

# THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Ep #400: How to Stop Binge Eating and...I'm taking a break from the podcast

Hello. I have an announcement.

I am taking a break from recording this podcast.

I've been thinking a lot about how I spend my time in my business and have been assessing what things I want to do more of, what things I want to do that I haven't been able to make time to do, and what I want to let go of to make more time for those things.

And so I've decided that one of the changes I want to make is to take a break from doing this podcast.

I don't know what that means right now, whether it means I will create more episodes in the future, or if I do, when that would happen, or if I won't. So that's why I'm keeping the option open and looking at this as a break.

And I really feel okay about doing this because in 400 episodes, I have shared A LOT of information, tips, tools, and strategies to help you stop binge eating and I hope I've given you lots of understanding of yourself, why you do what you do, and what you can do differently.

I am really proud of the work I've done in this podcast and believe I have created an extremely valuable and helpful library of episodes.

And I'm also okay with this because this is not at all the only way I help people to stop binge eating, and not the only free way either.

I am not stopping coaching. I will still be offering coaching programs and I'm actually planning to make changes to the program that I offer which I'm really excited about because I think it will greatly benefit both you and I so keep an eye out for that in the coming months.

I'll also still continue to offer free resources like the free coaching I did a few weeks ago, free trainings and classes, weekly coaching emails, you can also find me on social media, and I'll link my Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok in the show notes so you can follow me on your favorite platform.

And you should also stay subscribed or following this podcast as I'm planning to share updates here when I have something to share, such as info about the free stuff and the paid program.

So, this isn't the end for you and I. I will still be your coach, just in different formats, and I'm not taking any of this podcast away so I encourage you to go back and re-listen. You might hear something you forgot, or hear something differently because you're in a different place, or hear something you didn't hear the first time.

So, that's my update, and I'm really looking forward to what I'll be offering in the future and the changes I'll be making. Like I said, I really do believe it's going to benefit us both.

Now, I didn't want to just do an episode where I say "goodbye for now" and that's it.

I thought a great topic for this episode would be to give you a guide for stopping binge eating.

I want to give you the basics, and then of course you can go more in depth with anything I'm talking about today in the other episodes in the podcast.

People sometimes ask the big question: "How do I stop binge eating?" and if I could answer that question fully in just one episode, then I wouldn't have been able to create 400 episodes of this podcast. So there's a lot that could be said to answer that question but today, as I said, I'm going to give you the basics.

Starting with the most simple answer for why you binge eat.

You do it because you feel urges to binge eat.

That's the main difference, on the surface, between people who binge and people who don't.

People who don't binge eat don't feel urges to do it, so they don't feel driven to do it.

People who do binge eat do.

So why do you feel urges to binge eat?

You feel them for one of two reasons, or both. For a lot of people it's both.

You're too restrictive with food or you use food to control your emotions. So I'm going to talk about each, and I'll start with restriction.

There's two ways you could be too restrictive.

One is with the amount you're eating and the other is with what you're eating.

When we're talking about fueling your body, the amount you're eating can be too restrictive if you're not eating enough. So you're ignoring hunger and not eating when you're hungry. Or you're stopping eating before you feel full, and maybe even when you still feel a little hungry.

And you're likely doing this because you're trying to control your weight. You're trying to lose weight or are trying to not gain weight. You think that if you do eat when you're hungry and stop when you feel full that you won't lose or will gain weight.

And if that's what you think, you are not alone. So many of us believe that because of things we've been taught about weight loss. But also, we think that because we don't trust our bodies.

We think it's going to ask for food too much, or ask for too much of it.

So people think that's why they've gained weight in the past.

But here's what they're usually missing.

It wasn't eating when they were hungry and stopping when they were full that caused the weight gain.

It was too often eating when they weren't hungry and eating past full that did it.

It was eating more than what their body asked for too often.

The problem isn't us following our body's signals, it's us eating beyond them too much.

And, the problem is also ignoring those signals, especially the hunger one, because when you do that too much, your brain doesn't know you're not eating intentionally, so your brain thinks that food is scarce, and it begins to worry about survival. So, it urges you to eat more, to binge. It wants to replenish fuel that it has been lacking and also, it might want to prepare for future scarcity, urging you to eat more so it's okay when there is a lack of fuel again.

So you might think that under eating will help you to control your weight, but your brain is going to do everything it can to get you to eat enough fuel for survival, so it will send those urges until you do.

So then you go back and forth between under eating and bingeing.

So if you want to stop the urges that are a result of under eating, under-fueling, eat when you're hungry, and eat until you feel full.

