

Episode 173 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, question for you. Have you ever had a burst of motivation to change your habits? For whatever reason it feels like it strikes you like a lightning bolt out of the sky and almost instantly, you not only feel excited thinking about all the changes you can make, but you actually start to make them. It might last a month, a week, a day or even just a few hours but eventually you return to feeling uninterested, unwilling and uninspired. Does that sound familiar to you? Hands down, one of the top questions we get is, why can't I stay motivated? So many women we work with think that if they had more motivation, they could reach their goals, but they can't seem to stay consistently motivated. If you've ever struggled with motivation, then this episode is for you, my friends. And spoiler alert, if you're listening to this podcast episode right now, you've got some motivation in there somewhere. And on today's show, Jen and I dive into what motivation really is, how you can harness the various types of motivation to reach your goals, and if all else fails, what to do when you just aren't motivated. But before we get into today's topic, make sure you grab our free guide, "The Five Reasons You're Craving Sugar and What to Do About It." You can find the link to that in our show notes. Enjoy this episode, my friends.

ANNIE

Jen, how are you?

JEN CAMPBELL

Good. How are you?

ANNIE

Good. What's new with you?

JEN

I'm not sure if there's much. [Laughs]

ANNIE

[Laughs] Did I throw you a curveball with that question?

JEN

You did. I was ready to say I'm feeling motivated.

ANNIE

I do get it. Do you ever find yourself asking, or do you ever get asked, "Why can't I stay motivated?"

JEN

Constantly. This is probably one of the number one issues people self identify. Right? So, "Hey, what do you think's holding you back?" - "I can't stay motivated." And they really see it as a problem.

ANNIE

Yeah, I think this is definitely one of the most common we hear in our social media DMs, like, if I just had this motivation, then I could do all the things, then I could reach my goals, then life would be perfect. And the reason my life isn't perfect is because I can't stay motivated, and why can't I stay motivated? So that's what we're talking about today. And I think the answer is really going to surprise people, especially if you have this belief that you need to be motivated.

JEN

Yeah. And look, it's something we were taught, too, right? Like, just quickly acknowledging that the health and wellness industry has really kind of pushed this myth over the years.

ANNIE

That you have to be motivated.

JEN

Get motivated. Yeah.

ANNIE

Because, then it's not their fault. It's user error as to why the result wasn't achieved. Do you see what's happening here? [Laughs]

JEN

Yes.

ANNIE

Okay, so why can't you stay motivated, Jen?

JEN

Well, number one is because it's a feeling. And just as you don't become happy and stay happy, you won't always become motivated, and stay motivated.

ANNIE

Right, so if you ever have the experience, that you have these brief bouts of motivation, and maybe you change your actions as a result of that motivation, and then over time, feel like not so motivated, also not taking the action that I was, it's normal.

JEN

It's normal. Feelings ebb and flow, right? And we're not in a constant state of happy, we're not in a constant state of angry, we're not in a constant state of sad. Over time, feelings, ebb and flow, and the intensity of feelings, they can come on strong. And then they, then that subsides. And motivation can be the exact same as that.

ANNIE

And I think what people often describe as motivation is this feeling where they're feeling very excited, determined, they have a lot of conviction in doing this thing, whatever they've set out to do. And that's actually what we're going to get into, not maybe always how motivation feels. Right?

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

And you can have, I mean, if you're listening to this podcast, you have some motivation, right? If you are complaining about something to a partner, to a girlfriend, you have some motivation. It just may not always show up as this, like, I'm going to get out of bed early, I'm going to do this thing. Like, I'm going to be so happy. It's just your experience of motivation may be a little bit different than what you expect it to, believe to be.

JEN

Yeah, might be like a deeper, more meaningful motivation. Just as you know, a lot of us don't...We talk about health and wellness habits quite a bit, or weight loss journeys, but there's all kinds of different actions and journeys we take in our lives that we are motivated to take. But we're not feeling that buzz of motivational energy every time. We're, you know, we don't jump out of bed and run to work. Do you, Annie?

ANNIE

Right.

JEN

[Laughs] But we're certainly, I'm certainly motivated to work because I keep showing up here every day.

