

Balance365 Episode 99 Transcript

ANNIE BREES

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 thousands 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, welcome back to another episode. I shared with you last week if you caught last week's episode that we are incredibly close to our 100th episode. This is number 99. Next week is the week. Jen and I, we're going to review some of our favorite highlights and the way we've edited this episode is unlike any other episode, so we're definitely leveling up our podcast skills. And I'm quite proud. I'm quite impressed. But what I want you to do right now, as you're listening, open your podcast app and I want you to hit subscribe, because that way the episodes are downloaded automatically to your phone. You don't have to remember that it's Wednesday and we released a podcast or wait for our emails to come out as reminders or social media. They're automatically on your phone ready for you whenever you're ready to listen, if you didn't catch last week's that was also a little bit of a cutting edge for us because we had an interactive meditation on that episode, I would love for you to go listen, give us a review. We read every single review, and so appreciate it.

ANNIE

So let me tell you about this episode because it just keeps getting better. We have back one of our favorite people in the universe. And that is Josh Hillis, he has been on our podcast before. If you don't know Josh, Josh uses cutting edge psychological science to help people with eating behavior. And he uses a skill-based, not diet based, which is part of the reason we adore him, which allows people to create a new relationship with their bodies and with food and get results that have previously never been possible. He is the author of "Fat Loss Happens on Monday," and "The Lean and Strong Eating Skills, Psychology and Workouts." It's coming out soon, which we talked about at the end of the podcast. Jen and I both got a little bit of a sneak peek. It sounds like he's made some changes to it. But it is great. Josh and I personally share a very similar philosophy when it comes to strength and obviously eating behaviors and I give him a two thumbs up for sure. So, the first time we had Josh on, we discussed emotional eating as kind of a whole, all encompassing, because this is something that we see women struggle with frequently. It's something I've done, it's something I still struggle with. And that is emotional eating, eating because we're bored, we're tired, we're angry. We're happy, and we're celebrating, we're stressed. Stress eating specifically, stress eating comes up so much in our community. Women know that they're doing it, but they can't seem to stop. How do you stop

stress eating? And Josh is an expert in that area. He has a lot of great tools, strategies, suggestions, and we go over all of them. In this episode, give it a listen, give us a review. We'd love for you to tag us on social media while you're listening. It warms my heart so much. Thank you and enjoy.

ANNIE

Jen, we have Josh Hillis back on the show today. Are you so excited for that?

JEN CAMPBELL

I'm super excited, and I know our audience will be because the last podcast we recorded with you was such a hit Josh! They loved it.

JOSH HILLIS

I'm so glad, I'm so glad, it was so much fun.

ANNIE

I just love your energy and you just exude this like joy and fun about these topics that I think are so often kind of like downers or like shame filled or...yeah. So last time we had you on, we talked about emotional eating at a very like broad level. We've covered like all the emotions, and you gave some great advice. I told you before we started recording that you gave the analogy of "you can let the monsters on the bus they can be on the bus, but they cannot drive the bus."

JOSH

Yeah.

ANNIE

And if you don't know what I'm talking about, you need to go back and listen to that episode because it was golden. But we're going to talk more specifically about stress, stress eating, but before we do that, can you just like give us an overview of emotional eating because right now the diet and fitness industry is so, is just like, more control, more willpower more motivation. And you can like conquer your emotional eating issues.

JEN

Restrict harder.

JOSH

Restrict harder. Yeah.

ANNIE

Yes.

JEN

21-day water fast, yeah.

ALL

[Laugh]

JOSH

21-day water fast and all my cravings went away.

JEN

Yes. [Laughs]

ANNIE

All my joy went away, too.

JOSH

And I'm dead.

ALL

[Laugh]

JOSH

So yeah, overeating and emotional eating. Well, I mean, basically, it's anytime we're eating to like soothe ourselves, right, which isn't necessarily bad. The only time that's an issue is when that's the only tool we've got in the toolbox. Right? And so the reason that the dieting industry has no answer for that is because it's not related to like a type of food. It's not related to like a macro count. It's not related to any of the things that the diet industry ever talks about, right? Because the issue is like, "Hey, I've got the stress and I don't know what to do with it. I want to feel better."