And if you are someone who has a hard time recognizing their hunger and fullness signals, you are not alone.

So many of us, my past-self included, have ignored them for so long, and have made our eating decisions according to external things like calories or the time of day. We pay more attention to numbers than to our bodies.

So if you want to be more connected to those signals, intentionally look for them. They will be there if you look.

And, they may not be as obvious or strong as you think they should be.

So many people think that fullness is supposed to be like an alarm bell or like a strong sensation but it isn't. It's more subtle than that, and that's why you haven't noticed it when you don't pay attention.

If you're not paying attention, you'll likely not notice the fullness signal until it's at like a 4 out of 5, rather than a 2 out of 5, which is where you'll feel comfortably full. Four is more like extremely full, something you can't ignore, and is very uncomfortable. And if you're wondering about the other numbers on this scale of 5, 0 is not full, 1 is a little full, 2 is comfortably full, 3 is very full, 4 is extremely full, and 5 is stuffed. This is a fullness scale that I like to use with my clients to help them understand the spectrum of fullness signals.

Fullness is a spectrum of intensities and you're going to pay closer attention to where you are on that spectrum as you're eating. And my tip is to start paying attention when you're halfway through your meal. It's likely you won't feel fullness before then so before then, just mindfully enjoy your food. Then you can shift your focus between enjoying the food and checking in with how your body feels.

And you can also use the scale for hunger too, because that is also a spectrum of intensities. 0 is not hungry, 1 is a little hungry, 2 is legit hungry, and a good time to eat, 3 is very hungry, 4 is extremely hungry, and 5 is starving.

Now, as you're starting to pay closer attention to how hungry you feel, you could use the clock as a guide. You probably know when you usually eat, or when you usually feel somewhere on the hunger scale.

At the time when you usually eat, you can check in to see how intense your hunger is.

Or before the time when you usually feel very or extremely hungry, you can check in to see how intense your hunger is. So plan to check in before those times when your hunger is usually intense.

And with both hunger and fullness, the main place you're going to check in with is with your stomach.

There are other signs you may notice too but that's usually the most common place.

And over time, you'll learn what those signals feel like for you, and maybe other signals too.

You're learning, so allow yourself to be a student of your hunger and fullness. You're not going to get it right every time, and that's okay. Just keep practicing.

Now, let's talk about joy eating, eating just for pleasure, which is allowed, food isn't only fuel, it's pleasure too.

With joy eating, you might also be being too restrictive with those amounts too.

You might be forcing yourself to eat smaller amounts that aren't satisfying for you in that moment, because again, you're trying to control your weight. But as time goes on, you might start feeling resentful, restricted, and deprived, and that can cause your desire for satisfaction to build, and you start urging for a satisfying amount because you're so tired of finishing unsatisfied, and when you finally give in to that urge, you eat a lot to try and guarantee satisfaction.

So, similar to the under eating, you think you're helping yourself control your weight but at some point, you feel urges to binge, and you binge.

So you'd be so much better off just eating a satisfying amount now, rather than bingeing on the same amount or more later.

So that's how the amount can be too restrictive, and then there is how *what* you're eating can be too restrictive.

This is the restriction that most people who binge eat fall into.

They restrict themselves from eating certain foods, maybe a lot of different foods.

They don't allow themselves to eat them, they tell themselves they can't, that they shouldn't, and they force themselves to eat other foods, likely healthier foods.

And just like I talked about a moment ago, over time this causes resentment, feeling deprived and restricted, and the longer you deny yourself of those foods you want to eat, the more your desire for them builds. You go from wanting to urging.

And you don't just want some, you want a lot, because that's how we respond to prolonged restriction with anything.

It's like if you weren't allowed to see your favorite person in the world for a long time. When you finally did see them, you'd want to spend *a lot* of time with them.

But with the food, the restriction doesn't usually end there. You allow yourself to finally eat the food but, you tell yourself it's just this one time, that you won't eat it again tomorrow, or for a long time, or ever.

So now, you not only have this built up urging for a lot but, because it's going away again, you want as much of it as you can, while you can. So you're adding to the urgency to eat a lot of it.

That's how being overly restrictive with food can affect you.

You might eliminate those foods because you think it will help you to control your weight, or you think it will stop you from bingeing but, it can actually perpetuate bingeing and make it really hard to control your weight.

And even if you are able to restrict all those foods for an extended time and not binge, it's likely affecting you mentally. This is a main cause of food noise. It can cause you to think about the foods a lot and hyper-focus on them.

So if you experience a lot of food noise, this might be why.

