

Episode: Healthy Eating Imposter Syndrome



Full Transcript

HEALTHY EATING FOR BUSY WOMEN PODCAST
WITH KAT RENTAS

Episode: Healthy Eating Imposter Syndrome

Hello there. Welcome back to the podcast this week. It's so crazy to think that about a month from now will be the one year anniversary of this podcast. I cannot believe it. Time has flown by. And this podcast really started out as a passion project that had ended up helping so, so many of you. I really feel like we've developed such a community around this podcast with all of you who reach out to me after each episode. And for that I'm so grateful. I cannot even tell you. So I'm definitely looking forward to that one year anniversary. That will be something to celebrate for sure. And today, in this episode, I want to talk about something a little less positive and light-hearted. And that is healthy eating imposter syndrome. Now, most of you will have an idea of what imposter syndrome is. You'll likely have experienced it in one form or another. And this is something that can really come up when we're trying to change our eating habits, maybe change the results we have with our bodies, and ultimately change how we're showing up for our health. Imposter syndrome can be a very real thing for so many of us as we're going through our health journey's, especially with food. Now, if you don't know what imposter syndrome entails, no worries. I'm going to explain all of it here. And I want to start by sharing what this looked like for me in the past. Imposter syndrome is something we can struggle with in so many areas of our lives, but for me when it came to changing my eating habits and becoming a healthy eater, my imposter syndrome was the worst. It took up so much of my brain space when I tried to make changes. And I'll actually start by sharing what imposter syndrome is. So Google likes to define imposter syndrome as doubting your abilities or feeling like a fraud. So, in the case of healthy eating it would mean when you're trying to make change with food and eat healthier, you're going to doubt your abilities to do so and feel like a fraud. So, you'll feel like the changes you're trying to make with food are inauthentic to who you believe you are.

Episode: Healthy Eating Imposter Syndrome

And put that way, I like to define imposter syndrome a bit differently. So I like to define imposter syndrome as the separation between who you believe you are and the specific actions you're taking. Or trying to take. So for example, you have beliefs about who you are as an eater right now. You have beliefs about your eating habits and what they mean about you. And then there's the food actions you want to be taking. So maybe you plan your meals for the week and try to follow through. Imposter syndrome is the separation between who you're believing you are as an eater now and those actions you're trying to take. And for those of you who struggle with imposter syndrome, your thoughts about yourself as an eater aren't going to match with the healthy eating actions you're attempting to make week by week. So, if this seems a little confusing to you, don't worry. Sometimes when I explain things on this podcast I picture you guys sitting there like the mind blown emoji, just like what is she talking about? But, I'm going to clarify what I mean. So I'll use myself as an example.

Throughout my life, you all know this, I struggled to eat healthy. I had periods of overeating, binge eating, emotional eating – all of it. It just felt very out of my control. And because of my past eating struggles I eventually got to a point in my life where I had solidified beliefs about the type of eater I was. So, some beliefs I had were, "I can't be trusted around certain foods", "I don't know when to stop eating", "I'm an emotional eater", so that's something I identified as. Thoughts like those. I had a lot of beliefs about myself when it came to food. And the first thing to note here, is none of these were facts. These were belief systems I adopted throughout my struggles with food. My brain took all of my struggles as evidence that these were facts. That I couldn't be trusted with food. That I didn't know when to stop eating. So, this became my food identity so to speak. This is the identity that felt authentic to me at the time. I was very comfortable with this identity. Even though I didn't want to be that eater, it felt very believable that this was the eater I was.

Episode: Healthy Eating Imposter Syndrome

So, with this belief system and identity I created with food, of course I went on and tried to change my eating habits. So, mostly, I would write my meals for the week down in a beautiful planner and I would try to follow what I planned on eating for the week. And in the beginning of the week, I was running on motivation. So I'd be pretty successful Monday and Tuesday. Because none of my doubts and fears started to come up yet. My brain was in that motivation stage. And if you're not aware, the motivation stage is like the honeymoon stage during the week. It all feels magical, amazing, and like this is the time everything will change with food, but then old emotions will begin to surface. And this is just because motivation is a dopamine spike which comes back down. For more on that be sure to listen to the episode Healthy Eating Motivation. But anyways, I would get through Monday and Tuesday okay because I was relying on the honeymoon stage, or my initial motivation levels. And then by Wednesday real life would settle in and the motivation would wear off. And this is when my healthy eating choices that I originally planned for started to feel inauthentic. Something would just feel off. And I would, at that point, feel so much more resistance to following through with the food decisions. Because I wouldn't believe in any of it. There was who I believed I was and then there were the food decisions I had left to make. And no part of me believed that I was someone who would make those decisions, right? I mean let's just look at the data here. I was believing I was someone "who couldn't be trusted with food". I believed this at my core. I had zero trust in my abilities to commit to any food plan. So what happened when it was just me with that belief and then the food decisions I had to make in front of me? I self-sabotaged the heck out of that food plan. I believed those thoughts about myself. And I ultimately provided evidence for that belief, right? I was believing "I can't be trusted around food" and then I proceeded to sabotage and provide evidence of that.