JEN

They also might have to admit that they are a big source of stress for a lot of people. [Laughs]

JOSH

Oh, yeah.

ANNIE

The diet industry that is.

JEN

Yeah, so it's like, hey, just cut us out.

ALL

[Laugh]

JOSH

Totally, right. I mean, legit. It's a lot to manage trying to eat perfectly.

JEN

Josh, you have to hear, I won't say the name. But you have to hear what Annie and I have found in the last few months. It's a new company.

ANNIE

What did we find?

JEN

It's a new company. It is the ultimate diet. It's like, it is fasting, combined with macro counting combined with carb cycling.

JOSH

[Laughs]

JEN

I thought this was a joke. I was like, "What is happening?"

JOSH

Yeah, yeah.

JEN

It sounds very stressful.

JOSH

It's a lot to juggle.

ANNIE

If some is good, then all of it is the best.

JEN

Let's throw it all into one place. Let's do it all.

JOSH

I've actually seen that before.

JEN

Oh, you have?

JOSH

I saw a guy that was doing...It was 16:8 fasting, like four days a week, a 20 hour fast one day, where you know, and it was in like, you could have carbs on like alternate Tuesday. It was the same. And it really was like, let's take all of the things and like throw them in.

JEN

So we're over here like, "Hey, we need less rules." And they're like, "No, you need more."

JOSH

Yeah. Well, and there's a market for that, right?

ANNIE

Yeah, there is.

JOSH

They're basically telling people if the last diet didn't work, it's because it wasn't extreme enough.

ANNIE

Yeah, I just read a really good quote and I wish I had the source but it was the idea of excuses was created by the diet industry as a way to place blame on the customer, not the program.

JOSH

Yeah.

ANNIE

And that's like...it goes back to like, it's your fault that you couldn't stick to this and you just need to try harder and have more control.

JOSH

Yeah, it's like, people have this huge deficit in terms of like habits or skills or whatever you want to call them. And the diet industry does nothing to address that. And then blames the people. [Laughs] It's like...There's like, no way that that would work. You know?

JOSH

Yeah. It's like, if you told someone like do a handstand, do it better. Do it longer, do a harder version of a handstand and people are like, "I'm nowhere near being able to do a handstand." You know?

ANNIE

Yeah. Okay, so specifically about stress eating...Can we talk about like, I know you said people are trying to feel better, they're trying to soothe themselves. But why do we stress eat?

JOSH

So we've got stress, right? Everyone's got stressful lives. The clients I get, I think, probably tend to be people that have more stress in their lives than the most, right? Like, they've got careers and families and often like community commitments and like very full lives. And so there's stress built in and we don't have any, we aren't really taught any good tools for managing that. And we aren't taught like, what to do with that or how that should look or if it's okay. Actually, we're usually taught that it's not okay, we're usually taught that like, you should do all the things and

have it all together all of the time, and a smile on your face and make it look cool. And so, food ends up being the only tool in the toolbox, right? It's the only thing people have. It makes them feel better. For a lot of folks eating is the only time they give themselves a break. It's like the only me time they have.

JEN

I have said this for years. I think we even have some kind of marketing material around it. It's the one thing I had at the end of the day at one point, it's all I had for me with three kids under 4, a husband in grad school. It's just all I had.

JOSH

Yeah, exactly. And if it's all you have, you probably need it.

ANNIE

Which is really super common.

JEN

Which I think helps...we need to release the shame around that right? Like I look back and think girl, it's all you had, like it's okay.

JOSH

Yeah, right. Like how many clients I had that had like, like, two or three kids under four. You know, like, that's a lot. That's a lot. You know, and for a lot of my clients, like they're kind of the only ones taking care of them in they're running a career also. I mean, like, it's a lot. And so it's okay for it to be a lot. And then you take all of that, you take the stress, and you take food being the only way to take care of yourself. And then you add on top of that, like cycles of dieting. So like, you're starving yourself as much as you can, as often as you can. And then you snap, right? And so like, another thing is a lot of people end up stress eating just because they're dieting at all of their meals. And then when stress comes up, not only are they stressed, they're also just hungry. Like really, really, really hungry.

