

Episode: Counting Calories



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HEALTHY EATING FOR BUSY WOMEN PODCAST
WITH KAT RENTAS

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Hello everyone. How are you today? I hope you all are hanging in there as the holiday season approaches. Things can get quite busy this time of the year. With Thanksgiving and all of the other holidays approaching. Which, I'm curious, are you one of those people that starts playing Christmas music now, or do you wait until December? Because I personally am one of those people who is happy to start blasting "All I Want For Christmas Is You" by Mariah Carey on November 1st. But that's just me. No shame. Totally understand if that's not your jam. And I really do love the holidays. I love the holiday spirit. But, it can be a busy and stressful time of year for many, so as we approach this season be sure to intentionally take some time for yourself every now and again, even if that's just listening to this podcast on the way to work. Because you can't fill other people's needs from an empty cup, my friend. Now, I also want to mention that a number of you have reached out and said you can't wait to join Own Your Eating Habits when the holidays are over. And I love this. I think this is fantastic and amazing. But, you know it's my job to give you insight on how your brain's working with food, so you can make changes and create the eating habits you want. Especially if you're my client. And if you're planning on joining my program after the year ends, I'm going to treat you like my client here today. And I'm going to let you know that this reason for not joining the program and making changes now is total diet mentality. And I want to validate that because this is so normal. I have been there. But it's not where you'll want to take action from with your eating habits. This "I'll wait to start then" mentality is when you're thinking about healthy eating like there's a start line. Like there's a moment when your old eating habits forever end, and your new eating habits start where you'll forever be a perfectly healthy eater. It's very black and white. It's very restrictive in our minds. Where after you start my program, or healthy eating in general, you'll never be able to go back to your old eating habits. To foods you love and to eating experiences that you enjoy now. After you start the healthy eating journey, you'll never be able to enjoy Thanksgiving the way

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you want to or enjoy the Christmas dinner the way you want to, because, in your mind now, you'll be eating for your health and the rules will be different. This is what we do when we're in a diet mentality right? We think before we change our eating habits that we're eating the wrong things, and that when we learn to eat healthy that we'll be forever eating the right things and the right way. You guys, I used to eat all of the quote unquote "junk foods" in the house the day before I started every single diet because in my mind, "I might as well get rid of them, because starting tomorrow we'll be eating healthy for the rest of our life". This is how our brain's work. We set this defined line between our past with food and our future. Between who we were in the past with food and who we want to be. That's not the way it is. This approach is restrictive and it's likely what you're used to. What the transformation looks like to become a naturally healthy eater is a gradual growth that's committed to over an extended period of time. There's a reason why my program is 6 months, you guys. There's no forcing you to change your eating habits. It can be done in a way where the growth feels natural, kind, and simple. Which means, I encourage you, if you have a mentality that starting this journey will be better after the holidays, to see where that's coming from. Because the clients in the program now are going to have a supportive container that will guide them through the holiday season with food. So they're being supported and not self-sabotaging along the way. There's no right or wrong approach, I just want you to like your reasons for whatever you decide. And that's my spiel for today. Now, let's get into today's topic, shall we? Let's talk about counting our calories. This is a highly requested topic so I wanted to dedicate an episode to it so you can hear my thoughts. And it may be different than what you're expecting. As usual. I feel like I'm going to break your perspective of calorie counting. So, to start I want to talk about the opinions of calorie counting that are often seen in the health community. Really, most of the time, you'll see opinions about counting calories as good or bad. Positive or negative. In the

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health community, it's very common for everyone to take a polarized approach, right? This type of energy. That things are morally good or bad, right or wrong, etc. But, that's not what I teach in my practice. Because that manner of defensive, morally-based thinking is not productive for creating the eating habits you want and making intentional eating decisions. When we're focused on the drama with health, food, or the diet industry, we're not putting ourselves in a place energetically where we can prioritize the math with food. We can't prioritize what intentional eating decisions we want to make. Our minds are focused on the drama, as I like to call it. In my practice, everything is seen as neutral. So, it's not good or bad. Including specific meal plans, diet protocols, weight loss programs, or restrictive practices with food. These things are not good or bad morally, until you have an opinion about them. We can acknowledge that they don't produce effective long-term results with food and body, based on the math. But I'm not in the business of demonizing diets or participating in the heightened state of anti-diet culture. Not because I agree with diet culture. You guys know, I absolutely do not. I do have my opinions about it. But it's important to know that when you're changing your eating habits, and you're working to unlearn the narrative that the diet industry has placed upon you, that state of heightened emotion is unproductive. It will not serve you. Because it will keep you focused on the diet industry and what's wrong with it, rather than the eating habits you want to create. Does this make sense? This is an insightful topic so I want you to consider this. My goal for you, and all of my clients, is to make your eating habits less emotionally heightened. Because this is why you don't have the eating habits you want. The goal is to make your experience of the health industry and diet industry less emotionally heightened. And, it's to make tools that maybe didn't work out for you in the past, like counting calories, less emotionally heightened. So you're not placing focus on them and you're able to move forward. So that's the first part I want to cover here. This is why calorie counting is neutral. It's not negative or positive.

