

Episode 169 Transcript

ANNIE BREES (INTRO)

Welcome to Balance365 Life Radio, a podcast that delivers honest conversations about food, fitness, weight, and wellness. I'm your host Annie Brees along with co-founder Jennifer Campbell. Together we have a team of personal trainers and nutritionists who coach 1000s of women daily and are on a mission to help women feel happy, healthy, and confident in their bodies on their own terms. Join us here every week as we discuss hot topics pertaining to our physical, mental, and emotional well-being with amazing guests. Enjoy.

ANNIE

Hello, my friends, Annie here, welcome back to another episode of Balance365 Life Radio, where we talk about moderation and balance with all the things, am I right? What about moderation with alcohol? Maybe you enjoy a glass of wine and the evenings like me, or on the weekends. Maybe you drink more in the summer than the winter. Maybe the stress of living through a pandemic, homeschooling kids, and not seeing extended family or friends for months has left you turning to alcohol to decompress. Whatever your reasons, we aren't here to judge. What we are here to do is inform you so you can make empowered decisions for your life. And before we get into that, make sure you grab our free guide, "The 5 Reasons That You're Craving Sugar," and the link to grab that will be in the show notes. Enjoy this episode my friends.

ANNIE

Hi, Jen, how are you?

JEN CAMPBELL

Good. How are you?

ANNIE

Good. We're talking about booze today. [Laughs]

JEN

We are. [Laughs]

ANNIE

What's your, do you drink? What's your favorite drink of choice? If you were to drink.

JEN

I like a white wine and a Pinot gris would be my favorite. How about you?

ANNIE

It kind of depends on the season. You know? [Laughs] We're coming out of red season, moving into white or rose. I like those New Zealand sauv blancs, though, those kind of grapefruity, grassy.

JEN

Yeah, I used to live in New Zealand. So I know exactly what you're talking about. And I was very privileged to have had access to some wines there that you can't get in the rest of the world.

ANNIE

I bet. I bet it was amazing. Well, we are talking about some real talk about your alcohol consumption. And I know we wanted to kick this podcast off with some of the challenges of talking about alcohol consumption. Do you want to dive into those?

JEN

Yeah, so here is a great quote from author Mark Manson. "The truth hurts, but not knowing the truth hurts even more." So [laughs] today might feel like a bit of tough love. But we want to help you make decisions based on facts, not feelings. And we're going to do facts. But first, I want to dive into some feelings just to acknowledge them. And hopefully hearing us unpack that a little bit will help you understand that. We are all about the balanced conversations over here.

ANNIE

Me. You're talking about me when you're -

BOTH

[Laugh]

JEN

Trying to soften this for Annie. [Laughs]

ANNIE

Yes, it's a self-serving episode.

JEN

Yeah. So number one, this has to go first that alcohol use disorders and alcohol dependency exists and is on the rise. We're going to talk about moderation with alcohol today. But we know that anyone who has struggled with substance abuse will likely say it all started with moderation. Many say that our casual drinking culture normalized their problematic drinking. And so I want everybody to know that this podcast is not intended to facilitate or encourage alcohol abuse. Just as our fat loss advice is not meant to facilitate or encourage a slide into an eating disorder. So if you struggle to cope physically or emotionally without alcohol, please see your doctor. And a really good place to get more information on this is the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. You can go to their website and we actually got a lot of the information for this podcast from there.

ANNIE

Awesome.

JEN

Yeah. And the second reason this can be difficult this can be a difficult conversation is because people are living in environments that feel like pressure cookers, trying to manage their health behaviors in a culture that pushes self-responsibility as the answer. So as behavior change coaches, we do have to acknowledge that change has to come from within, it has to be driven by the individual. But we can't ignore that environmental pressures have a great influence on the options people have, or the ease in which they can make change. So I had a real struggle with this in 2017. That's kind of when the mommy wine culture stuff started crossing my feed. And I was angry. Like, I was very angry. I was living in a really difficult circumstance for me at that time. And I was so sick of mothers being blamed for everything, when more and more and more continues to be expected of us all with a smile on our faces while rocking a bikini like, it's just ridiculous. So if women are struggling with substance abuse, I want to talk about why, I want to talk about the environment they're living in, not crap all over them for finding themselves there.

