

# THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Ep #392: Why You're Too Restrictive With Food and How To Make It Easier For You To Stop

Hello! I just want to give you a head's up real quick that registration for the next round of The Stop Binge Eating Program will be opening in one month, on March 4<sup>th</sup> of 2026.

For so many people, the reason they don't stop binge eating isn't because they don't have enough knowledge. It's because they aren't getting help when they need help, and I get it. I'm so that person that will try to do it on their own for a long time but at some point, if the progress isn't happening, it's so important that we admit that we need help, and that we get it.

So that's what I'm offering here – my help.

If you want it, come and get it.

As I said, registration will open on March 4<sup>th</sup> but, you can get on the waitlist now by going to [coachkir.com/group](http://coachkir.com/group) and if you're on the waitlist, you will get notified via email as soon as registration opens so you can get signed up ASAP and get started on the coursework right away.

There is a lot of info about the program on that webpage but if you have any questions that aren't answered there, you can email them to [info@coachkir.com](mailto:info@coachkir.com).

Doing this work while in the program can help you to stay motivated and committed, and if you ever feel stuck, or lost, or frustrated, or doubtful, I will be there to help you overcome that.

You don't have to figure this all out on your own. Let's do it together, as a team. Me and you, along with a very supportive community of other people who are just like you.

Alright, now let's get into today's topic – why you're too restrictive with food and how to make it easier for you to stop being so restrictive.

Being too restrictive with food is one of the main causes of binge eating. Using food to control your emotions is the other main cause, and while a lot of people experience both as their reason for why they binge, and some people binge only because of the emotional reason, I would say that most people binge because they're too restrictive with food.

What being too restrictive means is that either you're physically depriving your body or you're mentally depriving yourself.

Physically depriving your body means that you're under eating. You're not giving your body the fuel it requires. You're too often not eating when you're hungry.

And when you under eat too often, and ignore your hunger too often, your brain gets concerned about your survival and urges you to eat. But it's likely going to urge you to eat a lot because it wants to make up for all the fuel it's been needing but hasn't been receiving and it might also be anticipating future under eating, if this has been a pattern, so it wants to prepare by urging you to eat a lot, to binge.

Mentally depriving yourself means that you're not allowing yourself to eat the foods you want to be eating. You too often tell yourself no, that you can't eat whatever it is you're wanting, you shouldn't, or you have to eat something else. You deny yourself of what you want, likely because you think it's bad or that you shouldn't eat it because it's unhealthy, and force yourself to only eat the healthy, nutritious foods.

But after doing this for awhile, you might get tired of it. You're tired of being denied what you want, tired of feeling restricted, deprived, or even resentful. So you start to urge for freedom to eat what you want. You urge to eat what you've been denying yourself of. And you urge to eat a lot of it, which is a normal reaction to feel restricted. When you finally get to have what you haven't been allowed to have for so long, you want a lot of it.

But also, if you're telling yourself that the foods will be restricted again tomorrow, and you won't eat them again for a long time, or ever, you're going to want to eat as much as you can while you can. So you give in to that urge to finally, freely eat what you want, and as much as you want, and you're reacting to having been restricted and/or future restriction, and you binge.

So that's how being too restrictive with food can lead to binge eating. The deprivation causes urges to binge, then you give in to those urges and you binge.

But, why do you overly restrict your food?

If you're going to stop doing it, so you can stop creating those urges to binge, it would be really helpful to understand why you're doing it, what's behind it.

Because if you don't address the underlying reason why, it can make it really hard to stop being too restrictive.

And the simple answer is because you're trying to control your weight.

You're either trying to lose weight or you're trying to not gain weight.

Now, I have to say right up front that I am not against either of those and that they in themselves are not fully the problem.

There's more to this.

Because you can want to lose weight, and do it without getting into overly restrictive territory, and get to a healthy weight, and there's no bingeing and no problem.

You can also want to not gain weight, and make eating decisions that align with maintenance, and maintain without bingeing.

