Episode: Self Sabotage

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HEALTHY EATING FOR BUSY WOMEN PODCAST
WITH KAT RENTAS

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Hello there. How are you doing today? I hope you're having a wonderful day and a wonderful life this week. It's been really amazing lately. Since the beginning of this podcast, I've been receiving so many messages from you guys telling me how these episodes are helpful to you and your journey with healthy eating.. And literally nothing makes me happier. My ultimate goal with this podcast is for you to walk away with actionable and valuable advice that you can take with you. So you can begin applying this work into your life.I really love to hear that you all are loving these episodes. And I recently received a couple of lovely emails asking me to do an episode on self-sabotage with food. And I said I'd be more than happy to do an episode on this. Since this is something that pretty much everyone deals with when trying to change their eating habits. Like, if you are a human being, you definitely have experience with self-sabotage in some capacity. Because that's the way our brains work. It's just what they know how to do. But I'm really happy to talk about this because the concept of self-sabotage is super discouraging and debilitating. Just the act of sabotaging your own results, whether that's with healthy eating or anything else in life, can be really painful emotionally. It's something that's hard to deal with. Especially when we don't know why it's happening and we feel really helpless.

This was for sure the case with me years ago when I was really struggling with my eating habits. At the time, I really thought that the answer to eating healthier and losing weight was to stick to a set diet. I was a professional dieter and I was always trying new meal plans in the hopes that one would finally stick. And that I would then get those magical unicorn results that I always wanted with my body. Right? We all know how that goes. And what would happen, is I would want the results so bad. Like, so badly. I can't even tell you. The desire to change my results was so strong. I thought about it during the

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day. I thought about it before I went to sleep at night. It's all I thought about. I truly had such a strong desire to elevate my life and feel like my healthiest and happiest self. So, I would go into every single diet or meal plan feeling hopeful. Like, this could be the moment I change my eating habits forever and lose the weight. And I would start off the diet feeling in control. I would eat according to plan. And it would legitimately feel like I was on my way to success. That I was approaching the new version of myself. And then, the same thing would happen every single time. With every single diet. I would want the end result so badly, and start off strong. But then eventually, I would find really good reasons for giving up the diet and quote unquote falling off track. Maybe I realized it wasn't the right time to change the way I was eating. Or that I didn't have enough money at the time to eat healthier foods. Or that I would try again when things in life felt less hectic. Basically, I would always come up with reasons that seemed legitimate to me at the time. And what happened is with every diet I would sabotage my progress. Meaning, I was left with the same or worse results after the diet than I had before. Nothing would ever change long-term. And this left me feeling horrible about myself. After doing this for some time I felt totally out of control. I felt helpless when it came to my eating habits. And I felt unworthy of the results I wanted. So, not a really fun place to be in. And I know from speaking with many of you that this is something you have experienced as well.

And I want this episode for you to be like a large exhale. Where you can release all of that resentment and regret when it comes to your history of self-sabotage. Because I'm going to explain exactly why this self-sabotage has been occurring for you. And what you really need to do to end the self-sabotage with food. I promise you, if you have a history of self-sabotage when

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it comes to your eating habits, you have really good reasons for it. There are exact reasons why self-sabotage occurs. It's not for some dark, mysterious, evil, ominous reason. It's not because you're a weak or bad person who is incapable of keeping promises to yourself. Or incapable of eating healthy. It's because of your brain.

Now, before I get into exactly why you self-sabotage and what that means we need to talk about willpower. Because this is where it all starts. Most of you will likely have tried to harness willpower to eat healthy in the past. I sure as hell did for many years when I was trying to force myself to eat a certain way. And willpower, according to Google, is "the control exerted to do something or restrain impulses". And I love this definition because it really gets to the core of it. "The control exerted to do something or restrain impulses". When we think about it, willpower is all about control. It's all about forcing the current version of yourself to take actions that aren't yet authentic to you. If those actions were authentic to you they would feel natural, right? But willpower is all about forcing yourself to take new actions. In other words, willpower is when you're forcing yourself to take actions that aren't yet authentic to your current brain. So here's how this works with changing your eating habits. Right now, you take certain actions with food that are very natural to you. As in, you are conditioned to eat the way you eat right now. And every food action you take is preceded by an emotion. And all emotions come from thoughts you're thinking. Meaning, from a higher level, that the thoughts you're thinking, or your brain, is responsible for every food action you take right now. Right now you are in, we call in coaching, a model. Where your thoughts lead to your feelings, which compel you to take certain action with food, which lead to the results you have with your body. This is your current model that you are in. This is how you are conditioned right now. And this is why the way you are eating right now will

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feel very natural and "right" for you. Now, what happens when you try and eat differently? And when you try to take new food actions that aren't yet authentic to your current brain? What will happen eventually is it's going to feel very, very wrong to you. At first it will feel good when you're starting to eat differently because you're relying on that initial motivation, right? You're relying on those dopamine hits that feel really good when you're anticipating that reward. But then that motivation starts to go away and reality will set in. And your brain is going to be like "Hell no, this is not what we're used to. What's going on here?". So it will come up with a lot of very good reasons why you should sabotage what you're doing that's new, so you can go back to your old ways. Because here's the thing. Your brain's only job is to keep you alive. It seeks pleasure and avoids pain, always. It only wants to do what's comfortable for it. Because as far as your brain knows, your current eating habits are what has kept you alive thus far. So, if you're trying to change your ways, and eat differently, your brain doesn't know that these changes won't kill you. And it sounds silly, but this is really the way our brains work. Your brain absolutely hates uncertainty. So, when you try and change your eating habits your brain will, in a sense, think it's in danger. It will seek safety, thereby compelling you to self-sabotage so you stay right where you are. Where your brain knows it's safe.And how does your brain compel you to self-sabotage? It will come up with a lot of thoughts that seek to keep you right where you are. For example your brain will come up with thoughts like, "This won't work for me anyways", "Who am I to think I can do this?", "I've never done this before, so why should I do it now?". Right? These thoughts will look a little different for everyone, but you get the idea. Your brain will come up with a list of thoughts that cause you to experience negative emotion. And I find, most commonly, this negative emotion is self-doubt. You're going to experience imposter syndrome where

