

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #361: Why Your Urges to Binge Are So Strong

Hi! Before I get started, I want to remind you that registration for The Stop Binge Eating Group Coaching Program will be opening in two weeks, on July 16th of 2025.

If your binge eating is having a negative impact on your life, if it's stopping you from feeling your best, from doing things you want to be doing, and if it's worsening your relationship with yourself or your body, then I encourage you to come join the program.

I'll help you change your relationship with food so you can feel better, so you can live your best life, do all the things you want to be doing, feel good about yourself and your body, and feel free.

The longer you wait to take a deep dive into this work, the longer you'll be negatively impacted by binge eating and, the longer you'll be waiting for all the good stuff that will come once you are binge-free.

So if you're ready to do this now, head on over to coachkir.com/group and get on the waitlist so you can register as soon as registration opens on the 16th. And you'll want to register ASAP because once you do, you'll get immediate access to The Stop Binge Eating Course so you can get started right away, before the program officially begins, and I'll also be giving away a couple limited-time bonuses and you won't want to miss out on those.

So go ahead and get on the waitlist and if you have any questions that aren't answered on that webpage, you can email them to info@coachkir.com.

Now is the time, don't wait any longer, and let's do it together.

Alright, now let's talk about why your urges to binge eat are so strong.

We can experience urges in all kinds of intensities. Sometimes they're pretty mild, and when they are, it's not so difficult to talk yourself out of bingeing. You can tell yourself why you don't want to it, make a firm decision to not do it, and the urge then fades away.

But other times, the urge is strong, making it hard to talk yourself out of it because the desire to binge is intense. It's all you're thinking about and it feels like you have no choice but to eat.

You might wonder why sometimes your urges are strong and other times they're not. Or maybe, why they're always strong for you.

Well, there's two main reasons I've seen for why this happens.

Either your urge has built up into being strong or, you have an immediate strong desire to change how you're feeling.

Let's start with the first one because that's what I see most commonly with my group members.

Most of the time, the urge doesn't actually just show up strong.

It builds over time.

It starts as a mild desire, and then the desire builds and builds until it becomes strong.

And this can happen for a few reasons.

It can happen if you're being too restrictive with yourself.

You want to eat a certain food, you tell yourself you can't eat it, then when you again want it later, you tell yourself you can't again, and the more you tell yourself you can't have what you want, the more you'll desire it. Your desire might grow with every no.

If you keep denying yourself of what you want, you'll desire it more. And that desire can eventually become a strong, urgent desire, a strong urge for it.

So, not allowing yourself to eat what you want, over time, can cause you to strongly urge for it. And, if you are not allowing several things, now you're urging even more.

You've told yourself no, that you can't, so many times and now you're urging for freedom to eat what you want.

When you're being overly restrictive and not allowing yourself to eat the foods you want to eat, that's what you're urging for – freedom.

Freedom to eat those foods, freedom to do what you want.

So, if that's the reason why your urges are so strong, then you decrease the intensity of your urges by allowing yourself to eat those foods you want to eat. You can give yourself the freedom that you want.

Now, if you're afraid to do that, I recommend you listen to the previous episode I did, #360: If you're afraid to allow yourself to eat whatever you want.

In that one I go into detail about why you will be better off if you do allow.

But what I'll say here is that you are better off saying yes to yourself when you feel the desire, and eating those foods sometimes, than if you say no over and over, causing your desire to grow into a strong urge, and then bingeing on them.

Allowing those foods will help you to decrease the intensity of your urges down into a mild desire or craving.

Another reason why your urge might build is if you're wanting to eat to numb or avoid your emotions.

You're going to feel emotions every day. Most days, you will feel some uncomfortable emotions. Sometimes, you'll feel a lot of uncomfortable emotions.

And what might happen is that you feel an uncomfortable emotion, you want to eat to numb or to feel better but, maybe you can't eat in that moment. So you just try to ignore it. And then it happens again. And again, And as you keep feeling the emotional discomfort, you keep wanting to eat, and your desire to get out of the emotion grows, so your desire to eat continues and grows. Eventually, you get to the point where you are strongly urging to eat so you can feel better and get away from the emotion.

So your continued urging to change how you feel by eating food is causing your desire for food to build up into a strong urge for food.

So, if this is your reason for why your urges becomes strong, you need to handle your emotions differently *and*, actually handle them.

For many people, they don't handle their emotions at all. Eating food may seem like handling them but really, eating the food just covers up the emotions temporarily.

Actually handling your emotions means you're processing them and resolving them.

It means you're going through them and working on the cause of them.

And the cause is your thoughts.

You're feeling how you're feeling because of what you're thinking.

So, if you work on changing your perspective and changing what you're thinking, then you will feel differently.

Think better thoughts, feel better feelings.

