alone with *that* food but you'll be alone with another food that you can binge on.

So, in that case, it wasn't the lesson you needed to learn.

Maybe the lesson you needed to learn is that you need to be more permissive with that food. You need to allow yourself to eat it more.

Now, maybe you've uncovered that useful lesson but the strategy you come up with is to eat the food every day.

But, what if when you eat that food you still think that eating that food is bad? Or you feel guilty whenever you eat it. Or you think you're going to gain weight now. Or what if when you eat it you tell yourself you've messed up your day so you might as well just eat more.

Then what?

A more helpful strategy would be to work on your thoughts about eating that food. So, your thoughts about that food being bad, or your thoughts about how you're doing something wrong if you eat it, or your thoughts about weight gain and what causes weight gain, or your all or nothing thoughts.

Any of those would be more helpful than just eating the food.

Eating the food while still having restrictive thoughts isn't really going to help you. Just the action of eating the food isn't going to make the urges to binge go away.

You need to let go of the restrictive thoughts you have, let go of your fears around eating that food, and give yourself unconditional permission, in your mind, to eat it.

That's what can help you to eat that food without bingeing when you're alone.

So, it might not be that you can't stop binge eating. It might actually be that you're missing something. You're not seeing what you need to work on. Or maybe you don't know how to work on it. And these are things you can learn.

You're not incapable, you just need to learn. And it can be so helpful to have a person who has an outside perspective, who isn't in your brain, and who understands binge eating to teach you. And I can be that person for you. It's what I do in The Stop Binge Eating Program and in this podcast.

It wasn't until I learned new things and got an outside perspective that I was able to stop binge eating.

For all the years I was binge eating, there was so much that I didn't know. And when I learned it, I still didn't know how to apply it all. But with trial and error and practice I learned how.

Be open to learning not just from the information I provide on this podcast but also from your binges. Have a student mindset as you go through this instead of an expert one.

You might think you should know how to do it or should be able to do it all. But maybe you really shouldn't. Maybe you still have more to learn. Maybe there is more you haven't uncovered. Maybe there are tools you don't fully understand how to use yet. Maybe you don't fully understand what is driving your binges and what has stopped you from stopping binge eating.

We uncover what my group members in The Stop Binge Eating Program hadn't yet seen on their own and it opens them up to more possibility and more belief in themselves. They can see what needs to be done, what they can work on, what they can do differently, and how they can do it.

And I make sure they believe they can do whatever it is they're going to work on because as I've been talking about today, that belief is imperative.

Even if they're not confident they can stop binge eating, they can feel confident that they can work on the lesson they've learned, and the strategy we've put in place.

And that's the other thing I want to talk about that can help you.

Instead of focusing on the big goal of stopping binge eating, which can be hard to believe you can do, focus on something much smaller.

Start with one thing that you do believe you can do that will be a piece of the stop binge eating puzzle.

Stopping binge eating happens when you've completed a number of different things.

Yes, it will happen you've let go of your excessive food restrictions and you've become more comfortable with feeling discomfort and more comfortable with staying present and connected with yourself.

But there are small goals within those goals.

And one by one, you'll achieve them.

And you're going to start with just one.

And that one will matter. It will make a difference. It will be a part of the stop binge eating puzzle.

When you're doing a real jigsaw puzzle, you don't look at the little piece in your hand and think that one doesn't matter. Of course it does. It's part of the big picture.

And if you're holding a piece and you don't know what to do with it, then you can put it aside and work with a piece that you do believe you can place.

You work with what you believe you can figure out first, such as the corner pieces, and then the edges that look like they fit with the corners. And one by one, you find a place for each piece until it's complete.

Each episode of this podcast is a puzzle piece. Maybe they're not all pieces of your unique puzzle but, you find the ones that fit and you start by working with the ones that you believe you can work with.

You start with what you think is doable for you.

Even if you don't fully believe you can stop binge eating, you can at least believe that you can do this one thing that can help you to stop binge eating.

Your belief in your ability to do that one thing is enough for you to work on it.

Don't worry about the rest of the puzzle pieces, don't worry about how big the puzzle is, don't worry about the times when you haven't completed the puzzle.

Focus on this one thing that you believe you can do. And work on it.

And once you do that thing repeatedly, you will build confidence in doing that thing, you will be progressing, you will be building skills, you will be changing.

And then, you can choose the next thing. You can work on the next puzzle piece that you think you can be successful with.

If you don't believe you can do it all, find what you do believe you can do.

And there is something.

There is something that will help.

Even if it doesn't solve the whole problem, it will move you in the right direction.

Alright, I hope this episode has helped you to feel more belief in yourself and less doubt. And if you find yourself losing belief, look for something that you do believe you can do. There is something.

You can do this. You really can. You are not incapable. I really believe that.

Believe it for yourself as well.

Alright, bye bye.