ANNIE

No, and we'll get into why we can do that, right? Like, what propels us to show up at work day after day after day, even when we have like a task list a mile long of stuff that we don't love to

do, we somehow are able to continue to take consistent action, right? And we're going to get into that. But I think the better question is, people are like, "Okay, well, great. So motivation comes and goes, it ebbs and flows, I can get on board with that, how do I create more of that motivation?" Like, and I think first, we need a basic understanding of the different types of motivation, right? Because I think what we're really commonly referring to as motivation is extrinsic motivation. And that often is accompanied that buzz that like, supercharged, maybe you saw something, I can't tell you how many times I go to a 5k race, or a marathon race to watch a friend cheer on someone else. And all of a sudden, I'm like, "Maybe I want to run."

JEN

[Laughs] You're feeling motivated?

ANNIE

Yeah, I'm like, "They look like they're having so much fun. I could do that. Maybe I could do that." And then I do that. And I'm like, "No, I don't want to do that." [Laughs] But extrinsic motivation is kind of the carrot, right? So the carrot in front of the bunny that you're, that you're holding out in front of yourself to take action, right? It can also, extrinsic motivation can also be to avoid punishment. So it can be both, it can be to get a reward or to avoid punishment. And I think the important point about extrinsic motivation, whether that's, "I want to look hot for my high school reunion," "I want to lose weight for XYZ holiday vacation," or fill in the blank, whatever it is for you, whatever you might be thinking about, or "I don't want to be embarrassed at work when I show up with a late project." So I'm going to stay up late and finish this project. Right? Whatever it is, the important thing to knowledge is that it doesn't have staying power, but it can get the ball rolling,

JEN

right. Yeah.

ANNIE

So to think that, like, you're always going to be motivated by this carrot forever and ever and ever. And that's like, the silver the magic bullet, right?

JEN

Yeah, I mean, I don't know if this would be accurate to say, correct me if I'm wrong, but people who are just grabbed, like constantly grabbing at extrinsic motivation to get going, we often see them fail. And we see them fail to establish any kind of consistency. So it's like a start and stop situation keeps happening.

ANNIE

Right. And ideally it would be really great if over time, and this is possible, that that external motivation can be internalized, which really is the hope when we hear as coaches that someone is pursuing behavior change for a more extrinsic motivation, that over time, the reward that they get from those behaviors becomes internalized, they become more in alignment with their identity and their values. And then over time, it does become more intrinsic, right?

JEN

Yes, yeah.

ANNIE

Which, is my experience with the gym. What brought me to the gym was I just wanted to look jacked and tan.

BOTH

[Laugh]

ANNIE

Very externally based, right? I wanted people to think that I was strong and I wanted to like have people clap for me. I'm like, applaud my muscles and x, y, z.

JEN

And you are jacked and tan.

ANNIE

[Laughs]

JEN

So what happens then? Now I'm jacked and tan, now what?

ANNIE

Well, that's a great point. You know, I accomplished that extrinsic mission, right? But what's kept me coming to the gym is this intrinsic experience of motivation, which is, "I'm just doing this because I find it enjoyable."

JEN

Intrinsically.

ANNIE

"I like how it feels. " Yes. "I am doing this regardless of how jacked and tan I get, I just enjoy it." And in between extrinsic and intrinsic, there's a whole other spectrum of motivation, like identified regulation, integrated regulation, that moves us more towards intrinsic motivation. But I think that the key here that I want to touch on is that most people are thinking of motivation as either there or not. They either have it or they don't. And I want to offer that you actually have probably multiple types of motivation already and you can harness from those different types as you need in any given day, week, month or year to take consistent action.

JEN

Right. And again, kind of circling back, you started naming all these different types of motivation, we're not necessarily going to get into them in this podcast, maybe in a future podcast, but that,

like motivation, it's back. It's part of behavioral science, it's studied, and there's many different types of motivation. And you don't always just fall in one bucket, right? Like you can be extrinsically and intrinsically motivated different times.

