

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #390: After You Binged – What You Should Do With The Foods You Binged On

Hello! After you binge, if you have food leftover, your first thought might be to throw away the food.

It might be because you're so sick of the food that you want it out of your sight.

It might be because you're afraid that if you keep it then you'll binge on it again later or the next day.

Or it might be because tomorrow, and for the foreseeable future, you won't be allowing yourself to eat any of those foods or foods like it. You are cutting them out so you want to get rid of them.

And if there isn't any food leftover, you might decide that you are not buying it again.

I reacted that way pretty much every single time.

I'd swear-off the foods I binged on. I'd swear I'd be good tomorrow and would only eat healthy foods that I wasn't going to binge on. And I would throw away whatever was leftover after the binge.

And I did this in part because I was blaming the food.

I blamed the foods tasting so good for my binge.

I thought the food was the problem so I thought if I didn't have it around, I wouldn't binge.

Now, obviously, I was incorrect because I could, and did just find other foods to binge on.

Getting rid of and cutting out those foods didn't solve the problem for me.

Because, the food wasn't the problem.

Also, getting rid of and cutting out those foods actually perpetuated my bingeing because the way I was thinking about the food and not eating the food put me into being overly restrictive, which is one of the main causes of binge urges.

You cut out the foods because you think you have to, then you miss them, you feel deprived and restricted, over time your desire for them grows, you get tired of forcing yourself to say no to yourself, so you start urging for them and at some point you break, you rebel against this rule you put on yourself, and you binge on those foods, and maybe other foods, especially if you're telling yourself that they will be forbidden again after this.

So I saw the food as the problem, that's why I wanted to eliminate it, but I did also see myself as the problem.

I believed I just couldn't control myself around those foods.

I thought there was something wrong with me because I just couldn't eat those foods without bingeing.

Except, sometimes I did eat them without bingeing. There were many times when I would buy something like a tub of ice cream or a bag of cookies, and I *would* eat moderate amounts for a couple days but *then* would binge on it. So my actual belief was that I couldn't sustain not bingeing on them.

But even that way of thinking about myself still put blame on the food.

So rather than working on not feeling out of control with those foods, which I didn't even know was an option, I'd just think that this is how I am and so I need to remove the food.

So I'd get rid of the food and nothing would change.

I wouldn't change. My behavior wouldn't change.

At some point, I would buy the food again, hoping I wouldn't binge but deep down believed that I would, and then either right away after buying it or a few days later I'd eat it, feel out of control, binge again, throw it away and not allow myself to buy it again, and the cycle would repeat.

The thing is, even though I threw it away if there was any left and I told myself I wouldn't buy it again, at some point I always did.

I did because I enjoyed that food. Or, at least I thought I did. After I stopped binge eating I actually learned that so many of the foods I binged on weren't actually that good and I don't buy them anymore because I genuinely don't care to, since I don't like them very much.

But also, after a period of not allowing myself to buy those foods, or foods like them, and trying to mostly eat only healthy foods, at some point I'd feel an urge to eat something unhealthy. I'd be tired of forcing myself to not eat those kinds of foods because I really did want to eat them sometimes. So at some point I'd get tired of denying myself and go buy them and just go all in on what I'd been denied of.

Or, it wasn't always a restriction thing. Sometimes it was an emotional thing. I'd feel bored or nervous or stressed or lonely and I'd just say screw it and go buy those foods to feel better.

So, here's what I want you to know.

If after you binge you want to throw away the food and not buy it anymore, that is an option that you can choose.

If that's what you feel most comfortable doing right now, and if you don't feel ready to keep those foods around, you can do that.

But, unless you are 100% committed to never, ever eating that food again, that isn't going to be your permanent solution.

If you're not committed to never eating it ever again, it can be your temporary solution for now if you choose it to be. But if you do, you must make sure you are not mentally being overly restrictive and I'll talk more on that a little later.

But at some point, if you do want to eat it again, you'll need to work on your relationship with it, work on your thoughts about it, your thoughts while you're eating it, work on handling your emotions differently if emotional eating is a problem for you, basically you'll need to work on whatever it is that is causing you to feel urges to binge on that food.

Again, if you don't want to do this work right now, that's okay. You don't have to.

But if you don't, you won't grow, you won't change your relationship with this food, and if you do eat it again you will likely repeat the same behaviors as before.