JEN

You're telling my story.

JOSH

[Laughs]

JEN

Someone brought up to me one time, when I was through this, so I kind of could see exactly what had been going on. She was like, she goes to me, "Did you ever read the book 'Women, Food and God?'" It was like on Oprah's book list one time. And I was like, I didn't need...I didn't need more spiritual awakening. I didn't need to address my own emotional eating. I needed to eat. I was hungry.

ANNIE

Jen didn't need God she needed food.

ALL

[Laugh]

JOSH

Well, and that's the thing, right? If you're just not getting enough food, all the rest is going to be like, unbearable.

JEN

Yeah, I mean, even if you're religious and you're praying to God to get through this, he's gonna be like, "Girl, you need to go eat." [Laughs]

JOSH

Eat a sandwich.

ANNIE

Yeah, because it becomes even more of an uphill battle than it already is, right? If you're stressed, and then you're starving on top of it, like, no wonder you want to eat and then and looking at that as Jen and Josh are talking about it with a lot of compassion. Like, of course you were hungry honey, like, have a sandwich, you know? Like it's okay.

JEN

Yeah and it's difficult to build other stress management tools into your life when you're also starving because that is just the first thing, your brain wants that on a physical survival level and then it also wants it on a -

JOSH

Yeah. We're wired to live. [Laughs]

JEN

[Laughs] Yeah we are.

ANNIE

Which is a really great thing. [Laughs]

JOSH

Yeah. And it's like that becomes that cycle that we all know about. Right? Diet, stress eat, and then you're like, Punish yourself by eating less.

ANNIE

And you, I know you know more about this than I do, Josh, but there is some some truth to comfort foods right? Like, when you're stressed. You're also more likely to crave foods higher

and fat, higher in sugar. And I've said this on before on the podcast, like when I'm stressed, my hand is in a chip bag or cookie jar. It's not like with the carrots and the beets. I'm on a beat kick right now.

ALL

[Laugh]

ANNIE

So excited for lunch. [Laughs] But this isn't like a reflection of your discipline or lack of discipline. This is because, this is like, your body's like hormonal response to stress.

JOSH

Yeah, it's not anything other than you're human. And the other thing that I tell my clients is it works.

JEN

It does.

JOSH

It totally works, right? Like you're not crazy. It's totally working. And some of the other things we do might not work as well.

JEN

Would you say it works temporarily, like, it works in the moment? Because I did find myself often even more stressed later and then it was just like, Oh, that's really not aligned with who? I...

ANNIE

That's exactly what one of our... So Josh is so kind and was like, Why don't you throw out this topic to your community inside our members' Facebook group, ask if they have questions, and that was almost the exact question of one of the women. She was like, "I think this sounds like a really good idea in the first, like, minute, and then I engulf all this food, and then I eventually feel like sluggish and like I'm too full. I overeat."

JOSH

Yeah, yeah, totally right? And "why doesn't that ever make a difference?" is the thing that I always hear from my clients, is they're like, "It works the moment and then I feel terrible later. And knowing that I'm going to feel terrible later actually doesn't make a difference in the moment when I want it." Right. And so that's a skill. That's it. Right? That's like you actually don't have the skills to make a better choice right there.

ANNIE

Okay, can we talk about that? Can we talk about the skills?

JOSH

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ANNIE

To conquer stress eating, or I should say manage stress eating.

JOSH

Yeah, I like that. [Laughs]

JOSH

It's more realistic, it's more human. So right away off the bat on like a mental level, we have to talk about values because if we don't handle that, then the skills aren't as effective, but from a skill perspective, there's basically three different things that we look at. The first is making sure we're getting enough food at meals, and that our meal timing is like kind of appropriate. And by meal timing, I just mean like, your meals aren't eight hours apart. You know, if you have lunch at 11 and dinner at like 7:30 then it's not a willpower issue that you're like stress eating at three or four, like, you're just hungry. Right? And so getting enough food at meals, getting good balanced meals, and eating a meal every like four to six hours is like foundational, like, have you had enough food? Next thing is going to be self care. And I'm stopping here because I think self care is a way overused, it's absolutely not the end all be all, but it's one of the things where we have to realize that we're using food as a form of self care and if it's our form of self care, we're kind of screwed. We should probably have some effortful self care, some like brainless self care, and some like checking things off our to do list self care.