ANNIE

More shame, right?

JEN

More shame. Yeah. The third reason it can be difficult to talk about this is shame. And this kind of goes for almost any health behavior, right? And what I want to ask everyone listening is, is it safe for you to be honest with yourself? And by that, I mean, how do you treat yourself when you are confronted with your own humaneness, your imperfections? Now I can be honest with myself, because I practice self-compassion. So for the most part, I'm kind to myself when I mess up, or I have a trusted friend, I can reach out to, like, the other day me and you when I was having a forgetful day, who can encourage me to use self-compassion, right? So I can find my way there. But 10 years ago, that was a foreign concept to me. I needed to be perfect, because the way I would treat myself when I wasn't, was unbearable. And think about children who misbehave and are met with unreasonable consequences and shaming that does not improve their behavior. They just actually learned to sneak hide and lie better. So if you meet yourself with unreasonable consequences and shaming that might be leading you to a similar outcome, right? If we aren't safe havens to ourselves, we may just become better aligned to ourselves. And change requires honesty, honesty leads to accountability. And we hope by listening to our podcast, and I don't just mean this episode, I mean, all of our episodes, that you are learning you can be your own safe space for honest reflection. So if today's podcast leads you to any uncomfortable conclusions, can you meet yourself with a warm hug? Can you meet yourself like you would a friend who told you she's struggling to moderate her alcohol habits? I really hope so.

ANNIE

Yeah. And accountability, whether you're providing it to yourself or accountability and that you're maybe getting it from an outside source, a friend, a coach, you're in coaching, it shouldn't be

punitive. Right? Like that's not true accountability. It's not, that's self-criticism, right? Accountability is saying, "How can I help you meet what's best for you?"

JEN
Yeah.

ANNIE
Okay, great. So now we got those out of the way. Some little disclaimers as to why talking about alcohol consumption might be difficult, challenging, uncomfortable, right? Let's dive into what is moderation when it comes to alcohol. I don't know if I want to know the answer, though.

JEN
So a lot of women we work with identify as moderate drinkers. We hear this all the time. But what is moderation is what I think a lot of people don't know, like, what are the guidelines, and the 2015-2020 dietary guidelines for Americans states that moderation is two drinks or less per day for men, or one drink per day or less for women. So for men, that is, if you're at 15 drinks per week or more, you are considered a heavy drinker, not a moderate drinker. And for women, it is, if you're at eight drinks per week or more, you would also be considered a heavy drinker. And again, this is very gendered. And we have nonbinary people in our audience. I just took this straight from the guidelines. So that's just a full disclosure.

ANNIE
Yeah, this is I think, interesting, especially when you present it as how many drinks, the quantity of drinks across the course of a week. I bet there are many women listening like myself who maybe go days with without drinking, but then when they do drink it's 2, 3, 4 glasses or four cocktails, and cumulatively over the week that would put me into a heavy drinker classification.

JEN
Yeah. And so just sitting with that, I think, as a fact without feelings, right? And just kind of sitting with that, as a fact, "I am a heavy drinker. How do I feel about that?" And you might feel fine with it. You might feel uncomfortable with it. You might feel uncomfortable and want to change that, you might feel uncomfortable and go, "I'm not changing that right now."

ANNIE
Or you might be tempted to turn the podcast off and say, "No." [Laughs]

JEN
"Shut up." [Laughs]

ANNIE
"Screw these ladies." [Laughs] "I don't like it."

JEN
Yeah.

ANNIE

In addition to that, Jen, I think we also need to talk about serving size. I know I mentioned on a podcast once but the serving size I have at home, I think is a little bit more generous than what's actually a serving size.

