THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #360: If You're Afraid to Allow Yourself to Eat What You Want

Hello! Something I talk about often on this podcast is allowing yourself to eat whatever you want.

And for a lot of people, when they hear that, they are *very* resistant.

They're nervous or afraid to do it because they think that if they allow themselves to eat whatever they want, then they'll always choose super unhealthy stuff, they'll eat a lot of it, and they'll lose control and binge.

So, they don't do it, they keep forbidding foods, making them off-limits, and not allowing them.

And then what happens is that their desire for those foods grows. Whenever they think about them, they tell themselves they can't eat them, and each time they say no, their desire grows.

What also grows is their feelings of deprivation, disappointment, maybe even anger, and feeling restricted.

And eventually, they're done with feeling that way.

They're done with saying no.

So they say yes but, it's yes with conditions.

Those conditions are usually that it's just this one time, they won't eat them again tomorrow, or for a long time, or ever.

Which sounds like a reasonable condition but, what usually happens then, is that they get into a last hurrah mindset.

This is their one chance, this is the only time they're going to eat it so, they go big.

They eat as much as they can while they can.

They eat it all so it's not in their home the next day.

They might even eat more than one food that they haven't been allowing themselves, and a lot of it, because if they're breaking a rule and being "bad" now, they might as well get in all the bad and break all the rules.

This is a very common series of events that happens.

But, a lot of the time, people don't acknowledge the entire series.

When people are not allowing themselves to eat the foods they want, they're not usually looking at the whole story.

They're looking at the control they're using to not eat the food, they're looking at the moments when they follow their rules and don't eat it or don't buy it.

But they're not acknowledging the effects of doing that.

And it could simply be because they don't see it.

They're not associating the bingeing with the excessive restriction.

And I get it. I didn't either for such a long time.

I had no idea that making so many foods off-limits was contributing to my bingeing.

Partly because I didn't really know *what* was contributing to my bingeing.

I mean, I had ideas but they weren't fully developed ideas.

So for you, take an honest look at what happens, the whole story of when you don't allow yourself to eat what you want to eat.

Do you want certain foods, and whenever you do, you don't allow yourself to eat them?

Are there foods you like that you only allow yourself to eat when you binge?

Do you actually hear yourself telling yourself that eating this food will be just this one time, or some version of that?

Then it's likely that you are being too restrictive and it's contributing to your binge eating.

Now, even with knowing that, one of the biggest concerns people have is that they think if they allow themselves to eat what they want, they will overdo it or binge.

Or they will only be eating unhealthy foods.

And they think that because when they have allowed themselves to eat what they want in the past, they've binged.

But, that bingeing isn't happening after they have given themselves full allowance and permission to eat what they want.

It happens after they haven't.

What they've seen is a response to being overly restrictive.

How you respond to being overly restrictive is going to be very different from how you respond when you're not.

Like I said before, the response to being overly restrictive is to overdo it.

You go from one extreme to another, from excessive restriction to excessive eating, and likely back to excessive restriction, and the cycle goes on and on.

Not only does the excessive restriction you've been putting on yourself lead to bingeing but, anticipating excessive restriction can too, because you'll likely want to eat as much as you while you can.

But, that's not what usually happens when you're *not* being so restrictive.

When there is no end to your allowance, when you can truly have any food at anytime you want, when you've been allowing and actually eating those foods when you're wanting them, you're not going to have the same response.

Because then, eating those foods isn't such a big deal. You're not urging for those foods. You're not urging for freedom. You don't have a limited-time to eat them.

So you're more relaxed. You're not in a hurry. Decisions are easier. You're not thinking about the food so much.

Because you've eaten it recently, it's not as novel. It's not as big of a deal.

Because you know you'll eat it again, there's not urgency.

You're going to feel and act so differently when you're allowed versus when you're not.

Think about this non-food example.

What if you haven't been able to see or talk to your favorite person in the world for 5 years. No phone calls, texts, video calls, or online communication allowed.

And then you get to see them but, only today.

What would that be like for you?

You'd be urging to see them and, when you do, you'd want to spend as much time with them as you could. You might even sacrifice sleep or other responsibilities because this is your only chance.

All your focus is on that person and you want to be excessive with your time with them.

Now imagine an entirely different scenario.

You're able to see this person whenever you want to. They're pretty available, sometimes it just requires you to reach out or to go see them but, any day you want, you can see or talk to them. And they're not going away.

What would *that* be like for you?

You've be so much more relaxed. You'd talk to them or see them when you were in the mood and when you weren't, you wouldn't.

Seeing or talking to them wouldn't be such a big deal.

And when you did see them, you would be okay with seeing them for a little bit and then moving on to whatever else you want to do.

You wouldn't necessarily sacrifice anything to spend more time with them because more time will come. You can see them, get other stuff done, do other stuff, and talk to them again soon.

Notice the difference between having excessive restrictions with that person versus not.

It can be the exact same way with food.

How you are with the food, how you think about the food, how you think about eating the food, all of that is going to be affected by how restrictive you are with that food.

And when you have that allowance, the unconditional full permission to eat what you want, you are going to feel and act more like your authentic self.

Most of you don't *want* to be eating large amounts of food at one time because you feel physically awful when you do.

Most of you don't *want* to be only eating the foods that have little to no nutrients in them, the foods that are considered to be unhealthy.

I can't tell you how many people I've worked with who have told me they like eating nutrient-dense foods.

And the people won't don't really, they likely *want* to want to like eating that way more and the way to get there is by slowly introducing those kinds of foods, starting with the ones you like and experimenting with others and experimenting with different combinations or ways of preparing the food.

But in order to do that, it will be so helpful to allow the foods that aren't so nutritious while introducing other foods rather than just trying to force themselves to only eat the nutrient-dense foods.