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your brain doesn't believe it's this new person yet who eats healthy and makes good choices with food. So what do you do from this place? Where you don't believe you're capable of new results? This emotion of self-doubt will compel you to take the same actions with food that you have in the past. Thereby causing you to self-sabotage. This is why self-sabotage occurs for everyone. The reality is that your brain is always acting in a self-perpetuating feedback loop. As in, it's always looking for evidence for what it believes to be true. So, if your brain right now believes that you are someone who eats a certain way, it's always going to try and provide you evidence for that. It will always come up with a list of really good reasons for why changing your eating habits isn't possible for you. And when you listen to your brain in this way, that's when you give in to the self-sabotage. This is when you'll think that something is wrong because everything inside of you is telling you to sabotage your goals. When really, your brain is trying to sabotage your goals because it wants to escape that negative emotion of self-doubt. Self-sabotage is what you do, or the actions you take with food, in response to your negative emotion. So, I'm really hoping this is clear and makes sense to you. If not, definitely feel free to give this a listen again. But it's really important. If you can really understand how self-sabotage works in your brain, it's going to remove so much unnecessary suffering when it comes to you and food. If I understood how this worked years ago, it would have saved me so much of that suffering that I felt for sure.

Now, from here, I want to talk about how to stop self-sabotage when it comes to food. To clarify, the goal isn't to eliminate self-sabotaging thoughts or urges from your brain. Because you can't. That has to do with conditioning and your brain wanting to keep you safe. The goal with ending self-sabotage is for you to learn how to make peace with those urges so you can keep making progress

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with healthy eating from a very intentional and empowered place. So, how do you start doing this? First, you want to get really, really clear with why you have the results you do now. Write down your current actions with food as best as you can. Just write down your current eating habits. And then get curious and ask yourself what feelings you're experiencing daily that are compelling you to eat that way. So maybe that's self-doubt, worry, uncertainty – anything you're currently experiencing in life. Whatever negative emotion is currently happening inside of your body. Then, ask yourself what thoughts are creating those feelings for you? So, if I were to do this for myself in the past, I probably would have written down that I overeat in the evenings. And the feeling that compelled me to eat that way was overwhelm. The thought that was the cause of my overwhelm was definitely, "I don't know what to do". This was how my current eating habits, at the time, were created. And I want you to do this for yourself. Give it your best guess.

Then, second, I want you to take notice throughout the day when you feel compelled to take those actions with food. Notice that emotion when it comes up for you. And then practice making peace with it. In other words, I want you to practice feeling the emotion fully without escaping it through food. So, let's say you overeat after work because you feel stress in your body. Instead of reacting to that stress, you're going to make peace with it and feel that emotion intentionally without covering it up with food. Because remember, self-sabotage is about you wanting to escape a negative emotion you're experiencing. Oftentimes self-sabotage is about you wanting to escape self-doubt because you don't truly think you're capable of eating healthy. So, just be willing to feel whatever emotion comes up for you. I like to do this by sitting in silence. And I'll close my eyes and really try to separate myself from my

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body a bit. I'll literally say to myself "I am not my body". This is kind of the mantra I like to use. And I allow myself to observe what I'm feeling in my body without judgement. Where I'm allowing myself to be separate from it. This is very useful when doing this work.

And this is really it. When you're willing to feel any negative emotion that comes up for you, you gain the ability to end self-sabotage with food. Because this means that no matter what self-sabotaging thoughts your brain has, no matter how many times it tells you that you're not capable of eating healthy, it means you're still willing to follow through on your food plan no matter what. It's truly amazing.

Now, something I want to mention, is that your brain is not the enemy. And I know it seems silly that I have to mention this, but I really do. Because the last thing I want is for you to resent that part of your brain that wants you to self-sabotage. Having any type of resentment for your brain will not allow you to create new results with food. It's just not possible. Because you have to be willing to love and accept your brain for what it does for you. And what your brain is really doing, when it wants you to self-sabotage, is protecting you. It only ever wants to keep you alive. I like to think about my self-sabotaging brain like an overbearing parent. Where they just want the best for you and sometimes they may love you a little too much to the point where it's annoying. But, they mean well. And they really just want to make sure you're safe. That's how I like to think about my brain. This is how I decide to look at my brain when it comes up with a list of thoughts as to why I'm not capable of becoming someone new. I'm just like, "Okay brain. I know you love me. But we're fine. We're totally safe. I got this". And this is the way I want you to see your brain when it's trying to convince you to self-sabotage. Have compassion for your brain and yourself. Nothing has gone wrong when you feel compelled to quit

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your food plan. Nothing has gone wrong when you feel an urge to sabotage your progress. This is all just your brain trying to keep you safe. And you just need to teach your brain that the next level for you is also safe. And that it's allowed to have those sabotaging thoughts, but you're going to achieve your goals anyways. So, just expect the self-sabotaging thoughts to come up for you when you make those new healthy eating goals. Because I promise you they will come up at some point or another. If they're not coming up, it means you're not actually growing. So, be ready for them. When you begin doing this work, there's no thought or feeling that can sabotage your progress with food. The truth is, self-sabotaging thoughts are just sentences in your brain. And you get to decide whether you want to believe them or not. Alright, my lovely friend. I'm so excited to see where this work takes you. Let me know how it goes. And I'll talk to you next week.