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It's tracking the caloric amount of the foods you're eating daily. It doesn't get more neutral than that. This is the facts of what counting calories is. So, why do we feel compelled to believe that it's negative or positive? It's because of the reasons you've had for doing it. And the reasons you've had for counting calories are exactly why it did work for you or it didn't work for you. And I'm going to explain this, so don't worry, if you're like "I'm sorry what? What does that mean?". I'll explain. Most of you, like me, will have had reasons for counting calories that didn't serve you. Here are some common non-useful examples for why we attempt to count calories. "Because I need to stay under X amount of calories to lose weight", "Because I should always be aware of how much I'm eating", "Because I'm only allowed X amount of calories on my diet", "Because it's what I'm supposed to do", "Because it's the only way for me to lose weight", "Because I won't have control with food unless I track this daily". Now, I'm being very general with these reasons that I hear from clients, and myself in the past, but consider what your reasons may have been for counting calories when it didn't work out for you. Take a moment. What were they? Think about it. And then, I want you to consider, and this is going to be very challenging for some of you, that all of your reasons for counting calories were never facts. They're belief systems that have been created in your mind after years of attempting diets and failing them. I'll give you one example, the belief "I need to stay under X amount of calories to lose weight". Here's the thing. Maybe. Let's not argue with this reason in your mind for counting calories. Let's just say this is true. Separately from that, and more importantly, I want you to consider what energy this creates when you're thinking "I need to stay under X calories to lose weight." What's the feeling emotionally when you believe that thought? Do you feel pressured? Restricted? Forced? Doubtful? Really take a moment and consider this. Because here's the big thing to know. Your beliefs about calorie counting, or any other tool you use to change your eating habits, matter. And most of you will have thoughts about calorie counting that create

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feelings of restriction, deprivation, feeling forced – energy that will cause you to self-sabotage. The act of counting calories is not restrictive. Your mindset around counting calories is restrictive. And most of us will have this mindset so heavily conditioned in our brains, that this is why we don't need to focus on calories to lose weight and change our eating habits. Because our relationship to calorie counting that is restrictive, will get in the way. This is why in my practice, we don't demonize specific diets or counting calories. Because those things are neutral. There's nothing wrong with those things morally. There's people in this world who can do those things, without self-sabotaging. In a way that may serve them. Because they don't have a restrictive relationship with these things. They're not counting calories because they're thinking "I should be counting calories to lose weight, since this is the only way I can do that". They're thinking "I want to count my calories". That's it. Really consider: why do you want to count calories? Because in case you weren't aware, doing something because you think you "should" with food will never be enough. "Should" is an opinion. It's not a fact. You know what's more valid? What you want to do with food. Do you want to be tracking your calories everyday? If there was an option to eat healthy, stop overeating, enjoy foods you love, and achieve your ideal weight without counting calories ever – would you prefer that approach? If the answer is yes, then stop trying to force yourself to count damn calories. I say this with all of the love in the world. Most of you will, I'm guessing here if you're like almost all of my clients, will have zero interest in counting your calories for the rest of your life. You just want to have control with food, provide your body with what it needs nutritionally, enjoy foods you love, without ever feeling deprived. So you're not constantly thinking about food. That's what you want. Counting calories never needed to be part of that equation. Eating healthy naturally? Did nature intend us to be tracking the caloric amount of the foods we eat? No. Does that approach work for some people with specific goals who have a good relationship to tracking calories?

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Yes, absolutely. Because they want to do it. If you don't want to count calories, you don't have to. And if you think you need to count calories because this is the only way to have control with food, then you are in the diet mentality which is exactly where you're supposed to be if you've been dieting most of your life, like I was. Kind of makes sense why we think counting calories, or restrictive approaches with food, are the only option. Because those are the options that have been presented to us. I want you to have so much understanding and grace for yourself when it comes to this topic. When you begin questioning the beliefs you have with food now. Because you're going to find a lot to question. You're going to find a lot of beliefs about your eating habits that, you realize, may be a total lie and never served you in the first place. And this can be a bit overwhelming. Even frustrating to know when we realize those beliefs are there. But be willing to question everything in your mind that believes that to eat healthy you "should" be doing it a certain way. You should be counting calories. Because that's not true. There's only what you want. And what many of you want is to eat healthy without ever thinking about it. You want to stop overeating and emotionally eating. You want to honor your body's needs. You want to eat naturally healthy in the way nature intended. This means you're a good fit for my practice, which is great and I'm so happy you're here. But, there's people that don't want this. They want to track calories, they want to track macros, they want to do those things, and that's perfect for them. Most of you will have met individuals like this, where they thrive with those tools. And that's amazing. Just to give you all insight, and this always blows people's minds, I used to count calories in the past for reasons I didn't like, right? Just like the example I gave. The reasons for counting calories created restrictive energy, so I always self-sabotaged my eating habits. And I didn't really want to count calories, I did it because I thought I should. So, I spent a long period of time learning to eat healthy naturally. I managed my emotions, honored my body's needs, created food plans based on my preferences alone, and became

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a naturally healthy eater. I was able to reach my ideal weight with ease without ever touching calorie counting or tracking macros. And I continued to do that for a long time. I still do that. But, it's so interesting. I now look at calorie counting, tracking macros, tracking any metrics with food totally differently. It's completely neutral. The energy I have with it is pure curiosity and detachment. Because I know I don't have to track those things if I don't want to. So, now if I do track metrics with food, it's just because I want to and I'm curious. This is the part that blows people's minds. If I track food metrics now, it's because it's interesting and fun. That it is. But, it took time and intentionality to get here. And the only time when it will be useful to track metrics with food is if you have zero attachment to it. Zero heightened emotional energy. This energy is not what allows you to make intentional food decisions. And to make intentional food decisions, have control with food, and eat healthy naturally, you don't have to count calories if you don't want to. It's all about what you want my friends. Those will be the most valid reasons for trying anything with food. Alright, this was a bit of a different discussion today. Thanks for hanging with me. I hope you have a lovely rest of your day. And I'll talk to you next week.