

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #385: Why Things Might Get Worse Before They Get Better

Hi! Really quick, before we get into today's episode, I want to remind you that registration for The Stop Binge Eating Program will be closing in just two days, on December 18th of 2025 at 12pm ET.

So if you are ready to be binge-free, are ready to feel in control and trust yourself around food, are ready to quiet the food noise, your thoughts about food, and are ready to feel more comfortable in your body, then do not miss this opportunity to make it happen.

Go to coachkir.com/group to register now, you'll be able to get started right away with the course videos and worksheets, and we'll get started with coaching on January 7th.

If you have any questions, you can email them to info@coachkir.com but again, do it now so you don't miss the deadline on December 18th at 12pm ET.

2026 is going to be your year. Your eating habits can change dramatically. You can be eating so differently by this time next year. And in this program, we will make it happen together.

Let's do it!

Alright, now let's talk about things getting worse before they get better.

For some people when they're working on stopping binge eating, things just get better and better from the start. And that's so great for them.

But for a lot of people, it doesn't look that way.

When they buckle down and get serious about working on this, and when they're doing the work that needs to be done, they actually feel worse, think about food more, or maybe even eat more than they did before they started.

And this might be concerning. They might think that something has gone wrong or that this isn't going to work, or that they are making things worse.

But that's not really what's happening.

What's really happening is that they're finally allowing themselves to be aware of themselves, of their thoughts and feelings, and at first, this might feel bad. Or they're finally allowing themselves to eat what they've been denying themselves of for so long, and at first, this might cause them to eat more.

Basically, they're allowing things they had previously been avoiding.

For some people, they've been eating to avoid their emotions or their thoughts because they thought they were too uncomfortable or annoying. They ate to feel better and to not feel. But now, as they're doing this work, they're actually facing those thoughts and feelings and experiencing the discomfort they'd previously been avoiding.

They're feeling worse because they're actually feeling.

But this is not a bad thing. This is a step in the right direction.

They're not avoiding anymore. They're actually facing their thoughts and feelings.

And now that they're actually allowing themselves to be aware of them, are actually letting the thoughts and feelings surface, they can finally do something to resolve them.

Them feeling worse doesn't mean something has gone wrong. It means they're doing something right.

They're not avoiding, ignoring, or escaping anymore.

And yes, it might be uncomfortable at first. They might be faced with thoughts they didn't want to admit to, or thoughts they're not proud of, or thoughts that upset them. They might be faced with emotions they'd been suppressing.

And if there's been a lot of ignoring and avoiding, or they've been doing it a long time, there's going to be a lot that comes up.

And this is okay. They can work through all of it.

They can resolve all of it.

And, having gone through the discomfort, and working on resolving their thoughts and feelings, will not only result in less discomfort overall, since they won't just keep coming back, but they'll also be building the skill of handling thoughts and feelings rather than eating to avoid them.

So yes, it might be uncomfortable at first, but it's discomfort that will result in growth and improvement.

I've worked with people before that are resistant to writing down their thoughts and uncovering what's going on in their head because they don't want to see it.

But if you don't see it, and you just keep avoiding it, it's going to continue affecting you.

If you avoid it, it will keep coming back and you'll keep eating to avoid. So that will create a different kind of discomfort that's going to keep repeating.

It's kinda like having a messy pile of stuff in your home. Yes it will be uncomfortable to go through it, sort it, organize it, whatever you need to do but, it's also going to be uncomfortable in a different way, and for longer, if you keep seeing it there and keep thinking about how you want it gone and cleaned up.

The discomfort of tackling something that needs to be tackled is a good thing. You're progressing.

And with emotions, when you finally allow yourself to feel the emotions you feel, you might feel a lot them that you hadn't been allowing yourself to feel. So you might feel a lot or frequent discomfort. But it's just because you're allowing them rather than pushing them down.

And this is a good thing because when you allow yourself to feel your feelings, you're taking the first step toward taking care of your feelings. You're acknowledging them, and they so badly want to be acknowledged.

And then once you've acknowledged them, you can understand where they're coming from, why you're feeling them, and process them.

You can't do that if you just ignore them. Nothing will be resolved through avoiding.

