

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #339: How to Have Food Freedom

Hello! Welcome back. Today I'm talking with you about having food freedom.

So what does that mean? Food freedom?

It means so many things.

It means feeling free to eat anything you want without guilt, fear, or self-judgement.

It means being free from obsessive thoughts about food.

It means not worrying about food.

It means feeling like you have a choice instead of feeling obligated or out of control.

It means feeling at peace with food.

When people say they want food freedom, those are the kinds of things they're wanting.

And if it's what you're wanting too, it is totally attainable for you. It really is.

But before you get there, it's important that you understand why you're not feeling the freedom and experiencing all the things I listed.

Anytime you're wanting something that you haven't been able to get yet, and you've been trying, you need to uncover your obstacle, what's making it hard for you, what's stopping you.

And for this, the basic answer is a simple one.

It's what you're believing. What you're thinking.

The reason why you feel guilt, fear, and judgement about what you eat is because of what you think about the food or about you eating the food.

You feel guilt because you think you're doing something wrong or bad by eating that food because you think it's a bad food, or some version of bad.

You likely feel fear because you're thinking you're going to binge or overeat or gain weight if you eat that food. You're thinking something bad is going to happen if you eat that food.

And you feel judged because you're judging yourself for eating it, or for even thinking about eating it. You're thinking you're bad for eating it. You think it's wrong.

You don't feel free to eat what you want without guilt, fear, or judgement because of what you're thinking about you eating that food or about the food itself.

And the reason why you have obsessive thoughts about food is because you're relying on food to control your emotions and to make you feel good or better. So when you feel negative, uncomfortable emotions, you think about food a lot because you think that's your way out.

Or because you're being too restrictive with your eating and the more you tell yourself you can't or shouldn't eat something, the more you want it and therefore the more you think about it.

Or because eating food is your main way to have fun or experience pleasure and since you're going to desire pleasure every day, most likely often, you're going to think about eating food a lot.

The reason why you worry about food is because you think you need to follow certain rules and either you are worried that you won't be able to or because you're conflicted and don't want to and you worry about breaking the rules.

Or, because again, you're worried that something bad will happen if you eat certain foods, such as bingeing, overeating, or gaining weight.

Or you worry about being hungry and food not being available.

The reason why you don't believe you have a choice is because again, you think you need to eat a certain way, that there is a right and wrong way, and you think that what you want isn't what you should eat. So even though you do in fact have a choice, you're not allowing yourself to choose what you want.

The other reason why you don't believe you have a choice is because you think you're out of control. You think you can't stop once you've started. And here's the truth, which can sometimes be hard for people to hear.

You can stop. You are not out of control. You are capable of making the decision to not pick up another bite of food and put it in your mouth.

Now, I'm not saying it's easy to stop eating. It's not. If it were then none of us would have ever struggled with bingeing and overeating.

But what I am saying is that it is possible for you to stop. That you are capable of stopping once you've started. And you're capable of not even starting.

If you keep telling yourself you can't stop and that you are out of control then you're going to feel powerless and not even try.

You don't feel freedom to stop, you don't feel like you have a choice, because you're telling yourself you can't stop and that you don't have a choice.

And any or all of these are what is stopping you from feeling at peace with food and stopping you from experiencing freedom with food.

Now, some of you might have resonated with one, or two, or three of those things I just talked about. And some of you might have resonated with a lot of them, maybe all of them.

And I don't want you to feel overwhelmed and start telling yourself it's going to be so much work and effort and it's going to take so much time.

It's just not useful to think about it that way.

So get neutral about it.

You have things to work on. You have x number of things to work on. And you will work on each of them.

That is it.

Don't make it into a huge ordeal. Make it into a to-do list that you will go through one at a time and complete them all.

And then get to work.

And what you're going to do will depend on what it is that is your obstacle.

That's why you need to first know what it is that is stopping you from having the freedom you desire.

Know your starting point. Know what's blocking you. Know what it is that you're thinking and believing that is holding you back.

And then you're going to work on shifting your perspective and changing how you talk to yourself.

A change in your perspective and a change in your self-talk is what will create food freedom for you.

So that means you're going to stop labeling foods as good and bad, and label the food by its name, or you can call them joy foods or fuel foods, both of which are good, but basically you're going to stop moralizing food so you stop feeling guilty about eating a delicious food and stop judging yourself for eating it.

You're going to tell yourself that you're not doing anything wrong by eating that delicious food, even if it's not the most nutritious food, or not nutritious at all. It's okay to eat it and you're allowed to eat it.

And you'll be okay if you eat it.

Now, I totally understand the fear you might have that eating that food will turn into eating too much of it.

But, so often the reason why that happens is because you're feeling guilty, judged, restricted, or fearful.

Those feelings can actually drive you to eat more. They can lead to you feeling bad about yourself, which can lead to you stopping caring about what you eat. They can lead to all or nothing thinking where you think you've already ruined it or messed it up so you might as well keep eating. They can lead to trying to eat as much as you can while you're being bad or while you're actually allowing yourself to eat it before you restrict again and it's no longer allowed.

We tend to think it's the tastiness of the food that causes us to eat too much of it when really, it's what we are thinking and feeling that causes us to eat too much.

It gets us into a mindset that causes us to give up, or to panic, or to ignore our true wants.

But not judging yourself or the food, and giving yourself unconditional permission to eat delicious foods that you like, allowing yourself to eat them, and knowing what really drives the overeating and bingeing can help you to be more relaxed, calm, and at peace with what you're eating. And that is a beautiful place to be when you're eating. You'll get so much more enjoyment from the food and it will be so much easier to stop eating when you want to.

