

# Episode: Food Failure



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HEALTHY EATING FOR BUSY WOMEN PODCAST  
WITH KAT RENTAS

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Hello there, my friend. Welcome back to the podcast this week. I hope you're having a wonderful week so far. And I'm happy you're here with me today because I want to talk to you about failure. I know, right? So fun. But it's really important that I address this here on the podcast. Because this is something that comes up regularly with women who reach out to me and even my clients. Because turns out, failure is a non-negotiable part of the journey to creating healthy eating habits. There's no way around it, no matter what we've been led to believe in the past. And what most of you will have been led to believe is that healthy eating means perfection with food. You may believe that reaching your weight loss goal, or any other goal in your life, requires you to follow through and do things right every single time. And the reality is, that can never be the case. Because it's in your failures and your setbacks that you get the answers you need. In my past with food, every failure I had felt so, so awful. I would make it mean all of the negative things about myself. I would make it mean I wasn't capable of eating healthy, that I wasn't worthy of the results with my body that I wanted, and I really made it mean something was wrong with me. And it's from this place that I would always give up on myself, right? Because it felt too painful to live in that place. So I would overeat and binge eat because I wanted to numb away those feelings of shame and regret that occurred after failure. Now, what's really interesting is I was convinced that this was happening because I did something wrong, because I failed. But really I was just creating this painful experience of failure with food. Because I was taught to believe that to eat healthy and lose weight, that I could never quote unquote fall off track. And, as the humans, we'll use that in our language. Even I'm guilty of it sometimes, right? Saying "Oh, I just fell off track". But I want you to know, first and foremost in this episode, that this track that we're afraid of falling off? That track doesn't even exist. You can't actually be on track or off track. This is a mindset that we're put in when we're immersed into diet culture. Where we believe that to get the results with our bodies we want, that we have

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to strive for perfection with food. And that failure should always be avoided. That it's negative to fail. And I want to share a different perspective about food failure with you today here in this episode. Because this will be the difference between you reaching your goals and you giving up. Your relationship with your food failures will determine this. And this is something almost every single one of my clients has to go through. They're living with this belief system that to fail with food means something has gone wrong. So they think their food failures mean something about them. So maybe they gave into an urge to overeat. Or maybe they didn't eat what they wrote on their food plan. And naturally, their brain immediately starts to make it mean all of the things. It will bring up a lot of compelling reasons for them why they should just give up now. And really what I help my clients do, is unlearn this pattern with failure. And the pattern I'm referring to is failing, having those negative thoughts come up, and then giving up altogether. Because you think you're not capable. This is the pattern I was in. And this is the pattern you may be in right now. And this is just because we have created this relationship around food failure that is negative. Where we think something has gone wrong. And then after you give up, you'll likely do quite a bit of overeating because you're going to want to seek comfort from that negative emotion you're experiencing. And this can feel like a tough place to be in. And if this is the place you're in with your failures, you're always going to feel like you're working against yourself in the journey to healthy eating. It's going to feel punishing, restrictive, and you're going to ultimately have to suffer yourself to the eating habits you want. And those healthy eating habits will not last. Because you can't suffer your way to new results. Not just with your food choices but with everything in life. You need to love yourself to the results you want. Or, at the very least have compassion and understanding for yourself to the results you want. And the way you do this isn't to change what you're eating. It's not to change any circumstances. It's to change your relationship with failure. Knowing that it's going to happen throughout your

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healthy eating journey. We're just going to expect it. You're going to plan for these failures. And then you're going to intentionally decide how you're going to show up after you fail with food. You're going to decide ahead of time what you're going to do when you fail. So maybe this is after you find yourself emotionally eating. Or after you realize that you overate. Or after you ate something that wasn't on the food plan that you already decided on. You're going to take control of how you show up when you fail. Because this is the determining factor over whether you get the results you want. Really, it's not even taking the "right" food actions that ultimately gets you the result. It's how you treat your setbacks and failures. Many of you have likely heard the term "fail forward" and it's no difference here. You need to decide how you're going to think and feel about your failures. So I'm going to explain a little more about how you can do that for yourself right now. But first, I do want to point out something that so many of us miss. Especially when it comes to changing our eating habits. We have been defining failure in a really heavy way. We're making failure mean all of the negative things. Where we feel as if it's almost morally wrong for us to fail. And I want to offer you that failure is simply not getting the expected or desired result. That is it. Not getting the expected or desired result. And I would also offer that when going through your food journey, you stop even using the term failure. Because for most of you, you'll already have such strong beliefs about what you think failure means to you. These beliefs will be really hardwired in your brain. So even using the term failure in your journey will trigger a lot of unnecessary thoughts and emotions for you. So, if this is the case, just change your language and thinking around it. Instead of saying, "I failed". You can say, "Oh. I didn't get the result I expected. I wonder why? Let's figure this out". See the difference? "I failed" because of how we're conditioned to think about failure, for most of us, will feel heavy. It will feel so emotional. You may experience regret, shame, inadequacy. Instead, we can just start saying, "I didn't get the result I wanted or expected". This

