

# Episode: Shiny Object Syndrome



## FULL TRANSCRIPT

HEALTHY EATING FOR BUSY WOMEN  
PODCAST WITH KAT RENTAS

# Episode: Shiny Object Syndrome

Hello, welcome back to the podcast this week today, I want to talk about shiny object syndrome, and I know this likely is not the first time you've heard this term, but I really want to offer you in this episode, how this can come up when you are working to change your eating habits permanently. And how I like to talk about shiny object syndrome with healthy eating is when you feel the urge to constantly change your approach with healthy eating.

So whether that's the methods you are trying, how you are taking action, all of it, all of the things that are available to you when it comes to changing the way you eat, you want to try all of the things. And this is when it feels very reactive and urgent. So this is something I've coached many women through as well as myself in the past.

So you are in good hands here. If this is something that you've experienced. So I would love to offer you this episode today, just to make you aware of this mindset and how you can move yourself through it when it comes up for you. Because if you are a human who struggle to eat healthy and you're looking to make permanent changes, this will absolutely be something that is available. And so how this starts for all of us of course, is when we want a result from healthy eating.

So maybe that's to feel healthier in our body, or we want to lose weight, whatever the goal is, or the result we're looking for from food. So of course, we want to start implementing changes with food. We want to eat healthy. And what happens is we'll start trying a new method. So maybe this is a new diet or a new food plan or a recommended food regimen, whatever it is, we will start to take action on that method.

And what happens is in the beginning, we have this motivation and motivation is just a rise in dopamine that we have in our brain when we're anticipating a result we want, right? So the result that you are looking for from healthy eating, just for a moment, I want you to firmly picture what that is very

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clearly, whatever that result is, when you are trying something new with healthy eating, you are going to have a dopamine spike of motivation, because now you are anticipating that result being possible, being real for you.

And what happens with every dopamine spike, unfortunately, is it inevitably comes back down. It's not something that lasts long term. And what normally happens for us is that we'll just make this mean something has gone wrong with the methods that we're trying will make it mean that we shouldn't feel the way we're feeling because when motivation leaves the building and the dopamine has come down, we will be left with our authentic human experiences. And really when we enter into a new diet or a new method to make the changes we want in the beginning, when we feel motivation, we will mistakenly think that if it's working, that we should be feeling that motivation kind of the entire time that the motivation and the emotions we're feeling indicates whether it's working and that we're getting closer to the result. So really what I'm saying is that most of us will believe we should be experiencing a certain feeling on the way to a goal.

So we believe that we should feel motivated and satisfied and certain and fulfilled. We think that we should feel that way on the way to a goal for it to be working. And these are all of the emotions that make us feel very safe and stable in our survival brain. And what happens is when the motivation runs out, we're left with all of the human experiences that don't feel very safe.

And we'll just think that this means something has gone wrong. We'll think that the results that we're wanting to create aren't possible and are unstable because emotionally we're feeling unstable and what this is when motivation has left, it's just all of the authentic doubts and fears that you can expect to come up. This can come from thoughts, such as this won't work long term.

This won't really matter. Anyways, this isn't going to last for me. These are the thoughts I see. Most often once the motivation has left because the

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motivation or the dopamine hit is a smoke screen for what you are genuinely believing about yourself when it comes to these changes. And if you are a human being who has struggled to eat healthy long term, then of course, you're going to have doubts and fears, but these won't be so obvious to you until motivation has left.

And now these doubts and fears are coming up, which feels very uncomfortable emotionally in your body. Now, I always like to say these thoughts and emotions you are having are valid in that. Of course you are having them based on where we've been in the past, but they're not true because you can't possibly ever know that something's not going to last because we can't predict the future.

What we believe about ourselves in terms of our future is just based on what we've created in the past. And it's likely if you are here, that you've struggled to maintain healthy eating long term. So that means the thought that's gonna be present for you in your brain is that no matter what method you try, it's just not going to last. And we can't demonize that thought or blame your brain for believing that. But it's also necessary that we objectively see that it can't be true, but we can understand why you are believing it. So motivation has left until these are all of the human experiences that you can expect to be present for you. But really as humans where we get into trouble here is we're just not taught how to handle these types of thoughts and emotions. We're not taught how to process them. And this is a big part of what I teach in my practice. I teach my clients to expect these fears and doubts, and they learn how to manage them effectively.