ANNIE

Yeah, and there's, I think one thing that I see a lot of people doing them themselves, I see a lot of people doing this in the fitness and the wellness industry, is judging their own motivation.

JEN

Yeah, I see that. But I also see, I suppose, in a similar realm, I see this industry putting forth only extrinsic reasons to change your behavior.

ANNIE

Mm hmm. Yeah. Tell me what you see, like what does that look like?

JEN

Very appearance based, maybe, appearance based marketing, or listing reasons for change, as well. I saw an ad the other day that talked about how a woman started her journey, because she got tired of people making comments about how big she was. And I just thought, "ugh," when I watched this ad, but that's extrinsic. So what this company is doing is harnessing the power of extrinsic motivation. And trying to appeal to people who are trying to avoid punishment.

ANNIE

Yeah, or avoid guilt, or shame. Yeah. What I see come up is people feeling bad for this. Feeling that they need more accountability, they need more support, they need that carrot.

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

And they're like, but I should be able to, like, why don't I want this, like, just want this for myself? And I should be able to do this for myself. And I mean, why am I so much more accountable to other people? You know, if I know someone is checking in on me, or expecting me to stay consistent or comply with these goals, then I'll do it. But I can't do that for myself. And I would argue that if you know that about yourself, leverage it, like, harness that.

JEN

I can totally relate with that. Because if you've listened to our podcast for any amount of time, you know that I'm not the biggest mover and shaker over here. [Laughs] And so exercise is just a slippery habit for me. And I work in this industry. And that's an enormous point of, has been in the past a big point of embarrassment for me, like, you know, you think of all the pressure, we have everyday people, and then you think of the pressure in this industry, right? To have these great habits. And I've definitely felt that pressure. And I've always responded really well to having an accountability partner for exercise. The times I have been most consistent in my life

with exercise have been when I have accountability built in. And when that accountability is gone, my exercise habits will slide. And it's not that I don't see the value in exercise. And it's not that I don't want to grow into you know, a woman who has strength, mobility, bone density, you know, I know the health benefits, and those are important to me. But I don't get out of bed in the morning going, "I can't wait to exercise today." Like I gotta plan my day around this. When am I doing it, right? I'm more of an avoider to be honest. So I've definitely felt that where I've gone, "I should be able to do this What's wrong with me?"

ANNIE

Right, but I would say Jen, hearing that experience that you actually noted a couple different types of motivation. One, yes, external, you've got the the buddy showing up at your gym at a crazy hour in the morning to say like, "No Jen, you gotta get out of bed." Right? If she wasn't there, the likelihood that you would also get out of bed may decrease dramatically, but you also touched on something called identified regulation which is where, you know, the outcome of this behavior has meaning and value to you. Which you also pulled in to have that behavior.

JEN

And that's been very, that's been big for me in learning that and being okay with it, right? So being okay with implementing habits that I want the outcome of, but I don't necessarily enjoy the process. Now, that's a slippery little slope there. Because I know we talked a bit about, a lot about disordered eating and disordered exercising in this podcast. And that's not what I'm doing, right? Like, I'm not pushing myself into emotionally unhealthy places, to get a certain result. I decide, I know what I want, I see my long term vision for myself. The reasons feel very intrinsic to me. They feel like, you know, I said this on the podcast before, I want to be a grandmother someday, I would love to be a grandmother. And I would love to be running around with my grandkids, I would love to have the strength to be able to throw them in the air, you know, and just just have a very good quality of life, you know, as long as possible. And I desire that. It's what I want for myself. And so it's getting real on like, well, you have to probably exercise consistently in order to be there, to be that grandmother. But you also struggle with exercise. So what are you willing to do and what are you unwilling to do? Right? Like, what's within my emotional and physical capacity. And for me, it's going, "I am willing to exercise consistently. I'm not willing to strength train five times a week or be at the gym every morning, you know, five, six days a week." I even find once I hit four workouts in a week, I've gone, I've identified that in the past, that once I hit four, I'm like, "Okay, that's enough. That was way too much. Three is doable for me."

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

Yeah. So it's like really about going in and going, "I feel motivated to do this." But I don't feel that rush of motivation that a lot of people do for working out.