So if you're deciding you want to not eat it again, please take all of this into consideration.

And if you're deciding that you do want to do the work and change your relationship with this food, I'm going to go through my recommendations for doing that.

My first tip is probably going to be the complete opposite of what you think you should do.

It's to not throw the food away and to buy the food again.

If I ever notice that I'm overeating a certain food, am thinking about it a lot, or am wanting it a lot, I bring it in.

I actually did that with tortilla chips not that long ago.

My boyfriend would buy them all the time and before he moved into my place, I would only eat them at his house. And when I did, I felt myself wanting to eat them fast and wanting to overeat them.

After noticing this several times, I decided I wanted to buy them myself and work on this. So I did. And now, it's not the same as it was. I don't feel the same way as I used to when I'd eat them.

And that wouldn't have changed had I not bought them and eaten them and worked on myself.

I remember telling my clients about them and how they were the one food at the time that I had an issue with.

And now, I don't talk about them that way anymore because they're not an issue anymore, because I worked on my relationship with them and worked on my desire to quickly eat a lot of them, by incorporating the tips I'm sharing with you right now.

And that's another tip. To work on the story you tell about those foods.

I work with my clients on this all the time.

They talk about certain foods being binge foods, bad foods, dangerous, a slippery slope, their enemy, or the bane of their existence. Or even just call them a problem.

They tell the story of how many times they've binged on those foods and that they're probably going to binge on them again.

They talk about how out of control they are around those foods.

The way they are talking about these foods makes them feel nervous, scared, anxious, panicked, powerless, feelings like that.

And it's not going to be useful to feel that way about these foods that you like and want to eat.

Think about how you eat when you feel nervous, scared, anxious, or panicked. I bet not very calmly. It's more likely going to be fast, mindless, and not thoughtful.

Think about how you eat when you feel powerless. You don't even try to stop, or control yourself, because you don't think you can.

Part of the reason why you do overeat or binge on those foods is because of the feelings you're feeling when you're around them. And you feel those feelings because of how you're thinking about those foods or about yourself with those foods.

So take some time to write down every thought you have about the food, about you eating the food, and about yourself with the food.

Observe the story you're telling and notice how that story makes you feel.

And know that you don't have to tell that story.

That is not the only version available to you.

Here are some other options, just to give you ideas.

It's a delicious food.

It's a food I really like.

There was at least one time that I didn't binge on that food.

I have felt in control while eating that food at least one time.

I have binged on it in the past but I'm working on not bingeing on it.

I have binged on it in the past but here is what I'm going to do to prevent bingeing on them again.

Notice the difference in how those thoughts feel. And also notice that I'm not telling a story of complete triumph and confidence. I'm just finding what's true that is more positive or more encouraging.

And that's what I want you to do. Find your successes, your wins, even if there was just one. You can tell the story of that one. You don't have to keep telling the story of the fails.

It's like if you won an award or competition after not winning so many times. You don't have to talk about all the times you lost. You can talk about that one time you won, and it will feel so much better if you do.

And rather than being pessimistic about the future with the food, you can choose to be optimistic. But it's going to be hard to do that if you have no idea how to change or what you can do and if that's the case, go find something in any of the other podcast episodes or you can come work with me in The Stop Binge Eating Program and I'll personally help you figure it out.

But when you do know what you can do, and you have at least one idea, one strategy you can work on, one tool you can implement, then you can choose to be optimistic about what you're going to do and the changes you're going to make.

Because, you *can* make change.

So if you work on what you're telling yourself, what you're thinking, you will feel and act differently with the food.

The next tip I want to offer is to be more mindful when you're eating that food.

What that means is that you're not eating it while distracted. You're giving the food your full attention. You're savoring it. You're actually experiencing it.

So often, one of the reasons why we overeat is because we're not paying attention to the food. We portion some out, watch or read something while we're eating so we're not even really tasting or experiencing the food, and when the portion is gone, we're like, "Where did it go? I barely got

anything from that.” And then we eat more while not paying attention and the same thing happens again.

Or we’re just eating out of the bag, box, or container doing the same thing.

The problem here is that if you don’t actually pay attention to it and really experience it, you’re likely not going to feel much satisfaction.

It’s like if you’re on a trip and you’re on your phone and aren’t paying attention to the place you’re visiting and aren’t taking it in, you’re probably not going to be very satisfied at the end, and you’ll want to stay longer so you can try and get the satisfaction you missed out on.