So, if this is the reason why you feel urges to binge, you're going to stop forbidding foods and making them off-limits. You're going to allow them to be in your life. You're going to allow yourself to eat them.

That does not mean you're going to only eat those foods you'd been forbidding, or put zero thought into how foods will affect your body and make you feel, and not care about nutrition.

Of course you're going to be thoughtful about the foods you eat and how much.

But you're also going to give yourself freedom to choose the foods and amounts.

Now, at first you might be choosing more of those previously off-limits foods, and that's okay. It's a normal reaction to having been restricted.

But don't give up on this concept of permission, allowance, and freedom. Don't take it away because you'll end up right back where you were.

Allow yourself to go through the initial reaction, stay in permission, allowance, and freedom, and the deprivation response will subside and you'll feel more relaxed, less urgency, and less desire with those foods.

Going back to the favorite person example I gave, after being allowed to see that person again for some time, you won't feel such a strong urgency to spend a lot of time with them. Knowing you can see them again when you want to, you'll be in a place where sometimes you want to see them, sometimes you won't, and when you do see them, you'll be so much more relaxed about it, see them for a satisfying amount of time, and move on.

That's how it can be with food too once you let go of the restrictions you put on it.

Now, if you feel any resistance to letting go of any of the restrictions I've been talking about, there's two things that can help you to do it.

One is to be honest with yourself about the whole story of overly restricting. Too often, we only tell ourselves the first part, where we feel in control, are maintaining or losing weight, and aren't bingeing.

But you have to acknowledge what happens next because the story doesn't usually end there.

And what happens next, the bingeing, is directly related to the restriction. It's not because you're too weak, or undisciplined, or don't have enough willpower.

It's because those restrictions are causing you to feel urges to binge.

So be honest with yourself about that. In the big picture, it isn't as helpful as you think it is.

The other thing that can help is being more neutral with your body and weight talk.

As I've been saying, these restrictions are usually happening because you're trying to control your weight.

And when you stop being overly restrictive, for some people, they can gain some weight. The amount is different for everyone, and it doesn't happen to everyone, but the possibility is there.

And some of you are so fearful of gaining weight that you aren't willing to take that risk.

So you don't let go of the excessive restrictions and you stay in the restrict/binge cycle.

It's that fear of gaining weight that holds you back.

So, if that's you, why are you so fearful of it?

Now, you might be thinking, "It's normal to not want to gain weight."

But that's not what I'm talking about.

There's a difference between not wanting to gain weight and being fearful of gaining weight.

For me, I would prefer to not gain weight but, because I'm not fearful about the possibility of gaining weight, I am more relaxed about it. I don't obsess about certain foods, I don't obsess about amounts, I don't eliminate foods, and if I do gain weight, which sometimes I do, I don't panic. I just make an adjustment to how I'm eating without drama. It's so much calmer.

But when someone is fearful, it's not like that. They hyper-focus on what could result in weight gain, over-analyze foods and amounts, eliminate foods, get super strict, and if they do gain any weight, they panic and make big changes to their eating to lose the weight as quickly as possible. There's a desperation and urgency that drives them to take drastic measures.

That fear, and all the things I just listed out, can absolutely contribute to binge eating and thinking about food way too much.

So I'll ask you again, why are you *fearful*?

Here's the usual answer for most people.

It's because of what they make gaining weight mean, about their body and about themselves.

They think that if they gain weight then they are less worthy of a person, are lazy, not good enough, undisciplined, unlovable, have no self-control, are just in so many ways a worse person.

So if gaining weight means that, or anything like it, then they're going to go to extremes to not let that happen.

But here's the thing. Weight gain doesn't mean any of that.

You are just as good of a person if you gain weight.

The only thing that weight gain means is that you ate more food than your body required for fuel.

That's it.

And you don't have to attack yourself for why you did that.

You can just understand why.

When I gain weight, it's usually because I wasn't caring about my weight and I was eating for fun too much. I was making food and amount choices that resulted in weight gain. That's it.

For some people it's because they were feeling a lot of emotions and used food to try and feel better.

For some people it's because they were trying to lose weight and didn't know how to do it without overly restricting.

It's just not useful to make it mean more than that, and we don't have to.

And when you don't, when you get more neutral about what weight gain means, you can be more relaxed about it.

That doesn't mean you stop caring, like I said, most of the time I care.

But you'll be taking care of your body and your mind in such a better way.

And that's what will actually help you to get back to where you were with your weight if you do gain.

And that's what will actually help you to maintain your weight sustainably.

