

Episode: The Motivation Hangover



Full Transcript

HEALTHY EATING FOR BUSY WOMEN PODCAST
WITH KAT RENTAS

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Hello, my lovely friend. I'm so happy you're here with me today. How are you? How's it going? Things are going really well at Kat Rentas Coaching. It's been really fun to watch this practice grow over the past couple of years. It's been amazing to speak to so many of you who listen to this podcast and are creating change with your eating habits. And right now, on the back-end we are working on a rebrand. So, basically that means this business will be getting a fresh coat of paint in the next few months. Which, of course it's exciting for me as the owner of this practice, but I really feel like we have such a community with this podcast, no matter if you're a listener of the podcast or a client of mine. It's so exciting and amazing to me to watch the business grow and help more women in the process, but I feel like collectively as women who want to have healthy eating feel accessible and enjoyable for us, we're all kind of doing it together. As cheesy as it sounds. The more this practice grows, the more women who have access to this work, the more women that are helped as a result with their eating habits, and that lights me up. But, moving on. That's what's going on with me lately. And, today I want to talk with you about something that everyone goes through when they change their eating habits. This is a concept that comes up a lot with my clients, and I thought about it, and I want to address it on the podcast as well. Because this will resonate with so many of you. And what I want to talk about today is this concept that I made up, called "the motivation hangover". And what I'm referring to is that period of time that occurs after the motivation to eat healthy has gone away. You'll likely have a pretty good idea of what this motivation hangover looks like for you. Here's what it looked like for me in the past. I would very intentionally and carefully create these beautiful food plans. And when I say beautiful food plans, they were stunning. I color-coordinated those plans, I created those plans on my computer with these like motivational phrases on them, I really thought about the foods that I included on that plan, and then I hung them on the fridge in all

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its glory – and it's fine, we can make fun of me. This always makes my clients laugh when I tell them how obsessed I used to be with the planning stage of eating healthy. And, actually, most of my clients can relate to this, maybe not in as extreme of a way as I would plan, but most of you will agree that the planning stage of healthy eating feels amazing. And here's why. Because this is when motivation will be triggered for you. This is where peak levels of motivation exist. And that was how it happened for me. I would feel super motivated, like I had my life together, that this would be the time I would finally eat everything on that plan without fail, and then reach the land of perfection with food, where there are butterflies, daisies, and unicorns. You get the picture. But then, what always happened, is my weeks would start off pretty good. Mondays and Tuesdays were always pretty solid. And then, by Wednesday afternoons, every single damn time, I would stop having the motivation. And it would hit me like a ton of bricks. I would finish my work day, come home, and then all of a sudden all bets were off. My brain started providing me with a lot of convincing reasons why I didn't need to follow the plan that day. And these reasons all seemed very legitimate in those exact moments, on the Wednesday afternoons where the motivation was no longer present. The reasons that would often come up were, "We just had a really hard day", "We deserve to have this food right now, because it's been a stressful week", "We'll just start again tomorrow", "One day won't make a difference", "We need a balanced approach so we'll just eat off plan today and then start tomorrow morning". These are examples of the seemingly legitimate reasons my brain would offer me for quitting my food plan. It's really funny, do you guys notice how our mental chatter can gaslight us with food? It uses our good intentions against us in the moment. My brain was like, "Well, you want to do a long-lasting approach, so you need balance, and having this Kraft mac 'n' cheese is balance. So there you go." Sometimes our brains are assholes, you

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guys. It's fine. Sorry if you have kids in the car, I just cursed. But, all of this is to say that those Wednesday afternoons when I got home from work were, for me, my motivation hangover. It was the experience of no longer having the original motivation that caused me to create the food plan in the first place. So, take a moment and consider: what's your motivation hangover, what does it feel like, and when does it occur? What reasons does your brain give you for reacting to the hangover? What reasons does your brain give you to quit your goals with healthy eating in that moment? So, motivation hangovers come up with my clients as well. They'll start my program, naturally having motivation in the beginning. This will always be the case. And then, after a couple of weeks, the motivation wears off naturally and then they're left with the human experience that they're having. The difference with my clients is that they have a supportive container and coaching to help them move through this, rather than self-sabotage. But they're humans, I'm a human, it happens to all of us. It doesn't mean there's something wrong with you, or that you're not capable of eating healthy. Here's exactly why this happens. Motivation isn't some tangible thing that we can summon with hacks or tools. We've all seen those articles, right? 9 Ways To Stay Motivated To Eat Healthy. 14 Tips For Getting (And Staying) Motivated To Eat Healthy. You guys, I'm kind of dying. I'm literally searching Google as I record this and these are the top two searches when you search "Healthy Eating Motivation". And here's the truth. Motivation was never meant to last. Because it is a spike in dopamine that occurs in your brain when it anticipates a reward. That's it. It's not very sexy, is it? It's just when your brain anticipates a reward. So, let's myth bust that one headline that says "Tips For Getting And Staying Motivated". No. That won't happen. Motivation is a spike in dopamine levels, that of course, naturally must eventually come back down. And it will eventually come back down as you begin taking action on the goals you set with food. And this is what happens when the planning stage feels so

