

Episode: When You're Always Hungry



Full Transcript

HEALTHY EATING FOR BUSY WOMEN PODCAST
WITH KAT RENTAS

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Hello! Welcome back to the podcast this week. I hope you're having a lovely week so far. This past weekend I was visiting with some family and we went out to dinners and had some beautiful meals and I always really appreciate moments like this in my life, where I realize I've created this relationship with food where it's just meant to be savored, honored, and enjoyed. I know so many of you can relate when I talk about how different my relationship with food was in the past. If I was going out to special dinners with family or friends, instead of thinking about how delicious the food was or how much I was enjoying my time, I would be overanalyzing my calorie intake or whether certain foods were allowed or whether having that meal would slow down my weight loss progress. And what's interesting is at the time, it felt really useful. It didn't feel like I was missing out on all that much, just because I was so used to this restrictive mindset around food. But I always want to share moments like this with you all so you can get perspective as to what's possible for you. Now, food is so simple and it's something that adds value to my life in the deepest way, but not in an urgent, desperate way where I feel out of control of the food I'm eating. My relationship with food, and my body, is so intentional, deliberate, and in control. Not in a rigid way, but in a way that allows me to enjoy food at the fullest level while feeling totally in control of every eating decision I make. And weekends, like this past weekend, where I was just enjoying the heck out of food really highlight this 180 degree shift I've made. And it allows me to have so much gratitude for this same shift my clients make as a result of this business and my program, so always appreciative of these moments. And just a little PSA to you. Food was meant to be enjoyed. And for those of you who want to be able to enjoy the foods you love fully, while also feeling like every food decision you make is under your control, I am the coach for you. I invite you to apply to my coaching program Own Your Eating Habits. It's where you gain the tools you need to find control with food in this way, while still having the

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freedom to enjoy foods you love. You can learn more and apply at katrentas.com/coaching. Now, today I want to talk about a struggle that many women come to me with. This is something I definitely struggled with in the past as well, and it's this concept of always feeling like you're hungry. Many, many women come to me with this story. They'll say, "I don't really know what it is, I just can't seem to stop eating, I'm always hungry". And I really wanted to dedicate an episode to talking about this struggle specifically, because it's such a common one. I know when you all come to me with this struggle, you're in a lot of suffering with it, because it's one of those scenarios with food where you feel totally out of control. So, I'm going to clear up for you why you may be believing that you're someone who's always hungry and how you can start moving outside of that narrative to eat the way you want to be eating. This concept of you "always being hungry" starts because you find yourself overeating, maybe gaining weight, and you want to solve for that. So, you try to change what you're eating. You try to follow specific diets, weight loss regimens with food, meal plans, and you find that no matter how much you want to force specific eating habits into place, it doesn't work out for you long-term. You can never seem to change what you're eating no matter how hard you try. Which leaves you with the belief systems that "You can't be controlled with food", "Nothing works for you", "You don't know what to do". Which causes you to experience emotions such as helplessness, frustration, desperation, doubt, inadequacy – very uncomfortable, survival-based emotions that you don't want to be experiencing. So what do we feel compelled to do from these emotions? Seek comfort always. Your brain always will compel you to seek comfort in food from these deeper, uncomfortable, survival-based emotions. So, you emotionally eat, overeat, and find yourself in the same place as when you started. Which further feeds the narrative that "You're out of control with food" and that "You're just always hungry", that "You're addicted to certain

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foods". It all started because you found yourself trying to solve your overeating and lack of control with food by changing what you're eating. And when that didn't work over a number of years, and you still found yourself overeating, you figured, "Yup. I'm just addicted to food. I'm just out of control." Kinda makes sense, right? Of course you feel out of control. When you're trying to eat the right foods and it's not working over a period of years, yeah. You have evidence for these beliefs. But it's not that you're out of control. It's not that you're always hungry and that you're this unique, ravenous, creature that's always hungry and that can't be controlled. It's funny I have a number of clients who start my program really believing this. That they have this part of them that's like this hunger gremlin that can't be controlled, and it's fine. We all believe this at some point. What's happening with these clients, and what's possibly happening with you right now, is that you're just placing focus on where you don't have direct control. You're placing focus on the symptom, which is what you're eating, rather than the cause, which is what's causing you to feel out of control with your eating decisions. This is why you've created this self-concept as an eater that you're someone "who is always hungry". That "You're addicted to eating food". We can acknowledge that you have good reasons for believing this, because this is the evidence you've been providing your primitive mind. Remember, you can think of it like a computer and the data that it's been taking in for years is that you're someone who is constantly eating. But, that part of your brain doesn't have any context. It's not understanding that there are specific reasons why you find yourself constantly eating that have nothing to do with your being out of control. But, regardless, it will create this self-concept and belief system that you are someone "who is always hungry". And this becomes a self-fulfilling belief for you. Because what happens is your brain will start scanning for evidence in your life that you are this person who is constantly hungry. That you are this person who always wants to eat. This

