

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep 343: Waiting For Emotions and Urges to Pass

Hi! Today I'm talking with you about waiting for your emotions and urges to pass.

Something I talk about often on this podcast is allowing yourself to feel your emotions and urges.

Instead of trying to escape them by eating food, or trying to change how you feel by eating food, or trying to feel better by eating food, you just let yourself feel how you're feeling.

You let it exist in your body.

You let yourself feel uncomfortable.

And eventually, the discomfort will pass and you will feel better on the other side of it.

But, it's not as simple as just waiting for it to pass.

It doesn't "just take time."

Sometimes people just wait for it to pass and give it time and they're waiting for a long time, hours.

And when it takes a long time, at some point they might get sick of waiting and just do what they know will work to stop the feeling. They eat.

They give in to the urge. They eat to change how they're feeling.

And because it keeps taking so long for it to pass, they start to believe that maybe their feelings aren't temporary, or it's going to take too long for their feelings to pass.

So they become unwilling to feel them through.

But, it doesn't have to take so long.

There is a reason why their urges and emotions are taking so long to pass, and it's important that they know why.

Because, there *is* something they can do about it. They can facilitate them passing sooner.

So let's talk about why they're taking so long to pass.

Starting with emotions, and then I'll talk about the urges because although they're very similar, there's also some differences.

If their emotions aren't passing, and they're not feeling better, it's because they just keep ruminating on the thoughts that are causing the emotion to be there.

Our emotions are caused by our thoughts. So when we think a thought, an emotion is created.

Let's say you're thinking that you have too much on your plate and you can't handle it all. The emotion that that thinking might cause could be stressed.

And then, you keep thinking that same thought over and over, and you add other thoughts to it. Maybe you're thinking about each particular thing that's on your plate, that you have to do, things people are relying on you for, deadlines, errands, obligations, all the things.

You keep thinking about all this stuff, and keep thinking about you not being able to handle it or get it all done or find time for it all, and when you do, you're going to keep feeling stressed.

With each of those thoughts comes stress. So, keep thinking them and you're going to keep feeling stressed.

So, if your emotions aren't passing, it's because you keep ruminating and dwelling on thoughts that continue to cause you to feel that emotion.

If you don't change your thoughts, your emotions won't change.

Now, sometimes our thoughts do just naturally shift without us really doing anything about it.

But other times they don't and we need to be proactive. We need to put in the work to change them.

We need to work on changing our perspective and when we do, that's when the feeling will pass.

You can look for other ways to think about your circumstances.

One of my group members did this beautifully when she shifted from thinking that it's so hard to find time to do all that she needs to do and that her life is too busy and then thinking over and over about all the things she wants and thinks she needs to do in her busy life to then thinking that she *has* been managing it and she *can* manage it.

She went from thinking it's unmanageable to thinking it is. Because, it is.

She changed her perspective and when she did she felt calmer and less stressed.

That is how you feel better. That is how you change how you feel.

You change what you're thinking.

You change how you're choosing to view your circumstances, other people, things you've done, things you have on your calendar, and yourself.

Shift your mind and you will shift how you feel.

So you don't just wait for your thoughts and feelings to change, you intentionally change them.

Now, I do have to say that sometimes we're not in a place where we want to change what we're thinking. We don't want to think differently about what happened, about the other person, about our circumstances, about ourselves, about what we did, whatever.

Or sometimes we're in a place where it's really hard for us to change what we're thinking because we just can't see another option, another perspective in that moment.

And if either of those are the case, then you're just going to let yourself feel how you're feeling until you're ready to work through it or until you can get help with changing your thoughts.

Sometimes, you can just let yourself feel how you feel. You can let yourself feel frustrated, or disappointed, or sad, whatever emotion you're feeling. And that's okay.

When the time is right, or when you can get help, you can do your thought work. When the time is right, you can work on changing your thoughts so you can change how you feel.

So it's not always going to be, "do this work right away to get that feeling to pass." Sometimes it will be a more appropriate option for you to just let the emotion be for some time. And when you're ready, you can shift it.

And then there are the urges to binge.

Now, sometimes that might be coming from a desire to change how you feel. If you keep feeling an emotion, you might keep feeling an urge to eat to change how you feel.

So, if you do what I just talked about, and you work on changing your thoughts to change how you feel, then you won't feel that urge to eat because you will have changed how you feel without food.

But here's what else you might be doing that can cause your urges to last for a long time.

Either you're resisting the urge or you're keeping open the option to binge.

Here's what I mean by those.

When you're resisting the urge, you're basically fighting with it. You might be getting frustrated that it's there. You might be getting annoyed that it hasn't gone away yet. You might be thinking that it should have gone away by now because you're thinking it should only last a certain amount of time.

And when you do this, you're basically adding fuel to the fire. You're increasing your discomfort by adding annoyance or frustration or anger of whatever emotion to the urge. You're compounding your discomfort.

And the more discomfort you feel, it's likely the more you'll be urging to get out of it, which can lead you to choosing to eat to end the discomfort.

And when you're keeping open the option of eating, you're not making a firm decision that you are not going to eat.

You're in the "maybe" space.

And if you keep entertaining the idea of eating, rather than shutting it down, you're going to keep thinking about it. The urge will stick around.

It's like if you say "maybe" to a toddler instead of firmly saying no. They're going to keep asking. They're not going to let it go.

Your urge isn't going to let it go either if you stay in "maybe."

So if you are feeling an urge and you're resisting it or you're thinking that maybe you'll give in to it, the urge will persist.

If you're waiting for the urge to pass but doing those things, it's not going pass.

It will pass after you've stopped arguing with it and after you've made the firm decision that you're not eating.

Now, I'm not saying it will pass right away once you do those things but, you'll be putting yourself on the path toward it passing as opposed to being on the path toward it not stopping, which is the path of resisting and staying in "maybe."

Your urge and emotions will pass. They are temporary.

But, what you're thinking while you're feeling them is what will determine how long it takes for them to pass.

Don't just wait. Do something about it.

Work on changing what you're thinking if you're ready to and want to, make a firm decision to feel and to not eat, and instead of resisting your urge, accept that it's there. Do your best to think neutrally about it with thoughts like, "This is uncomfortable but I can feel this. I don't need to eat to make this go away. This is just temporary and I'm going to work through it."

That's going to be so much more productive than getting mad about feeling it or panicking.

So, just like with anything that you want to change for yourself, don't just wait. Be proactive. Work on it, do what you can to help your feelings pass, and change your self-talk.

Alright, that is all for this episode today. Bye bye.