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damn good. You feel so motivated. And then, when motivation goes away, what are you left with? This is what I'm playfully referring to as the motivation hangover. But really, it's just the thoughts and emotions that were always there. It's the human experience that was always present for you. That's it. Meaning, nothing has gone wrong per se, when you feel really crappy after motivation has left. These are just all of the emotional experiences that were always present for you, before the dopamine spiked and gave you the illusion that it wasn't there. Motivation leaving is kind of just coming back to the reality of the human experience, which is meant to be uncomfortable much of the time. We've just developed such a low capacity to feel these uncomfortable human experiences, because we have articles telling us that we should feel motivated and good all of the damn time. It's not true. Your human experiences are valid and normal. So, here's another exact example of this, to make sure this concept is really clear. You create a food plan and you look at that beautiful, organized food plan feeling motivated. Your dopamine levels spike. This is all very primitive by the way. There's not much logical thought to this motivation, which I'll explain why. But the dopamine levels spike in the beginning. And then, you start to take action on that food plan. After some time, the motivation goes away. And when it does, doubt starts coming in. Because you're thinking, for example, "I've never done this before", or "I know this won't last", or whatever other opinion your brain has about you and these healthy eating goals. This emotion, of doubt in this case, is what we're referring to as the motivation hangover. It's not that there's anything wrong with doubt, or whatever other emotion you're experiencing. That's the 50:50 of life. Uncomfortable emotions are part of the deal when being a human being. Unfortunately for us. But, in comparison to the motivation where everything feels amazing, it will feel like a sort of hangover. It will feel like a problem and that something has gone wrong. And here's why motivation is very survival-based. It's coming from a reactive

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part of your primitive brain. The reason why motivation occurs is because your brain anticipates a reward. And the reward your brain is seeking is to feel better emotionally. That's all the primitive, survival brain ever wants. That's what it's excited about. That's what it's anticipating. That's what drives it towards a desired result. It's not logically excited about the weight loss or healthy eating habits. It wants to feel better emotionally. And it thinks that weight loss or healthy eating will cause you to feel better. So, your brain is anticipating the reward so you can feel better emotionally. And then, after some time when those dopamine levels have gone away, your brain's like, what the hell, why don't we feel better emotionally right now? Why do we still have the human experience? Something has gone wrong. Where's my reward? Your brain has no patience for uncomfortable emotions because it's survival-based. It's the fight or flight brain. And a lot of the time it wants to engage in flight. Because it thinks your uncomfortable emotions are a problem. Like, a life and death problem. So, when your brain realizes that your eating habits aren't a quick fix, and that you still have to partake in the human experience, or doubt for example, it's going to freak out and create a story. It's going to offer you a collection of thoughts, for why this won't work out for you and why you should probably quit. So, you believe those thoughts and self-sabotage. Does this make sense? I hope so. And this is an example of how, if you're struggling to follow through on healthy eating, you have legitimate reasons for it. Always. Not in a way where you're a victim, but because there's a reason why our brain's feel driven to do anything. I tell my clients this all the time. There's no struggle with healthy eating that is unsolvable. It just doesn't exist. So, find peace in that fact. Nothing has gone wrong. It's also worth mentioning that we tend to put motivation on a pedestal and think it's something we really want, but it's actually very non-useful when it comes to our goals. Especially when it comes to changing our eating habits. Because it's a false promise. It's a fair-

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weather friend. It's like that guy who ditches you on prom night. This has never happened to me and if it's happened to you, I'm very sorry to hear that. I always think about, what's that movie, I think it's Never Been Kissed with Drew Barrymore. It's this go's movie where she was unpopular in high school and her high school crush asked her to prom and she's so happy and excited, and then on the night of the prom, he asks another popular girl, drives by her house in the limo where she's standing outside in her prom dress, and throws eggs at her. So, it was all just this mean prank on her to humiliate her and he ditched her on prom night. This is how I view motivation, you guys. For whatever reason, I think about that movie. And really, motivation isn't really your friend. It just comes from a very survival part of your brain that wants to feel better immediately. And that's not something we want to rely on when changing our eating habits. It's also not something you need. So, what's necessary to get through this motivation hangover? Because really, what we're referring to as the motivation hangover is just uncomfortable emotion. Right? We're pulling the wool from over your eyes. You're taken back to reality and the human experiences that you'll need to process and feel, so you don't self-sabotage. So, really, this is the least sexy advice ever. But it's the truth. I'm never to sugarcoat it. You'll have to be willing to be a bit hungover. You'll have to be willing to allow your brain to make it mean all of the things when the motivation goes away, without listening to it. You'll have to be willing to feel uncomfortable, without self-sabotaging and reacting. You'll have to be willing to engage with the human experience without overeating, emotionally eating, or stalling your progress with food. You are capable of doing this, but it is a skill. It is something I have practiced for years and I'm still practicing it. That being said, it's some of the best work I've ever done in my life. If I can learn to work through the motivation hangovers? Psh. There's no goal, whether it's with my eating habits or anything else, that I can't achieve. And this is true for you

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as well. Now, for those of you who are like "Kat. I've been through so many of these motivation hangovers and I can't move past it. I keep self-sabotaging. I want the tools and support now to move through it. I am ready". Then you are a good fit for my coaching program Own Your Eating Habits. This is how we work privately together, it's very high-touch, and rather than self-sabotaging when you're in these motivation hangovers you have a very supportive and safe container to move through them. It truly is the best way to change your eating habits without self-sabotaging, because you receive that coaching from me to do so. It's specifically designed for the women who are ready to change their eating habits, they're ready to create this result, and they want a very intentionally laid out process that teaches them the deeper work with food, in a simple way that doesn't take more time. So, you can learn more and apply to Own Your Eating Habits at [Katrentas.com/coaching](https://katrentas.com/coaching). I hope you have a beautiful rest of your day, rest of your week, thank you for being here with me today, and I'll talk to you next week.