But, for a lot of people, it doesn't look like that and it's because of how they were taught to lose weight, because they are in a hurry to lose weight, or because they are fearful of gaining weight.

So let's talk about each of those, starting with how we are taught to lose weight.

Most diets for weight loss teach you to be overly restrictive. They tell you that you can't eat certain foods if you want to lose weight, that you can't eat more than x number of calories or points, or that you shouldn't eat at certain times of day.

But then what happens when you're hungrier one day, and you've already hit your calorie goal? Or what if in general, you're always feeling physically hungry after you've hit your calorie goal for the day? Do you think you should just ignore your hunger because the diet or whatever method you're following told you to?

Honestly, I wouldn't recommend it because that's likely going to lead you to feeling those physical deprivation urges I was talking about before.

So many people do that. They don't allow themselves to eat past their calorie or points goal, even if their body is telling them it's hungry and needs fuel, and then their hunger gets more intense, they think about food more, and eventually, that increased, strong hunger drives them to eat a lot of food, ravenously, quickly, and they binge.

And the same can happen when you don't allow yourself to eat during certain times, even if you're physically hungry. You're denying your body and when you do that, it will urge you to take care of it.

And what happens when you are told that you can't eat foods that you love? Have you ever binged the day before starting a diet because this is your last chance to eat those foods before you're not allowed to anymore? Or like I talked about before, have you ever binged on food you haven't been allowed to eat for such a long time?

We take on these rules that we're taught that we need to follow for weight loss and even though the rules might make sense, they're just not going to be the best method for most people.

Yes they may work for some time but eventually, one of the two kinds of deprivation will cause a binge eating reaction.

Ignoring hunger and denying yourself of the foods you like isn't sustainable.

So what you think you need to do to lose weight, can actually cause you to feel urges to binge eat.

You might think that being overly restrictive with your food will help you to lose weight, and lose weight fast, but the whole story needs to be taken into account here. Even if you do lose, bingeing could begin, making it hard for you to maintain any loss and it could also cause you to gain back what you've lost.

So if you do have a desire to lose weight, being overly restrictive with food, cutting out foods from your life, and ignoring hunger is not the way to do it.

And it's *not* the only way.

Toward the end of my program, and in my post-program membership I do work with people on losing weight after stopping binge eating in way that's not going to re-start their bingeing. And it's so much more gentler than what most diets teach, which means it's so much more sustainable, easier, and feels so much better because it doesn't include such strong feelings of being restricted, deprived, or resentful.

You don't have to make big changes and ignore your body. Small changes and taking care of your body can do it.

Now let's talk about being afraid to gain weight.

Like I said before, I totally understand not wanting to gain weight and wanting to maintain your weight.

But there's a difference between wanting to not gain and fearing gaining.

You can want to not gain and it can be coming from a calm place. So you're not obsessing about it, or hyper-focused on it, you're relaxed about what you eat, and you don't make a big deal about it if you do gain some weight. You simply just make a small change to how you're eating to lose the weight you gained.

But if you're fearful of gaining weight, it's going to look very different. You *are* going to obsess about it, be hyper-focused on it, you're going to be overly restrictive because you're afraid to not be so controlled with your food, because you're afraid that one mistake with food could lead to weight gain, and if you do gain any weight, you jump into excessive restriction to get it off as quickly as possible.

It's the fear that drives the excessive restriction.

And like I talked about with the weight loss stuff, that excessive restriction can lead to bingeing, which could lead to more weight gain or it could just make it really hard to lose that weight.

And this is such a common thing for people to do after they binge because they're afraid that the binge will cause them to gain weight. They immediately go into overly-restrictive mode to try and make up for what they ate in the binge and the cycle of restrict too much, eat too much, restrict too much, eat too much carries on.

So being in that fearful place likely isn't going to help you do what you're wanting to do.

So now, let's take each of these another step further.

