

Episode: Beating Yourself Up



Full Transcript

HEALTHY EATING FOR BUSY WOMEN PODCAST
WITH KAT RENTAS

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Hello! Welcome back to the podcast this week. Today, I want to talk with you about something that I used to do a lot of as it relates to changing my eating habits. And it's something I also know that a lot of you do as well, which is beating yourself up. So, maybe you beat yourself up if you ate something that wasn't part of your food plan or diet plan. Maybe you beat yourself up if the number goes up on the scale. I find that in this line of work where you're working to change how you eat, there's going to be a million, bajillion opportunities for you to do this. And this is something that I see so often with my clients in the beginning of us working together and women who seek my help. They're just constantly having these negative opinions and judgements about themselves throughout their health journeys that really end up affecting their ability to show up and continue making progress. A lot of the time these women will come to me and say that the problem is that they're failing. So, they'll say "I just can't stop cheating on my diet or falling off track" and it's interesting because I know as the coach that this really isn't the problem. The fact that you failed to follow a diet plan isn't something that concerns me. To be honest, it's probably because it means more about the diet than your abilities to follow through with it, but I digress. I'm not concerned about you failing. When falling off track, or eating off a diet becomes a problem is when you make this setback or failure mean something has gone wrong. And when you make a failure mean something has gone wrong, you beat yourself up. I have a long, long, long history of doing this in pretty much every aspect of my life. I was raised with the same relationship to failure as I'm sure many of you were. To me, failure was something that was bad and it was something to be avoided, right? This is what we're all pretty much taught. We're taught that an A+ is what we should strive for and we're taught that a C, D, or F is bad. And that failing should be avoided. Now, here's the kicker. We're taught that failing is unacceptable and that it's bad. But we're not really taught what to do when we fail. I remember when I was young I really struggled in school. I was always

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very smart, but I struggled to make the grade. And it's interesting now because I have a really clear picture today of what my relationship to failing was like back then. And what my relationship to failure was like is that it was unacceptable and that it should be avoided at all costs. But then, when I did fail, I remember not really knowing where to go from there. I remember not really understanding why I was failing so much or where it was coming from. What I do remember is that everyone and everything around me was just telling me not to do it. To avoid it at all costs. So, what this looked like was I would fail, make it mean that I was wrong or that something had gone wrong because I failed, and then because I felt so crappy and shameful I would continue to fail. And my story clearly turned out fine, I went to college, I became successful at various careers, and now I'm ultimately doing what I love. So all is good. But this relationship I had with failure in the past might be similar to your relationship with failure. And this relationship to failure will affect your abilities to make progress with healthy eating. Because if you make failure with food wrong, that means you're going to beat yourself up, which means you're not objectively solving for the food failures, which means you're not coming up with new solutions, which means you'll find yourself failing again and again not knowing what the best next step is. You're just going to be in this on-going cycle of beating yourself up again and again. Now, this is a cycle and I want to lay it out very clearly. I want you to understand exactly what beating yourself up will look like for you in your life. How the cycle starts is, obviously, with a failure. And to clarify, a failure is not negative. It's not good or bad. It's neutral, despite what we've all been taught. A failure simply means not getting a desired or expected result. That's literally it. I remind myself of this all the time. Just not getting a desired or expected result. After you fail what happens is you have a thought or opinion about the failure. These are all of the things that may feel true to you, but they're not. They're just thoughts, opinions, or beliefs you're having about the failure. So, let's say you planned to eat a salad for

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lunch and instead you got fast food. Your thoughts or opinions about the failure may be, "I shouldn't have done that", "I should know better", "Something is wrong with me", "I knew I wasn't capable" – things like that. These are just opinions about something neutral that occurred – which is the failure. Eating fast food instead of salad is neutral. It only became negative or had meaning once you decided to have an opinion on it. Now, what happens next is a feeling or emotion. Everything we think and believe creates an emotional response in our body. So, let's say you fail and you eat the fast food instead of salad, so you think "I shouldn't have done that", what feeling would occur in your body? Maybe shame, regret, guilt, etc. etc. Something along those lines. Your opinion about the failure created an emotional response. Now, here's the big thing. Are you ready? So far, nothing about this is a real problem. Sure, you're having thoughts that we can consider beating yourself up a bit. But all of you, or pretty much all of you, are going to have opinions about your failures. You're going to make them kinda mean something about yourself. Which means you'll have negative emotions. This is fine. This is part of the human experience. Sometimes, as humans, we can judge ourselves a bit. Those kinds of thoughts will likely be there for some time, until you deliberately work on your relationship to failure. Which is a process I go through with my clients. But, the single opinion you have about your failure? And the feeling you have from that? Not necessarily a problem. This is natural because you're a human. Here's where it becomes a problem for most of you. Where you start to really beat yourself up, to the point where it sabotages your progress. You don't stop at that single thought and feeling about your failure. You take it even further and beat yourself over the head with it. And this happens when you either indulge in the negative thinking or you judge the negative emotion in that moment. So, we go back to the original example. The failure is that you ate the fast food instead of the salad, you're thinking "I shouldn't have done that", and you feel shame, let's say. So, in this case you would be indulging in that shame when