JEN

Yeah, so that's another consideration when you're looking at if you're a moderate drinker, or a heavy drinker. So depending what your drink of choice is, a serving size of beer is 12 ounces, liquor is eight ounces, wine is five ounces, I know that when we go out to eat here, we can order wine in six or nine ounces, which is six ounces over right? Over a standard serving size of wine, or nine ounces is almost double. So there's been plenty of times when I've ordered a nine-ounce you know, and now I'm realizing, "Oh, that's two drinks, like that would count as two drinks." And so for anyone listening at home, I don't know what your drink of choice is. But you might want to just be mindful of the serving sizes, because you might be a heavy drinker simply because of mindless pouring, for example.

ANNIE

Yeah, so serving size is not a bottle.

JEN

It's not a bottle, no.

BOTH

[Laugh]

ANNIE

Got it. Noted. I want to also ask about the differences between men and women, because I know it's not just about body size, right? Or body weight.

JEN

Yeah, so I mean, that's the assumption, I guess is that well, if we typically see recommended serving sizes for men and women broken out, then if you're in a larger body, maybe you can go with the recommendations for men, which may be because that is part of it. When you live in a larger body, you have more tissue. But that's actually not the only reason. And it is that anyone assigned female at birth will actually be processing alcohol differently than somebody assigned male. And we will absorb and metabolize alcohol differently, and we are more likely to suffer organ damage from misusing alcohol. And studies also show women who consume about one drink per day have a five to 9% higher chance of developing breast cancer than women who do not drink at all. And the risk increases with the more drinks consumed. And I don't want this to be doom and gloom. So you can find all this online. The CDC is a great website to read up on this if you want to learn more. The National Institute for Health, or the website we mentioned earlier.

ANNIE

Yeah, and I think that's important to note though, Jen, because, well, for two reasons, like you said, as a woman who weighs as much or more than a lot of men in her life, I always assumed that I was, you know, I'd fall under those guidelines. I could handle alcohol like my dude friends could, right? But the other thing, too, is talking about some of the health consequences of heavy drinking. Because, you know, we do spend a lot of time on this podcast talking about weight loss. But this isn't just about weight loss. I mean, it can affect your ability to change your body composition and lose weight, but there's also some adverse health effects that could accompany this behavior.

JEN

Yeah, totally. And I think when I was younger, you know, and everybody knows that, like everybody kind of knows there's health consequences of drinking. I think when I was younger, I didn't, you know, you don't care about much at that age. It seems so far off. And I think as I get older, these things start to really kind of settle in for me and I think as you get older you start to, I don't know, maybe just think about your mortality a little bit more, and we can't control everything. But are there ways that we can support our longevity and for me, I guess I really started pumping the brakes in 2017, my alcohol habits had slipped up to a level that I, when I was honest with myself weren't comfortable for me, were probably more on the heavier side. But what I'll say is I just didn't feel good. I just didn't feel good. I wasn't sleeping well. I was, like, hungover every Saturday, Sunday, on the weekends. And kind of gradually with my kids not getting up and doing the things I love in life, because I just wasn't feeling that good. So I'd sloth around, not get anything done on the weekends. Yeah, and just I was not living my best life.

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

Yeah. So I still do drink moderately. And we'll, you know, we'll get into that, I didn't do an all or nothing, all or nothing might be right for some people. It wasn't right choice for me. But do you want to get into kind of the issues we see? The tough love part?

ANNIE

Yeah, this is the honesty part, right?

JEN

This is the honesty part. So here's the honest truth that a lot of people's moderate alcohol consumption isn't so moderate either because they don't know what the guidelines are. Or they are telling themselves little fibs. And maybe you think you're drinking within the guidelines until you actually look at, if you're telling yourself the truth about the number of drinks you have in a week, like you would be, maybe you wouldn't be surprised. But when our members actually start tracking their habits from just a very nonjudgmental place, they are sometimes floored at how often they do something that, like an undesirable habit. And they kind of just need to see it on paper, and what that adds up to over the course of a week or a month.

ANNIE

Right. I mean, what we're saying here applies to a lot of things, not just alcohol. But the thing with alcohol, though, is you, the more you drink in one setting, the less mindful, present, you know, it destroys your ability to make like mindful choices, recollection of activities.