Episode: Healthy Eating Imposter Syndrome

Thereby, creating this self-feeding narrative of who I thought I was as an eater. And this was all because of the imposter syndrome I was facing with those healthy eating decisions. Imposter syndrome is the separation between who you're believing you are as an eater and the eating decisions you want to be making. And I want you to consider, right now, what that separation looks like for you. What are you believing about yourself as an eater, that's separating you from the eating decisions you want to be making? Because what's happening is those beliefs are acting like a barrier to entry. If you don't believe that you are someone who follows through with a food plan, or listens to their hunger before they eat, or stops eating when they're full, then you're going to have major resistance to doing it. Because it's going to feel so inauthentic to you. You're going to feel like a fraud. And who likes feeling like a fraud? I know you want to eat healthy so much. I did too. But if in trying to do so you feel like a fraud along the way, who can blame us for throwing in the towel? Because that feels awful. So, once again, consider what belief barriers you're putting up between yourself and the eating decisions you want to make. What does that imposter syndrome look like to you? Why does the concept of eating healthy and being that version of yourself feel like fraud to you now? I want you to have curiosity when you think about this. There's no reason to beat ourselves up here. Just consider what's going on there that's causing you to feel like the eating decisions you want to make are inauthentic to you. Alright? So so much awareness to be had here. And awareness is key. Now, we've established that imposter syndrome with healthy eating is something to notice within ourselves. From that point, we have two options. And most of us are only aware of one of them, which is the one you may have already tried. The first option is to force yourself to follow through with food actions that feel inauthentic to you. So, you don't genuinely believe in your ability to stick to that method of eating long-term. You may not even feel genuinely worthy of the results you want.

Episode: Healthy Eating Imposter Syndrome

It just feels like a mismatch between the eater you think you are and how you want to show up with food. None of it feels believable. But, because you don't know you have another option, you try and force yourself to follow through anyway. Despite you not believing it. And for most people, this sets you up for total self-sabotage. Because when you work against your beliefs and brain in this way, you're setting yourself up for failure. You'll never win. And, I always say this, but the point is never to force your brain or beliefs into submission. It's to work with that part of your brain in a way where it's not running the show. So, what I mean by that is all of these beliefs you have about you as an eater, are all running rampant in your primitive mind. So this is where we store all our automatic, conditioned beliefs which leads to our conditioned behaviors. And right now, if you have imposter syndrome, you are believing those beliefs. You're indulging them and it's causing them to show up in your eating habits where you self-sabotage and then give that brain further evidence to keep believing that thought. So for me I was believing "I can't trust myself around food" which led to self-sabotage with food. This of course gave that brain perfect evidence to keep believing that original thought. So, the first option you have here is to try and force yourself through the imposter syndrome. But most of you will know that this doesn't usually work. Now, here's the second option. The second option is accepting the beliefs you have now about yourself with food, and then creating new believable thoughts for you to practice in the future. And this is the option that focuses on the cause rather than the symptom. Which is what we're all about in this podcast. The symptom is what you're eating and how you're showing up with food. When you try to force yourself to change the symptom, you're not solving for the cause. Which is what you're believing about yourself as an eater. And when I say accept your beliefs now, I mean that you're going to watch those imposter beliefs enter your brain and you're not going to make them mean anything has gone wrong.

Episode: Healthy Eating Imposter Syndrome

So, let's say you're like me and you genuinely believe you don't have control with food. You're going to watch that belief come up when it comes time to create a food plan for yourself or change the way you're eating. You're just going to allow it to make an appearance. And then you're not going to judge yourself for it. You're not going to make that belief mean anything about your ability to follow through with food decisions. And you're going to allow it fully without resisting it. Which means you're also allowing the emotion associated with it. Maybe that's fear, inadequacy, doubt, shame, etc. So, after you've established that those imposter beliefs will just be there, then you can try on new beliefs that can compel you to show up as the eater you want to be. And when I say try on new beliefs I'm not talking about positive affirmations. For instance, if you're believing "I'm out of control with food" there's no way you're going to believe the thought "I have complete control with food". No. It's just not going to happen. And that's fine. You don't need to believe the super positive thoughts to change how you're showing up with food. You just want to choose a thought that you can believe right now, that will allow you to move forward from that imposter syndrome. You can't make the jump from a super negative thought to a super positive thought. That's like going from that -100 to that +100. It's not going to be accessible right now. You want to find a thought that sits more at that 0 mark. That feels more accessible and neutral to you. So, for instance, if you're believing "I have no control with food". That sits at that -100 mark right? And when it comes time to follow through on a food plan, this is why you're experiencing the imposter syndrome. Because of that gap between who you're believing you are versus the actions you want to take. Now "I have control with food" is more at that +100 mark. So, what's something that would fall in the middle? Something more neutral? Maybe it's simply "I am someone who is working on having control with food".

Episode: Healthy Eating Imposter Syndrome

Right? It's steps above the negative thought, but we're not setting ourselves up for failure by trying to believe something super positive. And this is what I want you to think about for yourself. First, consider what beliefs about yourself and food are creating the imposter syndrome. (**)So for this, imagine creating a healthy food plan for the week. And then imagine showing up to that food plan exactly as you are now. What beliefs would you have about you following through with that plan you set? What beliefs will you have throughout the week that will make you feel like an imposter when you're trying to follow through. Identify these thoughts. Because these are the beliefs that need to be addressed. And then consider, how can you begin accepting those thoughts without making them personal to you? And, what neutral thoughts could you believe about yourself now, that would help you move through this imposter syndrome rather than against it? With this, the most important piece of advice I could give you in this episode is that your imposter syndrome with healthy eating means nothing about you. It doesn't have anything to do with your ability to eat healthy long-term. It's just representative of your beliefs about yourself. And if we've struggled to eat healthy, we can expect ourselves to have beliefs that don't look so pretty. But that's not a problem. Accept those beliefs and then create new believable thoughts that can allow you to move through that imposter syndrome now. Alright, my friend. I hope this gave you a new and different perspective. Can't wait to hear how this goes and I'll talk to you next week.