Rather than just covering up your emotions with food, actually feel them as they come up, uncover what you're thinking that's causing them, and then work on changing what you're thinking.

And I have an episode about that too: #266 – How to change your thoughts.

That's how you can feel better, for real, not temporarily.

And if you're handling your emotions that way, you won't be urging for food. If food isn't your means to feel better, then you won't desire food to feel better. So as your emotions come up, you won't be constantly thinking about food, causing the desire to build, you'll instead be handling the emotions, working through them, and resolving them.

And I want to add something else here too that's similar – it's the build up from you exhausting yourself or not taking care of yourself.

You're tired, and you're not allowing yourself to rest. You're pushing yourself hard. You're telling yourself that resting is a waste of time or if you do it, you're lazy.

So you're not taking care of one of your basic needs.

So you get so exhausted, your energy is drained, and while your brain wants you to rest or to sleep, you want to get energy fast – and eating is how you'll do it.

So like with the emotions, you notice you feel tired, you want to eat, but maybe you don't, and as you get more tired, you desire food even more, and the desire gets stronger to the point where you're now urging for it.

So like with emotions, take care of your needs. Take care of yourself. If you're tired, rest or sleep, depending on what it is that you need.

And the last reason I want to talk about for why your urge might build up into being strong is because when you feel less intense urges, you're not actually allowing and working through the urge.

This is similar to the emotions reason I was just talking about.

You might feel an urge to binge, and you might get through it without eating but then, you feel another one, and you get through it, but then you feel another one, it keeps coming back, and each time it comes back it gets stronger, and after feeling it and getting through it a few times, or several times, the urge grows into being a strong urge.

And here's where the mistake is.

You're not actually allowing and working through the urges.

You're fighting them, pushing them away, or trying to ignore them.

So you might win the battles and not binge with those few or several urges but then, you lose the war in the end.

And it's because of how you're handling those less intense urges.

There's going to be a different outcome when you are just telling yourself, "I'm not going to do it," vs when you're acknowledging the urge, opening up to the urge, breathing through it and actually telling yourself why you don't want to binge.

For example, thinking, "I'm feeling an urge, I am okay, this is temporary, I will get through this" then taking deep breaths, and telling yourself the reasons why you don't want to eat, and then, taking time to understand why the urge is there.

Such different energy is going to come from fighting vs allowing and understanding. Such different outcomes are going to come from each of those.

When you're fighting, like with not handling the emotions, you're not resolving anything. You're not resolving the urge.

But when you work through the urge, you are.

It's like if you're fighting with a person. It's likely just going to escalate and nothing gets solved.

But, once you actually hear each other, and listen and understand, and calmly explain yourself, that's when resolution can come.

This is about finding resolution with the urge. Showing the urge that it's okay it exists, it's okay that it wants food but, you're going to understand why it wants food, and tell it why you're not going to eat the food and what you're going to do instead.

And, once you take that time to understand why you're urging for food, you can take care of that reason.

You're urging for comfort, or freedom, or connection, or entertainment, or just to feel differently, and when you actually take the time to uncover that and understand that, you can give yourself what you're actually urging for. Because it's not really the food. It's what you think eating the food will do for you.

You're not going to figure that out if you're just fighting the urge and pushing it away.

It's when you allow it to be there and actually explore it that you will.

So, if you're not actually handling your urges and aren't actually working through them, they might continue and grow stronger.

So handle them. Work through them so they don't keep coming back stronger.

So, for most of you, and most of the time, your urges are strong because they are building. But, what about when they just come out of nowhere and they're strong?

That's most likely happening because you're having a strong emotional reaction. You got hit hard with a strong emotion and like I talked about a few minutes ago, if eating food is your go-to way of handling emotions, you might feel a strong urge to escape the emotion which shows up as a strong urge to eat.

So the solution here is the same – no matter the intensity of your emotions, you can handle them. You can be with them, process them, and work through them. Even if they're strong emotions. You are capable.

But, as I said, the sudden strong urge is much less common than the build up.

When that strong urge shows up, it's likely that it's not your first moment of desire or your first urge.

Kind of like when a couple has a big argument over something seemingly insignificant. The fight isn't a big fight because of that, there has been a build up of unresolved issues leading up to it.

So when it comes to your urges, resolve the issues that cause them as they come.

Take care of your wants and needs. Take care of your emotions. Give yourself freedom.

And then your urges won't be so strong and will be so much easier to manage.

Alright, that is all I have for you today. Don't forget to join the waitlist for The Stop Binge Eating Program so you can get started with the work as soon as registration opens on the 16th and so you can get those limited-time bonuses I'll be offering. Go to coachkir.com/group to get on the list, if you have any questions email them to info@coachkir.com, and I will talk to you again soon. Bye bye!