ANNIE

Yeah. The other thing I want to touch on Jen that I see women shaming themselves, and I see it from the fitness industry, too, women as well, is this kind of comes from maybe from fitness experts, coaches, trainers, wellness coaches, that have experienced this, but we're so much more than bodies. We're so much more than a number on the scale. Which is true. I love that messaging, right? But when they butt heads with a member who is like, "Yeah, but I really just want to hit this goal weight." That's where that member, is at right? Like, "I don't know, everything you're talking about sounds really great. I really just want to hit this goal weight," that they can kind of crap on that goal.

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

And if someone had shamed me for my goal, my initial goal of wanting to be jacked and tan, that was like, that's where the race ended. The line was like, the story was closed. The book was done, right? Jacked and tan was the only goal, right? If someone had been like, "That's not a worthy goal. That's not good motivation. That's not motivation. I want to encourage -" I would have never had been afforded the experience of what lies beyond that.

JEN

Yeah, it's so tricky. [Laughs]

ANNIE

While I want, yeah, while I want women to have that experience, I think it's so important that we meet ourselves and our members where they're at, and harness their motivations, whatever they may be, with no judgment, no criticism. And along the way, along the journey, tap into more of those intrinsic non scale victories connected to your values, connected to your identity sort of motivation.

JEN

Yeah, and that's honestly, that's exactly what happened with me, with movement, is that I've even, oh what was it? It was four years ago, I was really struggling, we'd done a move. I just couldn't get back into a good exercise routine. And I again, knowing it's important to me, but knowing I'm struggling to get started, I was like, "Okay, like, I gotta hit this with everything. After one month of consistency, I'm getting a new pair of leggings after," right? [Laughs] Like I just started building in the carrots because I knew that I can spiral up, I can get started with extrinsic. And at some point in that journey, it will internalize, because I think about those, those bigger things that when you exercise can take time to start really seeing the benefits in your life, right? Like you don't strength train one day, and then you're able to knock out 10 push ups the next day, right? Like you're building, and so for me, I had to build in some carrots. And I think it's trying to help our listeners understand that it's okay to build in carrots, whatever that is for you. But like, keep your eye on those deeper reasons, right? And figuring out, you know, it wasn't sustainable for me to buy myself a new pair of leggings every month to keep me going. Right? But I knew that, that those other layers of motivation would come for me.

ANNIE

Yeah. So I think what you're saying, Jen, is to listen for those other rewards that come along with that behavior, whatever it is, and celebrate those and allow yourself to like, be surprised, like, "Hmm, I wasn't anticipating this outcome, but I'm really enjoying it."

JEN

Yeah. And I knew back four years ago, I knew when I was getting going, the other turning point for me is, I built in the leggings and all that, and then I met a friend and she already had a well established exercise habit. She's like you, she just moves her body because she has the joy of moving her body. And so I knew she wouldn't be letting me down. Like, she doesn't need external motivation to move her body. So she would show up 6am, three mornings a week, so that accountability piece was huge for me. And then I knew things were really shifting for me as one day, she couldn't make it. And I still got up and worked out. I was like, "Look at you."

ANNIE

Yeah, and I think like, how beautiful is it that you could, and maybe you have, sat here and shamed yourself for like, "I'm just not an exerciser. I just don't like want to do this."

JEN

Yes. I self identify as a sloth. [Laughs]

ANNIE

"I don't have the motivation. I'm so lazy, I have no willpower. I have no determination." Versus, "No, I know exactly what I need. Because I know myself well to execute this behavior. And I'm going to put those measures in place to make sure I do what is in alignment with my values."

JEN

Yes.

ANNIE

Like, that's awesome.

JEN

Yeah, I think it is awesome. And we have a saying in Balance365 that we say to members, is you will be successful when you've learned to meet yourself where you're at. Just total acceptance of where you are at right now. Mindset. You know, health wise, habit wise, maybe weight wise, accept where you're at and meet yourself there. Right?

ANNIE

Yeah. So maybe why you want whatever you want is very externally driven. Right? It might be that reward or to avoid punishment. That's okay. No judgment. It's not any less better, more ideal or optimal than anything else. Just use it. See how you can leverage that to get the ball rolling.