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means that your brain will interpret neutral events in your life as evidence for this belief. So, for example, let's say you experience natural hunger because you're hungry and your body is telling you so. Your brain will interpret this as you "always being hungry" because that's just who you are. Let's say you have a human experience with food where you find that you overeat. Which, by the way, this is natural. Sometimes we just do this. It doesn't have to derail your progress entirely. But your brain with this belief, which take that event and make it mean "You're out of control. You're just always hungry and it's who you are". See why this belief really does matter? The clients who come to me with this belief take single episodes of overeating, or even take their natural hunger, so personally. They make it mean something is wrong with them. Which makes sense when they're believing that they're this hunger gremlin that can't be controlled with food who's "just always hungry". It will become a self-fulfilling belief if you aren't mindful of it. You'll judge neutral events in your life, provide yourself evidence that you are this type of eater, and then beat yourself up. Which, take it from me, this will lead you to a world of suffering with food. Now, let's talk about why this is a completely false narrative that your brain is providing to you. Because, remember, that primitive brain that takes all of this evidence to create this belief, never has all of the context. It believes a lot of things out of context. So, here's the context for why the belief "I'm always hungry" is a false narrative. It's because you cannot always be physically hungry. It's physically impossible. You only have so much room in that stomach of yours, right? Your stomach does reach a point when it is physically full. And I'm collectively laughing at all of us, you guys. Because we've all had this belief. "I'm just always hungry", "I can't stop eating", etc. etc. Always question the beliefs your brain offers you. Because sometimes it's just a liar. Now, let's unpack this though because we know that you know this. Of course you understand that your body only has a limited capacity for how much food you

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can eat. You know this. But, you're left feeling confused and like something is wrong with you because you don't know why you keep eating past fullness. Your brain assumes it's because you're "always hungry", but you also know that this can't be the case because your body has achieved fullness. So what's really going on here? Well, I'm going to tell you. And this is going to clear up so much for you if this is something you're struggling with. You want to understand the difference between physical hunger and emotional hunger. Physical hunger is very non-urgent and passive. It's the math, right? You eat when your body tells you it's hungry and you stop when your body tells you it's full. That's it. It's very simple. Now, most of you are struggling because you're looking at your eating habits through the context of this type of hunger. You're thinking that you want to eat past fullness because you're still physically hungry, even though you know you're not really, so you don't know what's going on. What's going on, is that it has nothing to do with physical hunger. So, let's put that in a box and set that aside. Why you think "You're always hungry" is because of your emotional hunger. Emotional hunger is very urgent and reactive. It's the opposite of physical hunger. It doesn't feel calm and intentional, this comes from your survival brain that feels very urgent and reactive. And your emotional hunger is driven by your brain's desire to experience emotional comfort with food. Physical hunger or natural hunger is filled by eating adequate amounts of food. Emotional hunger is filled by filling up with food as much as possible until an emotional experience is suppressed. So, putting ourselves into a food coma, basically. This is why this happens. You're not hungry. Your primitive brain is having a tantrum and it wants you to eat yourself into emotional comfort and safety. Now, hear me when I say that this is not necessarily a problem. If your brain is compelling you to do this, you have a perfectly functioning brain that is well-equipped to keep you alive. Congratulations. It's not a problem that your brain feels compelled to seek this

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comfort in food. It's not a problem that your brain is causing you to feel emotionally hungry in this way. It becomes a problem when you think it's a problem. When you think something has gone wrong because you feel this urge to eat when you want to suppress something emotionally. The healthiest eater you can imagine that you aspire to be? She also experiences urges from her brain to seek comfort in food. The difference is that she's not making it a problem and she's managed her mind enough so she's not experiencing emotional discomfort at a level where she wants to seek comfort from it with food. This is what each of my clients learns to do in Own Your Eating Habits. They learn to manage their emotions, so they're digesting their emotions separately from food. They learn to experience that urge, that emotional hunger fully, so it's not affecting their eating choices. I always joke with my clients that this is the difference between emotional digestion and emotional constipation. Emotional digestion is when you learn to process this emotional hunger rather than filling it up with food. When you're suppressing your emotions with food, that's when emotional constipation can occur and you make those emotions more heightened in your body over time. On top of this, my clients learn to honor their natural, physical hunger so their emotional hunger isn't as present. This is a skill you can learn. Natural hunger is solved by eating adequate amounts of food. And emotional hunger has nothing to do with the amount of food, or food at all. It's just your brain wanting comfort from uncomfortable emotions. And the most readily available source of comfort for us humans is food. Because it's a primary reinforcer and we all need to be eating to stay alive. But, you'll find that when you feel emotionally hungry you also feel compelled to seek comfort in other ways. Like procrastinating your work tasks, binge watching Netflix, if you're like my brain it really wants you to shop online and spend a little money, things like that. Things that don't ultimately serve you. This is natural for your brain to want to do. What will

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allow you to feel in control with food is when you realize it's not about what you're eating, it's not because "You're always hungry", it's because there's emotional hunger occurring and it needs to be processed effectively so it's not derailing your eating habits. The only way to digest this emotional hunger that you're constantly experiencing is to feel your emotions fully. The first step to doing this is to stop believing the lie that your brain is presenting to you. That "you're always hungry". It never has the full story. Sometimes your brain can be a liar and it doesn't have the context that you need. This is a great example of that. Begin separating your natural, physical hunger levels from your urgent, emotional hunger that you're experiencing. This will provide you so much clarity. Alright, my lovely friend. I hope this was helpful to you this week, and I will talk to you next week.