So yes it might seem like you're feeling more negative emotions but really, you're feeling the same amount as before, you're just actually allowing them to be felt.

So that's the emotional side of the things getting worse that you might experience.

But some people might also experience their eating getting worse at first.

They might be eating more than they were before, maybe even bingeing more.

Of course if you're trying to stop binge eating and you see yourself bingeing more, you're going to think it's not working or you're doing it wrong.

But here's what really might be happening.

One possibility is that because they're allowing themselves to feel and think more, they become overwhelmed and eat more. And if this happens to you, it's important that you're not just allowing

yourself to feel all the feelings but are actually working through them so they don't all just build up and become overwhelming.

And here's another reason why more eating might happen.

One of the things that needs to happen for you to stop binge eating is that you stop overly restricting your food and allow yourself to eat the foods you want to eat.

When people do that, one of two things might happen.

They might get really excited about their new-found freedom and take full advantage and eat and eat all the foods they hadn't been allowing.

And this is a normal reaction to prolonged restriction. It's normal to want a lot of what you've been wanting but haven't been allowed. It's normal to want all the things you haven't been allowed.

For a lot of people, this is a normal part of the process when you first start allowing all that you hadn't been allowing. You want a lot of it.

Nothing has gone wrong, you're having a normal reaction.

And what usually happens is that after a bit of time, the newness wears off, the novelty of eating these foods wears off, and that desire to eat them, and eat a lot, decreases.

The eating becomes more before it becomes less.

So if this happens to you, don't freak out. Trust the process.

Now, there's something else that people sometimes do that can also cause more eating.

When they first allow themselves to eat the foods they've been denying themselves of, they're not entirely allowing.

They're allowing themselves to eat the food but, they're not entirely mentally allowing it.

They're telling themselves that they shouldn't or that they're doing something wrong.

And they feel guilty about what they're eating.

So this can actually cause them to feel worse emotionally *and* eat more.

They're taking a step in the right direction by allowing themselves to eat the food but, haven't removed the guilt.

And that guilt might drive them to eat more. It might lead them into all-or-nothing thinking because they think they're doing something wrong by eating the food.

If this happens to you, you don't have to make it mean that something has gone wrong.

It's just bringing up something up that needs to be worked on.

Sometimes we feel worse and eat more when new things come up as we're going through this process.

We're doing well, we're doing what is right, but we're not doing it entirely right and we still need to work on something else.

And in this case, you're eating the foods which is a good thing but, you're not fully allowing.

And that's okay. You've taken step one, and step one might look like regression but it's actually not.

You needed to take step one in order to find step two.

You took step one, realized that you needed to do something more once you weren't getting the results you expected, and then found your next step.

So sometimes things get worse because you just haven't incorporated all that needs to be incorporated.

And that doesn't discount what you have done.

It's like when people are trying to lose weight and they're doing these helpful things with their thinking and their eating but haven't lost weight.

That doesn't mean that what they're doing isn't working. What they're doing is so important, it's foundational stuff, and it's an important part of the process. It just means they need to do something more.

So if you're doing something that you know is an important part of the process, and your feelings or eating gets worse, don't quit.

What you're doing is helpful, but you might need to do something else to get the result you're wanting.

It's going to be step by step. Allow each component of this work to build on each other.

So, when things get worse for you, it just might mean that you're on the right track.

Now, I do have to say though, sometimes things get worse but don't get better and if that's the case, it's either because what you're doing isn't something that will help you to stop binge eating or because you're not finding the next thing that needs to be worked on.

So for example, you might be eating the food you hadn't allowed, are eating way too much of it, and aren't investigating why and aren't finding the next thing you need to work on.

Or you're feeling your feelings but aren't processing and resolving them, you're just letting them go on and on.

You gotta keep taking the next steps if you want it to get better.

And if you're in that place and don't know what the next step is for you, I got you.

I can help you with that in The Stop Binge Eating Program. Come work with me on this if you're feeling stuck. I'll help you get unstuck.

Again, you can register at coachkir.com/group and the deadline to register for this round is December 18th of 2025 at 12pm ET.

Alright, so I hope this has helped you to relieve some panic or fear or worry if you start to feel or eat worse during this process, especially at the beginning. This just might be part of your process. So stay committed and keep going.

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