JEN

Yeah, well, that leads back to my point of how it seems to, it appears to cause more organ damage to women than men. And so women are more likely to black out, which is actually that it stops the transfer of memories from the area of your brain that collects the short-term memories and transfers them into the long term. It just blocks that out. So that's why, and so you might have lost track of the amount you pour into one glass. So you know, one serving is actually for you, actually having two servings at a time. Or you might not be honest with the amount of times you binge drink, which for women is having four plus drinks at a time.

ANNIE

So here's the tough love. You want to give it Jen?

JEN

Yes. So obviously a lot of people come to us for healthy balanced weight loss advice. And here's my tough love. The calories you are consuming from alcohol are adding up fast. Alcohol doesn't provide us with any satiety the way food does, and it actually often leads to snacking. So it's a double whammy. And there's a lot of people holding really tightly to their alcohol habit. And they have weight loss goals. And those weight loss goals aren't happening. And they keep trying to make more nutrition changes, when actually the biggest rock in their life is that alcohol consumption. We had a woman a couple years ago who was actually a heavy drinker. And she went, I think she went back to university is what happened. And all of a sudden, she was studying on the weekends, not drinking with her friends. And about six weeks later, she posted and her jeans were falling off her and she realized, whoa. Whoa.

ANNIE

I know that my alcohol consumption seems to ebb and flow for various reasons and I've identified a few but I know that when I'm actively pursuing weight loss, when I have in the past, I know if I were ever to return to that in the future, alcohol is one of the first things to go, for so many, and it's really not like just calorie based. It's the domino effect it has on all my other behaviors. So for me that's a non-negotiable way more than my like coffee creamer.

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

[Laughs]

JEN

Yeah. And everybody's got to decide what is negotiable and non-negotiable for them. But here's the thing. We're not going to just leave you with this doom and gloom, we're going to give you some really practical things to work through, for how to slow down. If you're to this and you feel uncomfortable, and you're thinking you're ready for this change, go through this process with yourself.

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

Yeah. So number one of slowing down here, identify the reward you get from alcohol. And what else can you do? So I would say most commonly we hear that alcohol is a winding down thing.

ANNIE

Yeah, it's often, when I hear women describing when they're reaching for a glass of wine, or whatever drink, it's usually this, "I just got my kids to bed, I've had a day, I just, I know, I should probably go back to the office and do some more work, but I just can't. I just need a minute." Like they're looking for, like, this a breather, they just want to tap out for just a second, like, just sit down, and like, chill out, right?

JEN

Yeah. And definitely for me, when I was kind of increasing my consumption, it felt like, definitely stress, like it was a way to blow off some steam or help kind of unburden myself, just even physically, like the tension that would kind of leave my body. But also, I felt very, I don't know, I felt very adult when I was doing it. Like it felt like this is what grown women do.

ANNIE

[Laughs]

JEN

This is what refined grown women do. And it was, that feeling would start happening for me before I poured the drink. It was like, I would get out the glass. And then we got these fancy glasses, I'd open the bottle. Yeah, it was the whole ritual of it, and how much that's influenced by marketing from the alcohol industry, I don't know. But I am assuming probably quite a bit of different, maybe commercials I've seen or maybe people I know who have had wine. I also live, I've lived in a couple different wine regions in the world as we moved around. I don't know why, I just find myself by wine regions all the time.

ANNIE

[Laughs]

JEN

And, you know, being at wineries, like, just the whole thing, it's quite a, it's an experience. And so there's probably a lot of memories wrapped up for me in drinking wine and even certain kinds

of wine. When I've actually been to the winery, it takes me back there. So I had a lot to unpack when I was pumping the brakes. And I had to create habits that made me feel the same.

ANNIE

We also hear, this was a little bit more pre-pandemic [laughs] -

JEN

Yeah [laughs]

ANNIE

- but it's socialized with, how we connect this a lot of times, a social activity that people do together. If you're not drinking, or if you're drinking less than everyone, you might experience some pushing of alcohol or you might have some FOMO. I'll also share too, that I think my alcohol consumption has increased since I've started dating, because -

JEN

Wow.

ANNIE

- you know, you meet a friend for drinks. That's what you do. Or I'd get a little nervous. And I'm like, "Maybe if I just had a cocktail?" [Laughs]

JEN

Yeah, I can see that for sure. I mean, I don't think I was sober the first five times I hung out with my husband.