The point here is that when you have that permission and allowance, you won't be clogging up you mind with thoughts about food and excessive eating caused by being overly restrictive.

So you'll be able to access what you *really* want.

And sometimes it will be nutrient dense foods, sometimes it won't, and sometimes it will be a combo of foods that are nutrient-dense and foods that aren't.

So many of you get so confused about what you want because you're not even allowing yourself to want what you want. You're telling yourself what you should or have to or can't do.

There would be so much less confusion for you, and no much less time thinking about what you're going to eat or not eat if you allowed yourself to eat what you want and weren't bombarding yourself with overly restrictive rules.

And, you'd feel so much more relaxed.

That really is a time when I see so much success from my group members.

When they calm down. When they relax. When they aren't trying to control the food and themselves but are instead just letting themselves be themselves.

And again, "yourself" isn't a binger. That's not who you are. That is who you act as when you're overly restrictive.

Now, I do have to say really quickly that for some people, their bingeing is also a result of wanting to escape emotions so that can be a contributor as well.

So I can't say that everyone who stops being so restrictive will stop binge eating because some people still need to work on the emotions component.

But, this whole restriction thing is a huge piece of the puzzle for most people who binge eat.

And it's so important that it's addressed so you can be the kind of eater that you naturally are without it.

Now, let's talk about what it means to allow yourself to eat what you want.

A lot of people think that allowing themselves to eat what they want means that they will eat anything and everything.

Then think that allowing means eating.

But those are two separate things.

Allowing simply means you have permission.

You're allowed to eat it.

It's not forbidden or off-limits.

You *can* eat it.

Then, with that permission, you'll *decide* if you eat it or not.

The eating happens when you decide to eat.

You have permission and then you decide.

It's like a party invitation.

Getting the invitation doesn't mean you go.

It just means you're allowed to go. You have permission to go. You are welcome to go.

Then, you'll decide if you will go or not.

You're invited to eat the food, now you decide if you eat it or not.

And remember, this decision is going to come from a place of abundance, where you have been allowed and will continue to be allowed. You can eat it again, whenever you want. There's no urgency.

Back to the party example, what would it be like if this was the only party you've been invited to in years and you think you won't get invited to another one for a very long time.

You might say yes just because of the scarcity. You're not even thinking about whether or not you want to go to this party, you're just saying yes because of the scarcity of parties. You also might stay way too long, even after you've stopped enjoying yourself, because of the future scarcity.

But what would it be like if you've regularly gotten invited to parties and you believe you'll get invited to more?

You'd actually stop and consider whether or not you *want* to go to this particular party on this particular day. And you might decide it's a no because there is some reason why it's not appealing to you in that moment and it's not a big deal because you know there will be other parties. And if you did go, you'd be okay with leaving when you're not enjoying it anymore, or at the time you decided ahead of time that you would leave at, because of the future abundance. There will be more. You don't have to squeeze in all the party-time now.

So, allowance is being invited to the party.

Then you decide if you want to go.

Allowance is being invited to eat the food.

Then you decide if you want to eat it or not.

And because you're relaxed without the scarcity and restriction, you'll much more easily be able to consider the reasons why you do and don't want to eat it.

Maybe you have reasons you like for not eating it – such as it will keep me awake, or it will make me feel too full, or I'll likely feel lethargic afterward.

Or maybe you have no reasons you like for not eating it – you'll likely feel fine energy-wise and in your stomach, or you just don't see any negative outcome coming from eating it.

And then you make your decision.

So you're not just eating it because you can, you're actually considering why you do and why you don't want to eat it.

So, allowance is never a bad thing.

I honestly can't think of a time when having allowance with food is bad.

Now, I've had people tell me before that they gave themselves too much allowance and that's why they overate or binged.

But that's actually not the reason they ate so much.

It's the decisions they made *with* that allowance.

They had the allowance and they decided to eat "just one more" or to eat something else or to keep eating past full.

They may have even decided that since they'd already eaten x, y, and z that they might as well eat a, b, and c, ya know, all or nothing thinking.

Allowance isn't the problem. Being allowed to choose isn't the problem.

If you overate or binged, it was your decisions to keep eating that was the problem.

They're separate.

So start paying attention to how you respond to not allowing yourself versus allowing yourself.

Notice how you feel and what you think.

Something I've done so many times with my group members is to see what happens when *I* give them permission.

I'll tell them that if they want to eat the entire bag, to eat it.

And when I give them that permission, most of the time, they look at me and tell me they don't want to.

Once I give them permission, they can so clearly see what they really want.

The same can happen for you when you give *yourself* permission.

So give it to yourself.

Because when you do, and you can so clearly see what *you* want, you won't feel the urge for what you don't, which likely is to eat excessively.

This is all about you finding your authentic self and your true desires.

And when you're in abundance, they're so much easier to see and live by.

You already have allowance, you *can* go to the store, or get delivery, or have someone bring you whatever you want. You have access to the foods you like. You're allowed to buy them. It *is* available for you to eat.

Now, allow yourself to have that allowance for yourself.

Allow yourself to have the allowance you already have instead of trying to force it away from yourself.

Because, forcing yourself to deny yourself, isn't going to have the outcome you might think it will.

Alright, I hope this has helped you get on board, or at least more on board with giving yourself the allowance to eat what you want.

Remember, it's just permission, not actually eating. That will come from the decision and the decisions you make when you're feeling restricted are likely going to be different from the decisions you make when you are feeling free to choose.

And you are free to choose. You are allowed to choose anything you want.

Allow yourself to.

Starting today.

And continue it every single day, forever.

You'll be okay.

Alright, that's all I have for you today. Bye bye.