JEN

Yeah, for sure. And so tell me what - Annie you're the queen of motivation science.

ANNIE

[Laughs]

JEN

I love it. US how to respond ,or sort of how to meet yourself, here you're at, when you truly are just waking up in the morning and going, I" don't feel motivated at all. "What would you recommend?

ANNIE

Well, this is what I tell myself. So take it or leave it.

BOTH

[Laugh]

ANNIE

Are you ready?

JEN

I'm ready.

ANNIE

Do it anyways. I know that that's not like, fun and warm and fuzzy. But there's actually a couple reasons for this. One, it's because I've acknowledged that I'm not always going to feel motivated. I'm not going to have that burst of energy, that like drive, that passionate drive to get up and go do the thing, right? I don't always, as you said, spring out of bed and am like, "Yes, I cannot wait to check all these tasks off my list today for work." Right? But as we've talked about, I know that this action is in alignment with my values and my vision of myself and the company and that deeper meaning helps me drive consistency, even when I don't feel like it.

JEN

Right, yeah.

ANNIE

So the other reason, though, is that action can lead to motivation. So many people are waiting till they feel like doing the thing to do the thing. But if you wait until you feel like it, you may be waiting forever. Instead, could you do just a little bit of the thing, like 10 minutes of the thing, five minutes of the thing. And I would imagine, if you do five minutes, you're probably gonna be like, "Huh, I can do five minutes more, or 10 minutes more, or I've got the -" and you see this like the science behind the Pomodoro method, which is a method we use in our in our business to help our team members get started on a task that they may be resisting, they, you know, you work for

25 minutes, start for 25 minutes, and then you can get a break. But if you ask our team members, they'll be like, "Oh, I started for 25 minutes, and an hour went by and I just got it done. I knocked it out." Mark Manson is also another person who's talked about this, he, I think he calls it the do something principle. Because doing something, the action leads to motivation, which then the motivation creates more action, which creates more motivation. And it's just a spiraling cycle.

JEN

Yeah, the amount of times that I have committed to cleaning a corner of my house, and having that trickle over into the whole room, you know, or other rooms, right? Like, it's, I see it all the time with cleaning my house, something I love. And so I'll be like, I'll tidy this corner. So I'll clean up, you know, maybe, the area of our counter where all the junk goes. And then suddenly, I want to do the dishes. And after we do that, suddenly, I want to sweep the floor kind of thing. Right? It's just like a spillover spiral effect.

ANNIE

Yeah. But you know, what people do instead, is they ruminate on cleaning the bathroom, for hours, even days, when it could have taken you 45 minutes start to finish, right? And then freed up all that that time and energy. So it's not warm, it's not fuzzy. And I don't mean this as like, head down, no excuses, just do it, sort of like, it's like, no, I say very lovingly, like you can take action, even when you're not feeling motivated.

JEN

Yeah. Or not, too, and like just release any of the guilt, right? So it's okay to work out for five minutes or start cleaning a corner of your kitchen for five minutes, and not feel that motivation come to do the rest. At least you've done that one little thing, at least you're in that, you're in that all or something zone, right?

ANNIE

Yeah. Or if you can commit to like, "No, I'm just not gonna do it," then you at least don't carry around the shame and the guilt the rest of the day for not doing the thing you said you were going to do, right? Because then you don't get the piece that comes with either side. Right?

JEN

Exactly.

ANNIE

I did the thing, or I didn't do the thing. But now I have this other feeling as a result of not doing the thing and not owning that decision. So in summary, know that you're not always going to be motivated. And that's okay. That's completely normal. There's different types of motivation. We'd encourage you to think of it as a quality not a quantity, and, how can you tap in the various forms of motivation to help you take action consistently? And if above all else, you aren't feeling motivated at all, do it anyways. [Laughs] Anything else to add Jen?

JEN

No, I think that's it. Thanks, Annie.

ANNIE

Yeah, thank you. Good topic, my friend.

JEN

Yeah. All right.

ANNIE

All righty. Bye.

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