BOTH

[Laugh]

JEN

I don't think he was either. But actually, my husband doesn't drink anymore. He quit drinking several years ago. And he told me, you have no idea how much alcohol is ingrained in our culture until you're not drinking anymore. And when I pump the brakes now, I remember my first kind of like, it felt terrifying, to be honest, we went to a, it was a gathering around here of business owners in the city. And we knew some people going, they invited us, we went, and I could have had a drink. But at that time, I had decided I was going to start challenging myself. So I had kind of gotten over the hump of not drinking at home or alone anymore. And that actually wasn't too hard for me. And I wanted to start challenging myself in more uncomfortable situations. And, I'm pretty introverted. So that is not a comfortable situation for me, to go to a meeting that has, it's like a social, there's people I don't, tons of people I don't know, lots of small talk, which I just hate small talk. And I didn't drink, I had a sparkling water and I got to really feel what my husband had been going through for quite a while and I mean, he was more comfortable than me because he had lots of practice by that point. But I felt awkward even though I had a glass of sparkling water. I still feel like, I didn't know what to do with my hands.

ANNIE

[Laughs]

JEN

I felt a bit edgy. I felt like, yeah, and so that's when you start realizing how ingrained these habits are. Right? It's like, when you go without your phone for a day and you realize how many times you reach for it.

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

Right? Like habits are just so unconscious. And so yeah, that's when I really realized what a crutch alcohol was. And I'm, and nobody has to do what I've done, nobody has to do that, I'm not preaching, it's just those are ways that I wanted to challenge myself.

ANNIE

Yeah, I think the other thing that doesn't get talked about a whole lot is, I actually have aspects of my personality that come out after a glass or two of wine that I really like.

JEN

And don't we all. [Laughs]

ANNIE

Like, Annie with two glasses of wine just is a little bit more chill, you know? She's just not so like high strung, she's more relaxed. And so part of exploring my relationship with alcohol has been like, how can I tap into that without the alcohol? What else can I do to bring that forward?

JEN

So I think I've gotten more silly, because I would get quite silly when I would have a couple drinks. I wouldn't be the life of the party. I would [laughs] you know, the funny one, I was always a funny friend. And I mean, if anyone who knew me back then is listening, they might be like, "No, she wasn't," but I certainly felt like it. And I think I've tapped into a silly side of myself that can exist sober now.

ANNIE

Yeah, yes. But the point here is, what started all this was you suggested that listeners identify the reward that they get from alcohol, because yeah, just like any other undesired behavior, like even quote, unquote, bad habits have positive rewards, otherwise, we probably wouldn't do them, right? You're way more likely to be successful if you can explore other behaviors and habits that elicit that same reward that you're getting, and sub that in versus just take out the behavior. And then you're like, but I missed that reward. I'm still craving this closing ritual, or relaxing ritual, a social ritual.

JEN

Yeah, and so identify, so then you start working through that list, right? And so what happened to me with this social situation, I felt a bit of anxiety, you know, just a lot of discomfort. I have learned to soothe myself in those situations. And it's a skill I did not have, because my whole adult life, I would rely on the alcohol to do that. And that's why with you know, this could apply to different situations. But whether you're drinking or you're overeating, often, and we have podcasts about this, when you are looking at the ways you, different ways you might over-consume or over numb, like over Netflix, you know, over scroll, all those things, when you stop doing those things, you have to deal with the feelings that come up yourself. And that's when you start building the skills to be a more emotionally resilient human.

ANNIE

Yep.

JEN

Yeah. So second thing to identify, identify the rewards, and then identify what it's costing you. So as Annie said, every habit has a reward, even bad habits. Even self-sabotage has rewards, right? Self-sabotage keeps us safe and comfortable. So for someone who's dating, we may talk ourselves out of asking someone out because we want to avoid rejection. So that self-sabotage keeps you safe from rejection. We may talk ourselves out of making a career move or launching a business to avoid failure. Right? But if you want weight loss, and this is what you think might be a pretty big rock for you, it's time to look at why you are self-sabotaging. So why are you talking yourself out of this? What's it costing you?