But if you do savor it and take it in and give it your attention, you’re going to get so much more pleasure and enjoyment and satisfaction, which will make it easier to move on once it’s over.

That’s what can happen with the food.

The more attention you give it, the more pleasure you’ll get from it, the better of an experience you’ll get, and the sooner you’ll be satisfied.

I’ve done tons of eating workshops with my groups and so many times the people doing them have experienced this. They watch themselves be satisfied with less than they thought they could be satisfied with. And it’s because they were being so mindful while eating.

And I myself notice this too. When I eat joy foods and treats and snacks without distractions, I’m so much more satisfied than when I eat them distractedly.

So after you’ve changed how you’re talking to yourself about the food, and you’re eating it again, be as mindful as you can be. Give it all of your attention. It is very likely you will notice a big difference in how much of it you eat.

And the last tip I want to share is to make sure you’re truly allowing the food.

This is something I talked about in depth in Episode #388 if you haven’t listened to it yet. It’s called, “How To Give Yourself Unconditional Permission to Eat What You Want and Not Binge.”

But basically, you have to make sure you’re not just physically allowing yourself to eat the food but that you’re also mentally allowing it.

If you’re eating it while telling yourself that you shouldn’t, or that this is a bad food, or that you’re doing something wrong or bad, you’re not going to feel good about eating it. Guilt is likely the feeling that you’ll be feeling.

And just like I talked about earlier with how you eat when feeling those other feelings I was taking about, you’re probably not going to be eating how you want to when you feel guilty.

Guilt is feeling that commonly drives overeating and binge eating. This is because it leads to all or nothing, perfectionist thinking where you think you’re doing something bad, so you might as well keep

being bad and you'll be good tomorrow...good usually meaning that you're going to restrict any unhealthy foods.

You're eating this food and you think you've ruined your perfect eating day so you might as well just keep eating and you'll eat perfectly tomorrow.

But if you aren't thinking that way, because you aren't feeling guilty, because you aren't telling yourself that you're doing something wrong by eating that delicious food, because you're truly allowing yourself to eat it, then you'll be much more likely to not overeat or binge on it.

So if you're going to eat it, really, truly allow yourself to eat it in your mind. Give yourself permission to eat it and to enjoy it.

And going back to what I talked about at the beginning about if you do choose to take a break from eating certain foods, even if you've chosen the option of taking a break, and you're choosing to not eat a certain food, or certain foods for a period of time, you are *still* going to allow yourself to eat them. It is so important that you do this because if you don't, you'll be moving into overly restrictive territory which is going to create that cycle I talked about earlier where you tell yourself you can't have them, you restrict them for awhile, then you urge for them and binge on them and then cut them out again, telling yourself you can't have them.

Allowing the foods when you're taking a break from them means you're not telling yourself you can't buy them, or that you're not allowed to eat them. Or that you shouldn't.

You're telling yourself that you absolutely can but, you're choosing not to.

So rather than making yourself feel restricted, you're making yourself feel empowered because it's your choice, not something you have to do.

You don't have to cut out the foods, no one is forcing you to and it's not your only option. If you're doing it, it's because you're choosing to. Be honest with yourself about that because it's going to feel so differently. You will feel so much more at peace with your decision to not eat them if you are seeing it as your choice and if you love your reasons for doing it.

So, those are the tips I have for you if you do choose to keep the food around, not throw it away, and buy it again.

Know that you do have a choice here, and as I've said but want to repeat, if you don't want to do the work or don't feel ready for it, you don't have to do it.

But if you do want to and do feel ready, you *can* change your relationship with the food and can eat it differently.

You really can.

So make your decision, commit to it, and if you're choosing to do the work, please make sure you aren't hard on yourself and don't give up if you're not perfect at it. You're not supposed to be perfect right away, or ever really. So be willing to not be perfect at this.

Also remember that this is a process, change takes time, and if you do binge or overeat, you are going to take the time to reflect and learn something from it. It can highlight what you need to work on and you can gain valuable information from it. You can even consider the tips I shared as a guideline and see if you weren't doing any of them. And if you weren't you can get to work on doing them so you can improve moving forward.

Alright, that's what I have for you today, I hope you've gained some clarity about what you want to do with the foods you've binged after you've binged on them, and I'll talk to you next time, bye bye!