ANNIE

Okay, hang on. Those aren't terms that I'm familiar...I think I can infer what you mean by that. But tell me, did you say effortful?

JOSH

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ANNIE

Okay, tell me what that is.

JOSH

So like, let's say you learn a language on Duolingo. Okay, like Duolingo is like kind of fun. It's kind of a game but you're also learning language, it's kind of hard. You're developing a skill, you feel kind of proud of yourself. There's something about having self care that's like a little bit of work, right? It could be that, it could be knitting, it could be building a thing, it could be going for a walk, I'd actually put under there also, right? Could be going for a five minute walk. But it's something where you're kind of like building a thing and it takes some effort to do. So, that's really important, and like, almost totally overlooked when when we talk about self care, and talk about like, you know, scented candles and a bubble bath and things like that, but then some kind of brainless, easy self care can be cool too, whether that's like a coloring book or maybe that's like watching funny cat videos on YouTube or or whatever right? But something that's

easy and you're like turning your brain off and then some clients that like fixed evening snacking with, like, better TV, like literally just like watching more engaging TV.

JEN

Rather than cat videos. So, "Netflix Explained" instead of "The Bachelorette." Just you know, as an example.

ANNIE

I think I told you this, Jen, think it was you but I actually like, wanted to make it a goal to watch more TV because I feel like I get on this like every waking moment of my life has to be productive.

JOSH

Yeah.

JEN

Well, Josh and I had a very good conversation in a Facebook thread. And then there was another woman involved. I think a lot of people were involved but you and I had a little sub thing going about the self care, self harm continuum. And that's how I've kind of been thinking about it. And it's like, okay, two episodes of "Shameless" at the end of the day feels like self care for me. 16 hours of "Shameless" straight starts to get into the self harm territory for me, because it means I'm neglecting my life and other forms of self care, right?

JOSH

Yeah.

JEN

And so it's all about frequency, just like emotional eating is about frequency. If you emotionally eat once in a while, whatever. If you're emotionally eating every single day, because that's the only thing you have to cope with your stress, well, then you're sliding into the self harm territory.

ANNIE

And it's a problem for you. Like, it's not a problem unless it's a problem for you. Like, I don't know how much you stress eat emotionally, whatever, unless it's a problem for you, then we have experts on to discuss the topic. [Laughs]

JEN

And when we talk about reducing emotional eating, we're not saying you're ever going to be at zero. We're saying we can move from being you emotionally eat 90% of the time to you emotionally eat 10% of the time. It's about making progress.

JOSH

Yeah, that's normal and healthy. Like, I think it would be weird to never stress eat.

JEN
Exactly.

JOSH
I think that'd be weird.

JEN
Yeah, and I don't want that off the table as an option for me just in case it's the only one there for me and that.

JOSH
Exactly.

ANNIE
And that's again, the message has been enforced by the diet industry that you have to be like, robotic about your life. Just remove all emotions about food, and I'm like, I have a lot of emotions about food. Like, it brings me joy. It brings me connection, it brings me happiness like, yeah, so...Okay, so anyway, so let's go back to the skill. So, effortful self care, brainless self care. And then was there another kind of self care?

ANNIE
just like, like,

JOSH
And this one's conditional, checking important stuff off the list. Like, a lot of times there's like really important things we need to do in terms of like taking care of ourselves or our life or whatever.

JEN
Like going to the dentist.

JOSH
Yes! And so for some people, that's an issue. For some people, they're too good at checking things off the list. And that's not the issue. But that can be a thing that we'd look at. And then the third thing is, I'm kind of going like, what you were just saying about like how the diet industry tells us that we shouldn't have emotions about food. I would take a step farther and say they tell us that we shouldn't have emotions, or like that the only good emotion is happy and positive and upbeat. Right? And I think that's actually a really major driver of emotional eating, is that people actually feel like when they feel that it's wrong.