And for most of us, without this awareness, we will take these fears and doubts to mean that something has gone terribly wrong, that we're not doing the right thing. Something's not working. We just won't question them at all. So what I'm telling you here is when motivation has left, I want you to expect

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the fears and doubts and to just objectively notice them and question them because awareness makes it tangible.

And now you can effectively see it for what it is, which are thoughts and emotions. You can just expect. Now what normally happens without this awareness, right? Cause we're not taught to expect this is these emotions will start to fester and they will get bigger until it becomes too much for you emotionally. And you stop making progress with whatever method of healthy eating you are taking action on and you self sabotage, right?

So motivation gets you started human experiences. Start coming up that feel uncomfortable. And over time, because we're not taught to expect them or manage them. They get so big that we stop doing what we're doing and we sabotage our progress. So this can look like overeating, binge eating for some of us, this can look like taking a break. This was for sure, my go-to like, oh, I'll just get back to it next week.

This is just not a good week for me, whatever form of self sabotage. You may notice with yourself that will end up proving the doubts you are already having. So the emotional experiences that felt really uncomfortable are based from the fear and doubts that this won't work for you. And then when you self sabotage, you just prove that to yourself over and over again. And we need to be careful when we notice these patterns, because we don't want to beat ourselves up for this because none of us are aware of this until we are.

And my goal for you in this moment is just to notice this notice the emotional experiences that come up when you're taking action on healthy eating. Now this relates to shiny object syndrome because this pattern is why we have it. This is when we will crave the initial dopamine or motivation that we get from starting a new diet.

It's the start of this entire pattern because before our authentic human emotions set in, so the doubts and fears, the experience of healthy eating we

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have is motivation. And we know what this feels like when we start a new diet or a new program or a new method. So that is what we want to constantly have. And so this is when we constantly want to try new things, try new methods of eating, learn new things, read new books, whatever it is to chase this dopamine high.

And this is something that I notice in my clients quite often when they begin my program. And it's just something that they unlearn because when you join my program, you really get access to anything you'll ever need. Again, to make the changes with food. It's very simple. It's very doable. Everything you need is right there. And sometimes their brain will feel tempted to do more research or supplemental work outside of the program.

And when we do some coaching on it, it's not saying that doing these things is morally wrong, but it's coming from this shiny object syndrome of just wanting that dopamine hit because they're authentic human emotions or their doubts and fears start to come up as they should. So this is what we're actually just conditioned to do as humans. It's why we're very go, go, go.

We're always chasing that dopamine high. And we just don't slow down a lot in Western culture because we're always chasing the dopamine hit to escape our uncomfortable emotions that make us human. So with my clients, a big goal for them is to slow them down and create healthy eating habits that feel natural for them. So they don't have to put an effort. And this requires them to learn how to be with the human experiences that they have.

So they're not constantly chasing that dopamine hit shiny object syndrome, where you are constantly trying new methods of healthy eating.

You are changing. All of the things is the opposite of slowing down, which is what you will need to do to develop naturally healthy eating habits that last, that feel fulfilling to you. And that don't feel inauthentic. So I also want you to expect that not taking action on shiny object syndrome with healthy eating

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is going to bring up withdrawal, right? Because you will need to deny yourself of that quick dopamine hit.

You will need to take action on long term changes with food and body without self sabotaging, despite it not necessarily feeling new and luscious and motivating. So I will have clients for example, who will be making changes in my program and moving towards the result beautifully in a permanent way. And often they'll say to me, which is perfectly valid by the way that it's not feeling as satisfying as they thought, and there's no big burst of motivation or accomplishment along the way to their goal.

And what I'm able to help them see is that this means they're doing it perfectly because first off, this means they're not relying on dopamine hits to get a result, which is how you create long term results. And don't give into shiny object syndrome. But also it means they're doing it right, because why there's no big burst of satisfaction or dopamine, because they're not having to go through this internal battle to get the results with food and body that they want.

So in other words, they don't have to suffer or punish or restrict themselves to get the result. They can feel satisfied from food. They can feel accepting of their body and comfortable of the results they have now. So when they get the results that they've always wanted without punishing themselves to do it, there's no major satisfaction at the end of that. It just feels easy and natural.