Now, the other part of fearing that eating that food turning into eating too much of it is that belief that you're out of control that I talked about before.

And you're going to start overcoming that belief by getting logical. I know it doesn't always feel like you have control and have a choice but, you do. That doesn't get taken away. You are always the one who decides what you're going to eat and who decides to eat the next bite.

I bet you sometimes even hear yourself making those decisions. "Just one more" or "Ooooh, that sounds good I'm going to eat those," or "Now something salty," things like that. The eating isn't just happening, you're actually deciding your next food or next bite.

And, there always comes a point when you do stop because you decide to stop. You tell yourself you've eaten enough, that you're done, and you stop. At some point, you do make the decision to stop instead of making the decision to eat more.

And the other example I like to use is if you were eating and a whole group of people you know walked in. Would you stop? I bet you would. Because you can and because you have a super important reason to stop.

So, even if you don't know how to make a different decision, even if you don't yet know how to stop yourself, and even if you don't yet believe you will actually stop, at least right now you can understand that it's possible for you and that you are capable.

You can at least know that you are not actually out of control even if you sometimes feel like you are. Being out of control and feeling like you are are two different things. Being out of control means you really can't do anything about it, which you can. And feeling like you're out of control means that you're just believing you can't stop, which you can.

So tell yourself that you can, that you're capable, even if you don't know how. Believing you can is going to be the first step toward actually using that control you have and learning how to stop.

And, it will help you to feel more empowered, which will help you to experience that freedom with food that you desire.

Eating that food doesn't mean you will binge. You have the ability to stop that from happening.

Now, going along with that power you have to choose to stop, you also have the power, and freedom to choose what you eat.

You're going to let go of all your can't's, shouldn't's, have to's, and need to's when it comes to food.

And you're instead going to make your decisions based on what you want and what your body wants, so what sounds appealing to you and what won't feel bad in your body.

Instead of being confused and conflicted because that diet says you shouldn't eat that or that person said you should eat this, you're going to realize the freedom to choose that you have and make your own decisions.

And as I said before, you're not going to judge your decision because it's an unhealthy food or it was an off-limits food for the diets you did. You're going to choose what's best for your mind and for your body.

You have the freedom to choose for yourself. You don't have to follow the rules that someone else created. Make your own rules. You have the freedom to do that.

And when you acknowledge this freedom that you have, and you follow your own rules, that you love, that don't make you feel restricted, that you don't feel obligated to follow, then you will experience that freedom that you already have.

Alright, next, you're going to learn how to handle your emotions, and feel your emotions, even the uncomfortable ones, without using food to manipulate them.

And the shift in your thinking that needs to happen for you to do this is going from something like “I can’t feel this” or “I don’t want to feel this,” or “I need to get out of this,” to something like, “I am willing to feel this,” or “I can feel this,” or “I will be okay if I feel this.”

You’re going to go from an unwillingness to feel to a willingness to feel.

And you’re going to do that because feeling, although it can be uncomfortable when you’re doing it, will give you a much better outcome than eating to avoid or change how you’re feeling.

And when you become a person who feels their emotions, and who doesn’t use food to control all their emotions, you won’t be so reliant on the food. You’ll be free from the need to eat to feel better because you’re going to get so much better at feeling better on your own, without food, by processing through your emotions, going through the discomfort of them, and getting to the other side where true good feelings will be.

You’re also going to intentionally have more fun, pleasure, and enjoyment in your life - little, moderate, and exciting and big.

All different intensities of positive emotions and activities in short periods of time and longer.

And you’re not going to rely on eating for them.

Now, it’s totally okay if food is involved, like if you love baking or you’re doing a whole day thing where obviously you’ll be eating at some point, or if you’re enjoying time with your partner, family, or friends over a meal, that’s totally okay.

But you’re not going to rely on only food to give you fun, enjoyment, and pleasure because there is so much more in the world that can help you to create that, things that won’t leave you feeling bad afterward.

And when you have other sources of joy, fun, and pleasure in your life, you won’t be so obsessed about food since food won’t be as important in that way. It will always be important because we need it to live, but, you’re not going to add importance to it by making it your main, or favorite source of fun, enjoyment, and pleasure.

When you diversify, you won’t be as focused on the food. You will have freedom to do other things and think about other things.

And lastly, instead of worrying about what will happen, decide what will happen.

If you do get hungry, what will you do?

If you do want to eat more, what will you tell yourself?

When you have a solution to your problem, you don’t need to worry about it.

When you have an answer, you don’t need to think about it over and over.

So whatever it is you're worried about, free yourself from the worry by coming up with a plan and show yourself that you will be okay. Because, you will be okay.

Freedom is possible for you. Feeling free and at peace is possible for you.

Whatever it is that is tying you to the excessive food, or causing you to think about it so much, or causing you to eat so much, or causing you to feel how you feel, you can change.

And there is so much freedom that you already have that you're not acknowledging, such as your freedom to choose what you want to eat.

Stop listening to other people and listen to yourself and your body. Pay attention to what your body is signaling to you and what you want in your mind.

The only person keeping you from feeling free is you.

You have the freedom already.

Now, you're going to acknowledge it and overcome the obstacles that are stopping you from actually feeling free.

Freedom is possible for you. Understand your obstacles and get to work on overcoming it by shifting your self-talk.

The power to change is within you.

Alright, that's all for today, bye bye.