Some people, even though they *know* what being overly restrictive will do, they are aware of the whole story beyond that initial weight loss, and how it can cause them to feel deprived and feel urges to binge, they still do it, because they see it as a way to lose weight quickly. They don't want to do the slower, more sustainable way. They just want to lose the weight and they might think that they'll be okay, and get can get through the deprivation with willpower, and that maybe they'll get to their goal before those urges to binge show up, and after they do get to their goal weight, they'll learn how to eat those foods in moderation.

For most people, that is not how it goes.

But why do they try to do it anyway?

It's because they are in such a hurry to feel better.

They want to feel better about themselves and better about their body, now.

Of course a lot of people also experience physical discomfort, and maybe pain, due to the excess weight, but for a lot of people, it's their thoughts and feelings that they want to change the most.

And they want them changed yesterday.

It's this hurry, this desperation, that's driving them to go overboard with the restrictions to lose the weight quickly.

And the hurry and desperation is coming from a desire to think and feel differently.

They think that once they reach their goal weight, then they will like their body more, they will like themselves more, and they will emotionally feel better.

But unfortunately, that's not always what happens.

Sometimes people get to their goal weight, and they still don't feel better emotionally. They still aren't happy with their body. They don't like themselves more.

Of course there are also times when people do but, it's still important to understand why they do.

And it's not just because their body is smaller. Again, if a smaller body equals better thoughts and feelings, everyone would experience it, and they don't.

And why? It's because the size of your body isn't the reason why you feel how you feel. What you're thinking is the reason why you feel how you feel. And your body doesn't determine what you think. You do.

You can change your body but if you don't change your self-talk and what you tell yourself about yourself and about your body, then you aren't going to feel better.

But, there is good news in this. This also means that you can feel better without changing your body at all.

You can change how you talk to yourself about yourself and about your body now. You can feel better emotionally now.

You don't have to speak and think so negatively about yourself and your body, it's completely optional.

And before you try to tell me that thinking positively isn't realistic, I wasn't going to tell you to be positive.

I'm suggesting that you are simply more neutral, and less negative.

Neutral feels better than negative.

So if you aim to think and feel more neutral, you will feel better now.

And if you are thinking and feeling more neutrally, and you aren't feeling so negatively about yourself and your body, then you won't be in such a hurry to lose weight. It will be so much easier for you to be more relaxed, and patient, and for you to be more willing to stop with the excessive restriction, so you can stop feeling urges to binge eat, and you can stop your binge eating and *then* work on weight loss in a more sustainable way.

You don't have to drastically change how you're eating to quickly change your body so you can feel better.

You can feel better now...by not being so mean to yourself and your body with your self-talk.

You don't have to use words like disgusting, gross, or ugly, to describe your body.

You don't have to use words like lazy, failure, or loser to describe yourself.

How bad does it feel to think that way about yourself? To talk to yourself that way? If you're thinking that way, of course you're going to feel bad.

But there are so many words you can use, words that are way more neutral, that won't feel so bad.

And if you don't know what those words are, I'm gonna challenge you on that.

If your favorite person in the world had the same body as yourself, what would you say to them if you were to describe their body, or if you were to describe them?

I bet whatever you'd say would be more neutral.

Whatever words you'd use for them, you can use for you too.

You can talk about your body by simply saying it's a human body, or it's okay, or it's a body, or it's a resilient body, there are options.

You can talk about yourself by simply saying things like, I'm a good person, I'm someone who is learning to take better care of their body, I'm working on stopping binge eating, I've had a hard time with not eating too much food, something more compassionate, or encouraging, or kind.

And again, the whole purpose of changing this self-talk into something more neutral is so that you can feel better now, so you're not rushing to change your body to feel better, which might not even work. You don't have to be in a hurry to change your body so you can feel better. You can change your self-talk right now to feel better.

And *again*, then you can be more patient and go through this whole process of stopping binge eating, before losing weight in a sustainable way.

Now we're gonna take the weight gain topic a step further.

Why might you be so fearful of weight gain?

Yes you don't want to be physically uncomfortable but just like with the weight loss, it's usually something more than that for people who are *fearful* of gaining weight.

And they're fearful because of what they make gaining weight mean about them.