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keeps you in your logical, deliberate brain. Where you're looking at the facts objectively. And you're gathering the data you need to keep improving. This is the place I want you to get to when it comes to failure or any setback you experience in your journey to healthy eating. Where you're separating the emotions from the facts. As in, you're separating what your brain thinks failure means, from the data you need to move forward. And, let's be real, when you have a setback or failure, those emotions will be there. But you don't indulge in them. You don't have to make those negative thoughts and emotions mean anything about you or the progress you've been making. This is just your brain giving you compelling reasons for seeking comfort. And that's exactly what your primitive brain is supposed to do. It's right on schedule. What makes the human brain special is we also have a prefrontal cortex. And this is our intentional, deliberate brain where we can observe that emotional brain and say, "No, I'm good. Not today. We don't need to listen to those thoughts". You can allow those thoughts and feelings about failure to come up for you. And then intentionally decide to move forward from there. So, to really clear this up I want to give you examples of my relationship to failure in the past and my relationship to it now. So, as I mentioned, I would make plans to change my eating habits. I would carefully craft these food plans that were beautiful, perfect, amazing, and I legitimately would think every time that there was nothing that could mess me up. That right here would be the moment I would finally prove that I could forevermore eat healthy. For the rest of my life. And then around mid-week of following through with this food plan, I would start experiencing urges for other foods. For me that was usually more dense food than I was eating. Or just more food in general. And I would make these urges mean that there was something wrong with me. That I was out of control with food. And then from these emotions of doubt, I would overeat those foods. So I would what we call "fall off track" and I would fail. I would fail that food plan that I so carefully crafted. And this is where I would suffer the most with food.

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Because, as mentioned, I would make it so personal. I would make it mean all of the negative things about myself. And I just wasn't very nice to myself about it. I didn't have my own back. And to me, failure felt like something that was morally wrong. Like if I failed, there was definitely something wrong with me. And this made me feel very ashamed for years. Now, what did I do from this low place? I overate even more. Because I felt awful. I wanted to feel better. And then from there, as time passed, I would have a desire to eat healthy and lose weight again. And I would start this entire cycle over. And all of this happened because I made the fact that I had an urge for food and the fact that I "fell off track" and failed meant something went wrong. It's not even the fact that I failed. It's what I did after I failed that caused me to ultimately fail. That's a mouthful. But in other words, it's not the setback that caused overall failure. It's what I made the setback mean. Now, here's what I did instead to get the eating habits I want. And I'm being very descriptive but I really want you to see a side by side picture here. I started changing my relationship to failure. And the way I did this was I began switching from shame with failure, to curiosity with failure. I have a brain that loves to learn, so curiosity for me I know is very easy to access. So here's how that showed up in my food failures. I would make a food plan for the week. And this is a food plan that I created based on my own needs, preferences, and goals with food. This is what I teach my clients to do. So nothing about this plan felt restrictive to me, which set me up for more success. But I was still experiencing urges to overeat at this point in my journey. No matter the food plan. Because my brain was so used to me giving it that comfort. It's like that kid in the candy store that throws a tantrum. If you give it the candy, always, it will keep yelling for the candy. So even though my food plan wasn't restrictive, this is still the place my brain was in. It still wanted to overeat. So, at this time, around mid-week I would still feel that urge to go off my food plan, to stray away from the food decisions I already made ahead

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of time, and overeat. And there were times in my journey that I did. I gave into those urges and I went off my food plan. Now, what I did instead in this moment is what changed everything for me. Instead of making this setback mean all of the things, I got really, really curious about it. I would think, "This is so interesting. This isn't the result I expected. I wonder why I did that?". I started writing how I was feeling at the time, what I was thinking, what food I was craving – all of it. I became a detective of my own eating experience. And, I can't emphasize this enough, this simple act of evaluating my setbacks gave me so many answers. If you change your relationship with failure in this way, where you're able to be curious about them, you will gain so many answers that you never had before. And it's with these answers that I was able to set myself up more for success every following week. I would plan, have a setback, and evaluate. Plan, have a setback, and evaluate. And eventually things started to change. I started to really solve the problem and figure out what made me tick. So plan, have a setback, evaluate turned into plan, follow through, evaluate. I began following through with ease with everything I planned on eating. Knowing that if a setback would occur, because I was a human, that I would be really to get curious about it, without judgement. The biggest thing I want you to take away from this example I gave you, and this episode, is that failure is not only inevitable in your food journey, but it is necessary. It's the breadcrumbs to your success. Because how else will you evaluate your progress? I get clients who are worried about failing in my program. Because these are high-achieving women who were taught like I was that failure should be avoided at all costs. That to be a good client, or a good student, that they shouldn't fail. That they should always make the grade. And I love when I can tell them, "Oh no. We can be excited for the failures in this journey. Because it will happen. And when it does, we get so many more answers that we never had before". And then, this is where their transformation really begins. So, always remember. Failure is inevitable and it's necessary. And there's nothing

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wrong with failure. It simply means we didn't get the desired or expected result. And there's a lot of useful data that comes with that. So you can figure out exactly what makes you a healthy eater for life. Alright, my friend. If you're looking for a support system as you move through these failures with food, you can sign up for my coaching program and work with me to do so. You can find out more at [katrentas.com/coaching](https://katrentas.com/coaching). I love you. And I'll talk to you next week.