ANNIE

And the answer is going to look different for everyone. Right?

JEN

Yeah, absolutely. And I think, and what I mentioned earlier, for me, I identified that I was not spending my weekends in a way that felt valuable for me. Monday would roll around and it was like, where did the weekend go? Right? I wasn't being like the best partner or mom that I want to be. I wasn't treating my body the way I see my best self treating her body.

ANNIE

Yeah, I think avoiding failure is another one. We hear that from perfectionists a lot.

JEN

For sure.

ANNIE

You might know a thing or two about that. [Laughs] Because if you don't even try, then you can't fail.

JEN

Right, then you can't fail, right.

ANNIE

Or, if you label yourself, you identify as a failure, then it's no surprise when you do fail. But that belief that you are a failure likely impacts your thoughts and behaviors of like, what is the likelihood that you're really giving a full, honest, best effort attempt at trying anything?

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

When you believe you're a failure, right?

JEN

Yeah, for sure.

ANNIE

And also defining failure as failure, you try something and then you don't get the desired outcome, or is it that you don't even try at all?

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

Is it something else? Getting clear on these things is a big piece of the puzzle.

JEN

For sure. Yeah. And I think too, is that maybe looking at, you know, you spend a lot of time and energy thinking about wanting to feel more comfortable in your body physically. And so that's what this could be costing you. Right? If that's what you want, we think you deserve to have that.

ANNIE

Yes, and I want to circle back, you know, numbing, avoiding some of those emotions. I think that that's what is at the heart of drinking too. For a lot of members in drinking, they get to avoid the discomfort of sitting with those emotions. And so in that way, it can be self-sabotage, right? Because pouring a couple glasses of wine is considerably easier, right? In the moment, than to sit and feel some of those uncomfortable emotions, think those thoughts that maybe aren't the most helpful, and explore like, "Where did I learn that? Where did that come from? Whose thought is this?" You know, asking yourself all those questions, that work. That's a lot more work.

JEN

It's a lot more work. Yeah.

ANNIE

Mm-hm. And it's not always fun.

JEN

No, but it's valuable. Right? It's so valuable. I'm really proud of myself for how much I've decreased my alcohol intake. And it has nothing to do with calories. It has to do with, I am so proud of myself that I have learned these new skills of how to calm and soothe myself without alcohol. And to add to that around emotional eating, which is something I do pretty infrequently, as well, too, that was, it's sort of the same result. Like, wow, I'm so proud of myself that I've learned to soothe myself without food as well. Right? Those are the things that I for me, I feel, are kind of part of living this great big, full life and feeling all my feelings, not just running from the uncomfortable ones, and embracing the comfortable ones. It's all of them.

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

Yeah. I also feel, I don't mean to sound righteous, but [laughs] I feel like a good role model for my kids when I feel my feelings and don't reach for different things. Yeah. Yeah, it definitely feels good to me. And also my partner, we're really both on board with this, that, yeah, that our kids the way we, I guess consume, or my husband doesn't consume alcohol at all, but the way I consume alcohol is just, yeah, I think it's, it would be, I would be very content if their alcohol habits were similar to mine.

ANNIE

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. So do you want to get into how to reduce your consumption?

JEN

Yeah, so, we just talked big picture. So we just talked kind of the meaning, you would be developing the meaning behind the action, which is so important, but we'll get granular now on little things. And I've got a couple tips to reduce your consumption. And I'm sure Annie does as well. So number one, I created some self guidelines for myself. And so I didn't do that when I was stressed, I didn't do that while I was drinking. I did it when I was feeling good. And I was able to sit in a good headspace and decide what I want for myself. And my self-loving guidelines with alcohol are that I don't drink alone anymore. Nothing wrong with that, again, just these are my guidelines. I will have a drink with a friend and two drinks is my max and honestly these days, that would be pushing it because I pulled back on drinking. It affects me negatively even more than it ever did. So now I can even feel one drink the next day after I've had one drink, so, and you know, keep in mind, I implemented these self-loving guidelines in 2017. We're in 2021. And it wasn't perfect. And it's all been a learning experience. But over the last four years and especially, come on, pandemic, like how much socializing are we doing? I don't know if I've had, I had one drink the other day, I was celebrating, we sold our house. And I had a glass of