If they gain weight, they will make it mean that they're out of control, lazy, disgusting, a failure, such negative things about themselves and who they are as a person.

And they don't want to become a person who is out of control, lazy, disgusting, or a failure.

They're so afraid of gaining weight because they're so afraid of becoming those and they see them as totally connected.

And I totally understand why people think that way. Our society has ingrained so much of that into us. Our society has such negative associations for when people gain weight.

So it makes sense that we've internalized it.

But we don't have to follow along with that way of thinking.

We don't have to make weight gain mean that for us, because it doesn't.

You are not a worse person because you've gained weight.

Gaining weight doesn't all of the sudden make you a person who has all these negative qualities.

When you gain weight, here's what it really means.

You ate more food than your body required for fuel.

That's it.

It doesn't mean anything about you as a person.

Now, you might want to attack yourself for *why* you ate more food than your body required for fuel but *do not do that*.

It is not at all useful to do that.

What is useful is to just have an understanding for why.

You were binge eating and didn't know how to stop.

You didn't know how else to handle your emotions.

You were trying to lose weight by going on an overly restrictive diet, like you and so many of us have been taught to do, thinking it would work, but it didn't, and you started feeling urges to binge.

You were just having fun and weren't caring about what you ate.

Notice how these reasons are so much less emotional and they're not a personal attack on you as a person. They're just what happened. You don't have to add anything to them that makes you into a bad person.

You're not a bad person. You're a person that was trying their best, or who was doing what they thought was the right thing at the time, or was doing what they wanted to do at the time, and it resulted in weight gain.

Stop making it mean more than that.

Because, when you don't attach weight gain to such negative things about yourself, then you won't be so afraid of it.

And if you're not so afraid of it, then you won't be so obsessed with it, and won't be so restrictive with food to try and avoid it.

That's why you see people that are so relaxed about the possibility of gaining weight. They're not making it mean so much about them. If they gain, they don't make it mean anything negative about themselves, and so they'll just make a small change or two to get back to where they were. Not that big of a deal.

While others, make it mean so much, so they try too hard to avoid it.

So, let's recap all this.

If you are too restrictive with food, whether it's by under eating or by not allowing yourself to eat foods you want to eat, you can cause yourself to feel urges to binge eat.

You overly restrict because you're trying to lose weight and either it's the only way you know how to do it or you're in a hurry to do it.

Or you overly restrict because you're fearful of gaining weight.

So if you want to stop all of this, you're going to stop making you in a smaller or bigger body mean so much about you as a person or about your body itself.

Your words matter. How you talk about yourself and your body matter.

The more neutral you are with talking about your body, at any size, the easier it will be for you to be more relaxed with food.

And if you don't change how you talk about yourself if you gain weight, if you talk about yourself the same way you do when you are a smaller size, you will be more relaxed with food.

And to be clear, relaxed doesn't mean you don't care. It just means you're not so obsessive, and aren't trying so hard to control your food, and essentially your body.

And from that place, you will feel so much better both mentally and emotionally *and* it will make it so much easier for you to stop binge eating.

More relaxed is the way my friends.

So, I hope that gave you more understanding into excessive restriction, why it's important to stop it and how you can make it easier for you to stop it, and if you want help with doing anything I talked about in this episode today, come work with me in my program.

I'm not going to say that changing how you think about yourself, or your body, or weight gain, or anything I talked about today is easy. It can be challenging. But it can be easier if you have an experienced coach, such as myself, who has worked with so many people on this exact thing, to help you.

So we can work on this together, I can guide you through it, I can help you with whatever parts are hard for you.

Again, registration for the next round of the Stop Binge Eating Program will be opening on March 4<sup>th</sup> of 2026 and you can join the waitlist now by going to [coachkir.com/group](https://coachkir.com/group) and you'll want to join that waitlist so you can get notified via email as soon as registration opens so you can register and get started on the coursework right away, before the program officially begins.

Alright, if you have any questions, please email [info@coachkir.com](mailto:info@coachkir.com) otherwise, I will talk to you next time. Bye bye.