And I want you to picture for you. If this is feeling a little bit outside, the realm of possibility, I want you to just imagine, what would that feel like to get the results that you want with healthy eating, without putting in a lot of emotional effort without restricting or suffering or punishing, how would you feel when you got that result? Right now, it may seem like you'd feel really excited and accomplished and amazing. But what I can tell you, and I want you to consider today is that it wouldn't feel ultra exciting or satisfying



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because it would just be who you are at that point. The changes felt natural. So now you've become someone who is being with the result that they've created, where they now identify as that person. So I know that's an in depth way of looking at this, but I want you to just consider how it may feel different, getting the result you want in a way that doesn't require so much from you. Because really when you chase the dopamine hit from trying a new diet or a new method, it also means that you are likely going to crave the dopamine hit when you've successfully completed a new diet. So when you've reached your goal, it's like reaching that top of a mountain. You've conquered it. You've proven you can do hard things, which yeah, that feels amazing. Doesn't it to prove to ourselves that we're capable of something that's really difficult where we had to put a ton of effort in, but here's the thing.

Your eating habits were never meant to be something that you conquer because you can't constantly be climbing that mountain and you can't stay on top of that mountain forever. It shouldn't feel like a climb to get to where you want to go. The accomplishment of doing hard things is worthwhile and valid in other areas of your life.

So say your career or for those of you who may resonate with it accomplishing new fitness schools, maybe. So I love to run and you know, running a marathon or doing a race is something that I can work hard for and accomplish and cross that finish line, which feels amazing. But with food, we can't be relying on these hits of accomplishments because the way we eat needs to feel sustainable emotionally, we can't be relying on these bursts of effort and dopamine hits because we're eaters every day we have to eat to survive.

If every eating decision is feeling like something you need to accomplish or conquer, you are going to burn yourself out, but we'll chase those dopamine hits with healthy eating because we think that's what's necessary to get a



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result. So when women enter my program and they learn how to eat healthy sustainably, where there's no big mountain to climb, that feels like it requires all this effort, healthy, eating requires less from them.

There's no battle for them to enter. It gets to feel simple and easy. And sometimes understandably, this trips them up a bit at first and they'll get shiny object syndrome and crave a method that's maybe new because they want a dopamine hit from their human emotions, which in most cases are fear and doubt in themselves to make the changes they want to make, but to make the permanent changes that they want, they need to create a method of healthy eating that doesn't feel like they're constantly climbing that mountain.

It needs to feel different because listen, I want you to consider using my marathon example. If I was training for a marathon every day of every year and making that my lifestyle, no, I have a season of the year where I do that. Right? And I do it because I want to, I don't have to train for a marathon.

I have to eat every day. Therefore I cannot have a method of healthy eating that requires the same level of commitment and effort that I need to train for a marathon, for example. Right? And so I hope this example resonates and it may be a bit extreme, but I want you to consider that difference, that accomplishment you get from doing hard things to become a naturally healthy eater. It's just not the best approach.

And I want you to consider when you give up the dopamine hit of shiny object syndrome with healthy eating, what will be left for you to experience emotionally? So for many of you, it's going to be the doubts and fears that taking a simple long-term approach with food, won't be enough to get the result you want. You're going to have fears and doubts about your ability to follow through long term.

And this is normal, but I offer you to slow yourself down. When you notice

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you are having the shiny object syndrome with healthy eating and give yourself emotional safety here, which just means having compassion when you notice those fears and doubts show up. So love yourself through the fears and doubts, support yourself. Because if you do the shiny object syndrome where you feel the urge to try all the things will pass, and then you can keep making long term progress in exactly the way you are now.

And also I do want to be clear. I'm not saying you shouldn't try new things. When something isn't working for you, where you are taking action, evaluating progress and making small changes along the way that is useful. And you'll know, this is useful based on the energy it's coming from. So these types of smaller changes come from focused and curious energy.

Shiny object syndrome is when you are wanting to burn it all down and start over completely. And it likely happens fairly often. It comes from the belief that nothing about what you are doing or what you've done is working, and you are desperate to find what will click. It's going to feel very, very urgent. And that urgency is just representative of you wanting to find that dopamine hit from a new diet or a food plan or whatever it is to escape how you are feeling now.

So as mentioned, I don't want you to beat yourself up when you notice this, we are not in the business of doing that here. I just want you to be aware of this mindset and lovingly expect it in your journey with healthy eating and making changes with food and body. I recommend when it comes up, just asking yourself, what is it I'm really needing right now? Where do I not feel safe? And where am I feeling?

Unsure. Give yourself that space to be with these questions and calmly answer them. Shiny object syndrome is available to all of us in the beginning. And you just need to teach your brain that the long term approach with food is safe. So you can make these changes permanently in the exact way that

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you want to. All right, my friend, I hope as usual that you have a lovely rest of your week, take care of yourself and I'll talk to you next week.