Relaxed weight loss is going to be more sustainable than hurried weight loss.

And along with your thoughts about weight gain, the words you use to describe your body matter too.

If you're constantly telling yourself that your body is disgusting, gross, ugly, flabby, words that make you feel bad about it, then it can also cause you to feel that same desperation to change it.

Or, you might think well of your body now but you use those words to describe how your body would be if you gained weight so again, you're fearful of gaining because you don't want your body to be those things.

But it won't be those things. And it isn't now.

Those are not factual words that describe your body.

They are words you are choosing.

The facts are that your body weighs x number of pounds. You could also measure your body and those measurements would be facts.

Another fact is that your body is a human body.

Now, you could also argue that the words overweight or obese are factual.

But here's the thing. You don't *have* to use those words if you don't want to and if they make you feel bad about your body. Plenty of people don't.

Just because your BMI is a certain number doesn't mean you have to use the words that the BMI uses.

There's plenty of people who don't even agree with the BMI and don't associate their body with it at all.

The point is, you get to describe your body in any way that you want, and use and not use words you want.

And if you keep using words that make you feel bad emotionally, you're going to keep wanting to quickly change your body so you can feel good emotionally.

But you don't have to change your body to feel better emotionally. You can just change the words you use.

Now, you don't have to use super positive words. Neutral is fine. Neutral feels okay, and feels better than negative.

And the reason why I'm going into all this is because when you feel more neutral about your body, and think more neutrally about your body if you gain weight, then you won't be so fearful of gaining or staying here.

Which will make you more willing to let go of the restrictions and risk possible weight gain, or risk staying at this weight.

And I'm not saying you need to stay at your gained weight or current weight forever. I support you if you want to lose weight.

But, I can't encourage this enough – work on your relationship with food first, including stopping being overly restrictive with it, so you can stop binge eating, and *then* work on losing weight. It will be so much easier, and more sustainable, if you do it that way rather than trying to lose weight while you're still binge eating and while being super restrictive with food.

Alright, so that's the restriction part of this.

Now let's talk about emotions, the other reason why people feel urges to binge eat.

Some people eat to control their emotions.

When they feel uncomfortable emotions, eating food helps them to feel better, it numbs their emotions, it's an escape from their emotions, and sometimes people even eat when they feel good emotions to enhance or extend the emotions.

Eating is their emotional regulator.

But, as you know if you eat to control your emotions, it doesn't actually resolve the emotions and you might actually feel a different kind of discomfort after eating so you feel uncomfortable, eat, and then feel uncomfortable again.

It's not solving anything. It's just a distraction, a temporary break.

Now, sometimes people just emotionally overeat, so the experience is overall less intense and usually less in quantity.

But it can turn into binge eating when the emotions are intense, when their emotions have built up a lot, so they feel desperate to decrease the intensity quickly and think a lot of food will do the trick.

It can turn into bingeing when they've been feeling the emotions for an extended time and get so tired of it that they again, want to quickly change how they feel and think a lot of food is the solution.

It can turn into bingeing when it's not even extended or intense, but they just want out of an emotion and think that the longer they eat, the longer they don't have to feel it, so they eat a lot.

So when they feel the uncomfortable emotions, they urge to eat, since that is their go-to method for managing their emotions.

For emotional binge eaters, the urging for food is really an urging for different emotions, or for no emotions.

So why are some people this way?

One reason is because they were never taught how else to handle their emotions, so they don't know what else to do. Another is because they have been taught to think negatively, or fearfully about emotions, so they don't think it's okay to feel emotions, or that if they do they won't be okay, or the feelings will get worse.

It's usually a combination of fear and not knowing what else to do that keeps them going to food.

But really, when you understand your emotions, they're not so scary.

They are just sensations in your body, they are temporary, and they cannot harm you.

And if you allow yourself to feel them, that's actually the first step in helping them to pass.

People usually want to ignore them, hoping they'll just go away, but that's what actually makes them last longer. Ignoring and avoiding doesn't resolve anything, it just keeps it existing in the background, waiting to show back up.

So when you eat to avoid feeling, you're prolonging the feeling.

It's like procrastination. You're just putting it off.

And once you do allow yourself to feel the emotion, and you accept the feeling rather than resisting or fighting it, which means you just let yourself be in it, that in itself can help you to start feeling a little better.

And then, you can do something that can help to regulate your nervous system, which could be deep breaths, moving your body, laying down, whatever feels good to you in that moment.

And then, what's really going to help you to change how you're feeling, is changing your thoughts.