ANNIE
Or they panic.

JOSH

Yeah, yeah. And so the third thing is like willingness and diffusion. And so willingness or acceptance or whatever you want to call it is a certain amount of accepting that humans are...Like my addiction studies professor said over and over and over again, humans aren't wired to be up all the time. Like we're just not built that way. We're built to go in cycles or whatever. We're happy sometimes, or sad. Other times, we're excited and inspired sometimes, or frustrated other times. All that's okay. And the willingness to be with feeling bad, is actually like the master key and the skill that's required to do that or the skill that makes that a lot easier would be like diffusion, which was like the monsters on the bus example.

JEN

Which is basically to sit with uncomfortable feelings?

JOSH

Yeah, it's sitting with uncomfortable feelings, it's allowing them to be there and still living your life in a way that matters to you.

JEN

I mean, an example we've had on the podcast before is my willingness to sit with bad body image feelings without having to act on them, right?

JOSH

Yes!

JEN

Before I would say "I have to get rid of this feeling right now and how I do that is by taking back control of my eating habits aka going on a diet," where now I can wake up in the - and honestly when I used to have bad body image days, I couldn't face the world. I felt like I was the most worthless human being out there and I just had no deserving of love, connection, anyone seeing me. Where now I can, I still have bad body image days, surprise, surprise, everybody listening. They're not as frequent as they used to be, but I'm willing to sit with the discomfort of those feelings, I can acknowledge them as just bad feelings and I can move on with my day regardless.

JOSH

Yeah, that nailed it. And I think that one of the diffusion tools that my clients use is labeling those thoughts in terms of like, where they came from. And that could be just as simple as like, "Oh, like, that's from the diet industry. Like that's a diet thought."

JEN

"That's a childhood conditioning issue...That's what my mom used to do."

JOSH

90% of my clients, like, it's something they were told as a kid.

ANNIE
You can

ANNIE
You can figure that out generally, and maybe you have a better prompt, but by saying like, "Where did I learn this?"

JOSH
Yeah, awesome.

ANNIE
Like, "who told me this? Where did I see it like, half the time." It's like, "Oh, women's health magazines or, or commercials or 90210" or whatever.

ANNIE
know?

JOSH
Well and so that's also important to acknowledge that those things aren't going away. Right? We can limit our exposure to those kinds of messages, but we're not getting away from them. Like, there's still going to be those conversations among groups of friends, there's still going to be those commercials on the radio, they're still gonna, like, we're still going to get bombarded with messages that are going to like tear down our body image and make us feel like dieting is the solution constantly. And so I think it's unrealistic to think that those thoughts would go away completely. But if we do recognize where they come from, we can we can sit with them. We don't have to feed them. We don't have to fight them. We don't have to act on them. We can just be like, "Oh, there that is again."

ANNIE
I like that.

JOSH
And I know where that's from

ANNIE
Josh, how does, because I know you already gave a lot of strategies and skills for emotional eating in general. But are there any strategies or skills that work really well, specifically for stress eating?

ANNIE
Yeah, so, it's the same kind of thing, right? Like, stress with some version of this is overwhelming. This is overwhelming. And it shouldn't be. Right? It shouldn't be like this. And so we can take those same kinds of three things, right? And we can say, like, "Hey, what if I don't have self compassion? And I'm like, I really have a lot going on in my life right now. And so how

can I be willing to accept I'm going to have some stress with the life that I'm in right now? How can I be willing to like sit with that? How can I notice what it is and distinguish the difference between that and real hunger and then either just sit with it, or put in some self care of some sort." You know, like we're talking about, the folks that at the end of the day, they're exhausted, they had a really stressful day and they're, you know. Something that we do on like, on so many calls with my clients is they're like, "Here are the things that happened." And I'm like, that's a lot and they're like, "That really is a lot." And just that, like, the knowledge that that's lot gives you a little bit of space and a little bit of self compassion. Right? So you can actually feel the way that you feel, you can feel stressed out, right? And you can look at, "Do I need to put in some self care of some sort, or do I need to eat a meal?" Like, "Do I need a meal right now? Am I starving rolling into this because I'm so far from the last meal?" But it's one of those things where like, you can get a lot of a lot of distance from it. Just noticing like, "Oh, I'm stressed out because my boss just yelled at me." Or "I'm stressed out because I actually have more stuff on my to do list than there's any way I can possibly do this week." And just recognizing and going, like, "With this situation that's happening in my real life, there is no way to not feel stressed out."