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you're adding even more thoughts and opinions that create the shame. So, instead of just thinking the single, original thought "I shouldn't have done that", you're adding even more to the story. So, you're also thinking "I should know better", "I can't be trusted with food", "I'll never change", "I am the problem" – a ton of layered emotions that create even more shame. So, we're not just dealing with the single thought and opinion that creates the base layer of shame. We're layering them to create this insane amount of shame in our body. You're indulging the heck out of it and beating yourself over the head with shame. Also what can happen is you can judge the shame. And this means you're making it mean something has gone wrong when the shame is there. So on top of thinking the original thought that created the shame, you're having opinions about your shame. So you may be thinking "I shouldn't be feeling this way", "Why am I so hard on myself?", "Something has gone wrong". These are all things that will also layer negative emotion on top of the shame, because you're adding judgement to it. So, quick review because this is a lot here. You have a failure occur and then you have thought and a negative emotion as it relates to that failure. This is not a real problem. This is part of the human experience. Where beating yourself up comes in is when you either a) indulge in that single negative thought and layer a bunch of other negative thoughts that increase the negative emotion, or b) judge the negative emotion so you're making it mean something has gone wrong. This is how you beat yourself up and it's something that so many of us do when we have setbacks with changing our eating habits. And I want to offer to you that it's not the failures, setbacks, any of it that are causing you to ultimately fail. It's the fact that you beat yourself up with the opinions you have about your failure. Which creates suffering. And what's interesting as well is this suffering will strongly compel you to seek emotional comfort, right?. Because we're not just dealing with one negative thought and feeling. When you beat yourself up you're increasing that negative experience. So your brain is going to want to seek emotional comfort

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like crazy. Which for many of you will look like overeating, over-Netflixing, overspending, whatever pushes that emotional suffering way, way down and makes you feel emotional comfort. And I want to just say right now, we have got to stop collectively as humans beating ourselves over the head with our negative thoughts. Because it all just starts with one opinion you have about yourself in a single moment. Maybe it's the moment you eat that fast food, or when you miss a workout, or when you have a single moment of overeating after months of progress. We have to stop taking this one moment of doubt, regret, shame, guilt, and then beating ourselves up with it. You don't have to keep believing every judgement of negative thought that comes into your brain when you have a setback. I had a client where this, this work right here was her growth. She had a history of progressing at healthy eating and working out for months at a time. And then, she would have one setback which would cause her to sabotage all of it. And it's interesting with her, she was really making quick progress right from the beginning. She was making strides with her eating habits and then she had a moment where she engaged in some overeating and, if I'm remembering correctly, she had the thought "I knew this couldn't last" and her feeling was disappointed. What happened was she added to that story in her mind. So she continued to think more thoughts that increased the feeling of disappointment. And then she judged the disappointment because in her mind, something had gone wrong here. Now, as her coach in her next session I explained to her how she was just allowed to be disappointed. Listen, in my coaching, we're never in the business of trying to make you a robot and feel positive all the damn time. We keep it real. And for her, I said "What if you just had full permission to be disappointed in that moment? What if that makes perfect sense?". And she experienced this release. Because she was making her disappointment and opinions about her setbacks mean something had gone drastically wrong. Which was why she would beat herself up and self-sabotage. From that point forward, she started to let herself feel whatever she

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experienced when she failed. Which meant, she could dust herself off, get back up, evaluate what happened, and move forward. This was her work. This was her growth. She thought it was because she couldn't be trusted with food and all of these other really personal reasons why she couldn't consistently eat healthy. But it was just the fact that she constantly would beat herself up. Which would keep her stuck. And I want you to learn something here from this wonderful client. Because this work she did was so foundational not just with food, but for her entire life. She stopped beating herself up when it came to being a mother. She stopped beating herself up when it came to being a business owner. It changed her damn life and I'm so proud of her for that change. What would happen if you just stopped being the feeling police, right? Like really. What would happen if you stopped making it mean something had gone wrong when you feel disappointed, guilty, shameful, regretful when you had a setback. Instead of thinking "I shouldn't be feeling this way" or "I did this to myself", what if instead you believed "Of course I feel this way" or "It's safe to feel this right now". What's interesting is giving ourselves permission to feel negatively in this way can seem scary at first. Because many of you will think of it like opening the flood gates. Like, if you give yourself permission to feel disappointed after you fail that you'll just feel disappointed for the rest of your life and then you'll never get anything done. But it's the opposite. When you fail and you feel disappointed, or feel something else negative, if you reject it, judge it, or push it down it will only come back stronger. Feelings don't just go away and this isn't a problem. No feeling or emotion can actually harm you. And no feeling or emotion can actually negatively affect your life. You have to give yourself that permission. So, stop being the feelings police. When you fail, practice allowing whatever comes up. Rather than indulging in it or judging it or resisting it. Doing so will give you so much more emotional freedom and it will stop the on-going cycle of beating yourself up with your food failures. If this resonates, I invite you to apply to my coaching program at

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katrentas.com/coaching. This is how women work with me, get coached, and change their eating habits for life. So get on it. Alright, my friends. I hope you have a lovely rest of your day and I'll talk to you next week.