

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #353: If Eating is the One Thing You Haven't Been Successful In

Hello! Today I'm going to be talking with you about when eating is the one thing you haven't been successful in.

For some people, they're used to success. They have a successful career, they are generally happy in their relationships with their partner, family, and friends, they have achieved many personal goals in their lives, but then, there is the whole eating thing.

The eating thing is the one thing they're struggled to have success with.

They've had such a hard time stopping binge eating and just haven't been able to figure it out.

And they're so confused because they've been able to have success with so many other things in their lives.

They see themselves as a committed person, a person who is determined, who is driven, who is motivated, who is capable.

So why haven't they been successful with stopping binge eating?

Well, in order to understand what makes this different, we have to understand what is making it hard for you to be successful with your eating and why your eating is an issue to being with.

When people struggle with achieving something for a long time, I think that looking into those two things is something that is overlooked or isn't really dug into enough.

You might just want to say something like, it's an issue or it's hard because I love food too much. Or, the food just tastes too good. Or, I just can't control myself. Or, I'm just too weak.

But that's not really it.

What it really is, is one of two things, or both.

You use food to control your emotions or you overly restrict your food to control the size of your body.

And what makes it hard for you to have success with your eating is that you don't know how to handle your emotions without eating food, or don't want to not escape your emotions, and what also makes it hard is what you think you need to do to change the size, or maintain the size of your body.

So let's talk about these separately for a minute.

First, the emotion piece.

Eating might be your go-to for emotional management.

Those other things that you've had success with weren't.

Being successful with working, or building relationships, or any personal goal you had likely wasn't taking you away from avoiding emotions.

But if you eat less, it will. If you eat less, then you will be using food to avoid, numb, change, or escape emotions less.

And if you don't know what else to do about your emotions, or are so unwilling to work through emotions in a more productive way, then it's going to be hard for you to have success with eating less.

So when you worked on achieving those other goals in your life, they likely weren't taking away your emotional crutch.

If eating is your emotional crutch, then eating less will be taking that crutch away.

So, because those other things you've been successful with weren't tied to strongly to controlling emotions, it was easier for you to achieve them.

You probably had to overcome other things, and feel discomfort, and let go of some things, but maybe you weren't as tied to those other things as you are to how you handle your emotions.

And maybe those obstacles you overcame and discomfort weren't as prevalent as the spectrum of emotions you feel every day and in general, so there was less for you to overcome.

With emotional eating, whether it's emotional overeating or emotional binge eating, you could feel emotions almost every day that could get in the way of you eating how you truly want to be eating because you're choosing to control your emotions with food instead.

So, if you want to achieve success with your eating too, just like the other things you've achieved, you also need to achieve success with feeling emotions, not escaping your emotions, and working through them.

That's where the focus needs to be. It's not just "eat better," it's "handle your emotions better."

Then there's the overly restrictive eating and body piece.

It's likely that your other achievements didn't involve you denying yourself of something you want in order to change or maintain the size of your body.

Now, if you had a fitness goal that you achieved then sure, that might have been related to changing or maintaining your body.

But, were you being overly restrictive with something you want in order to achieve it?

Not just restrictive, because yes maybe you restricted something in order to make time for working on your fitness goal but, overly restrictive.

If you kept saying no to something you really wanted so you could work on your fitness, then yeah, it's likely that eventually you would give up on your fitness goal and revert back to doing those things you'd been denying yourself of doing.

Which is what happens with most people who overly restrict their food. They might be able to do it for a period of time but eventually, they give up on trying to not eat them and start eating them excessively, kinda giving up on their weight loss and eating goals, at least for a bit. And mostly likely they go back and forth between being hard-core about their eating and being super healthy to then excessively eating the foods they didn't allow themselves to eat during that super-healthy period.

It's likely that when you achieved those goals you've had success with, you weren't being overly restrictive, denying yourself of something you want for an extended period of time, with no end in sight for when the restrictions would end.

But that's what you might be doing with food.

Even when people move into maintenance with their weight, they may still stay in that overly restrictive mindset because they think they have to.

Or, they move into maintenance and think they can just let go of all their restrictions and then they not only revert back to eating all those foods they hadn't been allowing for so long, they eat them in excess because they're reacting to the deprivation they created for so long.

So, if you want to be successful with your eating, just like you have with those other things, those excessive restrictions that lead to excessive eating need to go.

You need to work on being more permissive with what you eat.

And what would also help, is to work on being more neutral in your thinking about your body.

It's the hatred, or dislike of your body that drives you to try and change it quickly, cutting out all the foods to try and make it happen quickly, instead of being patient with it.

And, it's panicking about gaining weight that can also drive that overly restrictive eating mindset.

You become so worried or scared of gaining weight that you try so desperately to stop it from happening and how most people do it is by over-hauling their diet.

If you worked on thinking more neutrally about your body size, and weren't so fearful about weight gain, then you could be more relaxed with your eating, which is going to ultimately create a much better result for you than being overly restrictive which can lead to bingeing.

So, let's put this all together.

What made your previous achievements hard is not the same as what is making achieving better eating habits hard.

And, what you needed to do to achieve those goals and be successful with them is not the same as what you need to do with your eating.

With the other things, you weren't letting go of your emotional crutch.

Although, just a side note, if you're someone who was successful at quitting smoking or drinking or something like that but still binge eats, it's likely that you just transferred your emotional regulation habit from that thing to eating.

And with the other things, you weren't going back and forth between being super restrictive to then letting all the restrictions go because you were trying to control your body size.

And again, yes you might have done that with exercise but, if you were being super restrictive in some way, have you been maintaining it without struggle? I'm guessing not.

So, I hope this has helped you gain insight into why you have been successful with so many other things but not your eating yet. And I want to emphasize the *yet*. Because you will.

You just need to understand why you haven't been successful, why this is different, what your focus needs to be on, and then commit to working on it.

You have so much of what you need in order to be successful with anything – commitment, determination, motivation, drive and belief in yourself.

Now, you're going to work on the things that you didn't need to work on to be successful with the other things.

You can do it. You can do this too.

Alright, that's all for today, I'll talk to you next time. Bye bye.