champagne. And that's the only drink I've had in 2021, I think which is crazy when I think about it. So anyways, they've worked for me, but everybody has to figure out their own self-love and guidelines, and they might change as the years go on. The second tip I have is to measure it. So rather than free pouring or grabbing the biggest wine glass you can find and pouring into that, measure out five ounces, if that could help you stay mindful. And I do the same thing with food sometimes, like, measure out the cream for my coffee, and all of that.

ANNIE

Yeah, I shared this on another episode. But I used to drink out of mason jars, because it was just like, that's what we drink water out of. And I think I'm really hipster and super cool. But I realized that when I went to a restaurant that my serving of wine was considerably more than what they were serving me, and a mason glass, it's just not quite as easy to eyeball. So I switched to wine glasses when I served myself. And it's much more easier for me to say, okay, like that is a serving of wine.

JEN

Yeah, for sure. The third is to switch to lower-calorie drinks. So that could be a shift, obviously, the alcohol is going to be the same. But a lot of alcoholic drinks come with like pretty sweet, sugary, whether it's soda or juice with it. So they're just very high-calorie. They're expensive, as far as our total daily energy expenditure. And for us to ask for an accountability partner, and whether that it's a friend, your partner, or there's different online groups that are actually not about abstinence, but they're about moderation. Or talk to your doctor, if you think that this is going to be a big struggle for you. And also understand that it's not all or nothing, like, alcohol abuse is a sliding scale, and you can go to your doctor, even if you are sure you are not dependent on alcohol or like would actually classify as being an alcoholic, right? It's a sliding scale, and you can have alcohol abuse issues, and still go to your doctor knowing it's not, you know, you don't need to go to rehab necessarily, you know, all those things. I mean, I don't know, I'm not your doctor. But I think a lot of people feel that their issues have to be quite extreme before they actually seek out healthcare advice.

ANNIE

Yeah. The other suggestion I would make to help reduce consumption is to not keep it in the house.

JEN

That's a really good one

ANNIE

I have a bar cart, for some reason I don't make cocktails the way I pour wine. And I know this about me, so I don't keep like a stash of wine in the house or in the fridge. If I want wine, I'll go buy a bottle, I'll bring it home, share it with a friend or whatnot. But I don't have like a supply of bottles after bottle after bottle.

JEN

I remember when you were making this transition, even years ago, you used to keep boxes of wine in your fridge. And you would talk about how that is so easy.

ANNIE

Yeah, because it was like, at least with a bottle, there's a little bit, there's a limitation. Like, you can only pour so many glasses if you only have one bottle, right? But with boxed wine, which we originally were buying, because we thought it was more economical, we could just have half a glass and didn't feel like we wasted a whole bottle if we don't drink it within, you know, two, three days. But what ended up happening was I would pour just a half a glass and then just another half glass more, and then a half, because it was so, it's just in your fridge and it's in your face every time you open your fridge. And so I just stopped buying boxed wine, no shade to boxed wine. It just...[Laughs]

JEN

Yeah, you were, it was slippery for you. Yeah. And I actually, on that note, I know somebody who buys like single servings of wine. She just buys, they're like little cute little mini bottles. And I saw a lot of those in New Zealand actually. Or she buys wine in a can. And so she just has single servings and she'll just open a single serving and I think that's really smart too.

ANNIE

Yes, yeah, absolutely. But what if you don't want to reduce your consumption?