You feel the emotions you feel because of what you're thinking. You've interpreted something in a certain way, have a particular perspective on something, have an opinion, and that's the reason why you feel how you feel.

And it's all changeable.

You can shift your perspective, change your opinion or interpretation, if you take the time to explore other options or get new information.

And when you do, *that's* when you'll feel better, no food required.

It is possible for you to feel better without eating food.

Will it take longer and require more effort? Yes but, you'll feel so much better afterward compared to if you just eat a bunch of food.

It's so much more effective.

And you're capable of doing it.

You actually do do it, without even realizing it.

Your emotions change because you're doing it. If you weren't, you'd just feel the exact same emotions all the time, and you don't.

But sometimes, we need to do it intentionally, which can be challenging, and that's why I offer my help with this in my coaching program, but it is possible for you.

But in order to even do it, you have to be willing to feel the discomfort of your emotions so you can stay in them as you work through them.

And when you become more willing, and you feel your emotions more, and you work through them more without eating food, and your new ways become your go to ways, you won't urge for food like you used to.

When you're urging to feel better, food won't be your only thought because you have other, better options.

So, that's why you binge, why you feel urges to binge, and what you can do to stop feeling those urges.

But, there's something else I want to talk about too.

You can understand all of this, and you can know what you need to do, but in order to actually do it and stop binge eating, there is something very important that you'll need to do.

It's continuing to believe in yourself.

From what I've observed, the number one reason why people don't stop binge eating isn't because they don't know what to do, how to do it, aren't strong enough, aren't capable, or have been doing it for too long.

Now obviously not knowing what to do or how to do it is a big reason, which is why I have this podcast and my coaching program.

But, so many people have that, or a lot of it, and still don't stop binge eating because they keep giving up on themselves.

If they binge, or if the work gets hard, or if they don't stop bingeing as quickly as they thought they would, or when they try something and it doesn't work, they start telling themselves they can't do it and this won't work for them. They doubt themselves, they lose belief in themselves, they feel hopeless, and they quit, because that's what we do when we feel hopeless.

And you can't succeed if you quit.

So they're not successful not because they can't, but because they stop trying.

And they stop trying because they stop believing.

If you don't believe you can do something that takes effort, then you're not going to bother putting in the effort.

If you think you can't, you won't.

So the most important part of all of this, is continuing to believe that you can do it.

And it doesn't even have to be that you believe you can fully stop binge eating. You just need to believe that you can do whatever component of stopping binge eating you're working on whether it's working on not under eating, on allowing all foods, on feeling emotions, on working through emotions, on neutral self-talk, on neutral body talk, and any sub-component of those.

You have to believe enough to keep you going. It's okay if you have some doubt but the belief needs to be stronger.

So if you binge, you're not going to make it mean you can't do this.

That's not what the binge means.

The binge means you have something to learn, something to work on, or there's something in your way, something that's making it hard for you that you might not even be aware of.

So if a binge happens, you're going to get curious about it.

What did you try to do and what made it hard for you to do it successfully?

What should you have done and why didn't you?

What do you not know *how* to do yet that would be helpful for you to learn how to do?

That's what successful people do. They don't try to forget about their mistakes or beat themselves up about them, they take information from them.

Then they get help with what they need help with.

And then apply the lessons they learn.

Each binge gives you information and if you're hard on yourself, get mad at yourself, and quit on yourself, you're not going to receive this information.

And without it, you'll just keep doing the same things and getting the same results.

So you're going to get back up after a binge, get curious, learn something, get help when you need it and apply the lesson.

And you're going to repeat this and not give up on yourself, ever.

Don't be the person who loses all belief and quits when things don't go as you expected or wanted them to.

Be the person who sees the binge as something to learn from, and then learns something valuable.

AND, who gets help when needed and actually applies what they learn.

So, that is my guide for you. Those are the basics and foundations for stopping binge eating.

And again, the rest of the episodes in this podcast go more in depth with these topics and if you want to go even more in depth and get personalized help with this, that's what coaching is for, so I can help you directly.

So if you've listened to all the episodes and you want more, let's coach so I can help you figure out what is making this hard for you, what is stopping you, and what you can do to make more progress and stop binge eating.

You can find information about working with me by going to [coachkir.com](http://coachkir.com) [c-o-a-c-h-k-i-r.com](http://c-o-a-c-h-k-i-r.com) and there's a link to that page in the show notes as well.

So, this is my final episode, for now, but this doesn't have to be goodbye.

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Links to all of those will be in the show notes as well.

Alright, you amazing person you, this is it. I'll see you elsewhere. Bye bye.