JEN

Okay, so I want you to know, this is okay. I had a coaching call the other night with a woman who, we were talking about her negotiables and non-negotiables. And she flat out told me, don't touch my wife. That is a non-negotiable right now. We're not talking about that today. And I said, that's okay. Like, we're not here to take things away from you. We are here to give you information, evidence-based information and empower you to make your own choices. But here's the deal. Most people find us because they're sick of dieting, and they want more autonomy with food, or their nutrition overall and exercise, etc. But with autonomy comes responsibility. So have your wine or your drink or your beer or whatever you like. But no, "Poor me," okay? You have to own the consequences as well. And that's all we want for people, right? We want, nobody's perfect, absolutely nobody is perfect, you and I certainly aren't perfect or are perfect habits. But we can make imperfect choices and own those consequences. Right? Because as I talked about, at the start of this podcast, when you have self-compassion, when you are in a safe place to unburden yourself, or your safe place to look at your own imperfections, then you can do that.

ANNIE

So own the choice.

JEN

Own the choice and own the consequences. Don't get up on Saturday morning feeling groggy and tired, kind of grumpy after three glasses of wine on Friday, and blame it on everyone around you. Just, "Yep, I did that. I did that. That was me."

BOTH

[Laugh]

JEN

And that was my turning point. So really, you know, things were hard for me at that time, I was going through a lot in my marriage, I felt, you know, I felt this wasn't maybe necessarily true, I felt like I had very limited options. I didn't feel supported. I wasn't supported. We were also living in a new city. I didn't know anybody. And you know, there was a lot of victim mindset stuff going on with me, as my alcohol consumption increased. And so it really was a turning point for me when I was able to be honest, and say, "Okay, these consequences are mine. These are mine." And then I was like, "This doesn't feel good. It doesn't feel good to not blame other people on Saturday morning for why I'm not feeling good."

ANNIE

Yeah, and I also think the thing that I don't want to see women do after listening to this podcast is, "I should" or, "I'll try." I think those are the two most exhausting phrases in the human language. Like, do it, don't do it. Like, we don't care.

JEN

Do it because you want to, because the information you learned in this podcast, or you go out and do a little bit more research on your own, really empowers you to want to make that choice because you believe it will be better for you. For future you.

ANNIE

And it's just, it's just an exhausting place to be like, "I should but I don't know, I'll try, maybe, eh..." Like, oh, man, like, don't do that to yourself. Right? Like...

JEN

Don't do it.

ANNIE

Take a moment to decide. And if you're still like evaluating, right? That's different than "No, I know, this is not supportive of my best life. But I kind of wanna, I don't want to," you know, that whole thing. And if that's you and you're a Balance365 coaching member, get on a call, we'll talk about it. [Laughs]

JEN

Yeah, we will, we will talk about it.

ANNIE

So, assess the reward. Evaluate what you're getting from it, identify what it's costing you. Reduce some consumption, if that's what you want. We went over some tips for that. And if not, if you listen to this, and you're like, "No, don't touch it. I'm not changing it." Great. Own that too. Anything else to add?

JEN

No, that's all.

ANNIE

Alright.

JEN

How are you feeling? [Laughs]

ANNIE

A little attacked. No. [Laughs] I'm feeling good. I feel like I am on the cusp of maybe addressing my alcohol consumption. You know? I'm like, I can see it on the horizon. Like I'm sniffing -

JEN

You're in preparation stage.

ANNIE

Yeah, I'm, it's almost like I'm holding a piece of clay and I'm like, playing around with it. Like, maybe like, what's this like?

JEN

[Laughs]

ANNIE

Like, you know, I know all the, I know all the tips and tricks, right? And there have been times where I've gone without alcohol for months and months and months at a time, there's been points in my life where I've just dramatically reduced it, and I guess I'm just still evaluating, like what's reasonable and sustainable to me knowing that like, my friends do enjoy getting together for a drink on occasion. It's summer coming up, I'm sure, you know, I might have a family barbecue that I'd want a cocktail at, like so maybe nothing at all isn't the right choice and maybe I can focus on reducing frequency, right? And what does that look like? Just playing around with it.

JEN

Yeah, just staying curious. And what if I, what if tonight I, what if, yeah. Yeah.

ANNIE

Yeah. Alright. Great episode Jen. Thank you.

JEN

Thank you.

ANNIE (OUTRO)

Hey everyone, if your mind has been blown while listening to this podcast, just wait until you work with us. Let us help you level up your health and wellness habits and your life inside Balance365 coaching. Head on over to balance365.co to join coaching