JEN

Josh, how can you do that without slipping into a victim mindset?

JOSH

Ooh, good. Oh, man. So, there's two things that we're looking at doing. One is...Okay, so, self compassion, right? Self compassion is, the way the researchers that I like to follow define self compassion, it's kind of like this. It's kind of like, recognizing that I am human. And I am like fallible and I make mistakes. They have all kinds of emotions and all that kind of stuff. And so compassion is recognizing that, allowing myself to, like be with that and taking the actions that are aligned with my values. So, none of that is about like, I'm not going to take actions that are aligned with my values. It's like, I know what I stand for. I'm still gonna do those things.

JEN

Yeah. And just to differentiate for our audience that I would consider the victim mindset, basically, feeling powerless.

JEN

Yeah.

JEN

Hopeless, powerless, correlated with inaction. Because you can't see a way to change your situation.

JOSH

Yeah.

JEN

And there are victims out there. And so I don't want to like tell somebody who's actually a victim that they need to pull themselves out of it. But there's also a victim mindset. I wrote about this recently on my Instagram, that I struggle with victim mindset. With feelings of powerlessness, even though there are options available to me, my default is pretty much victim mindset. And it's basically when that seeps into your identity, and then you sort of find yourself there in almost all situations. And so, I think in my writing and experience and interactions with Balance365ers, is that a lot of women struggle with that. So it's differentiating between, I can show myself compassion without slipping into a victim mindset of powerlessness and inaction.

JOSH

Yeah.

ANNIE

Hey friends, Annie here, I wanted to sneak in this episode to tell you where you can find even more information on the Balance365 nutrition philosophy including the top three mistakes everyone makes when trying to change their health or body and how they keep you stuck. You can learn the exact process we use with our clients in our free workshop, The Five step Process to Overcome Overeating. Get off the diet rollercoaster and restore a healthy relationship with food that you can pass on to your kids. And you can get that for free right now. It's super simple. Just pause the show, open up your browser and type in balance365workshop.com or you can click the link in your show notes. Okay, let's get back to the episode.

JOSH

I think ...Victimization absolutely occurs and there's really terrible things that happen, and people that are in like, I know in situations, that's absolutely a thing. And so I'm glad we differentiated that. That's not what we're talking about. Like you just said exactly, like, that's not self compassion, the way that I see it and the way that I read about it. Some people make a distinction between self kindness and self compassion, that self kindness is like self soothing in whatever way is most comfortable, which is appropriate sometimes, but self compassion, which is absolutely tied to action. And it is the people that are doing, like, compassion, focus therapy, and like the self compassion researchers are like, self compassion is an extraordinary, extraordinary amount of work. It is like really, really, really hard work to be with yourself exactly as you are and as you are not, and still take actions that are aligned with your values. And so I should...just a little bit about values. The way I look at values is I'm looking kind of more like character strengths. So it's kind of like a way that you want to be whether that's kind, or conscientious or connected, or like it's some sort of character strength and character strengths are inherently flexible. And you can use those as a decision making tool in any situation. Because you're making a decision based on, "What would it be like to be this character strength in the situation with the options I actually have?" Does that make sense? So it takes off the table all the options, you don't have. [Laughs] To just like, "with the options I actually do have in real life, what would be the most conscientious thing I could do right now?"

ANNIE

I think that's such a really profound distinction. Because it's so easy to be like, "Oh, well, if I had this than this, or if I could do this," and it's like, okay, that's all great, but that's not exactly what we're experiencing right now. So like, what can you do with the tools, the experience, the environment, the situation, whatever, and that feels really good. It's like, I feel like I'm like, Okay, I can do this.

JEN

I actually in my experience, that can be part of victim mindset that your head goes to, "If only, I will never be able to because I don't have, you know, this tool available to me," or "I can't afford a gym membership" or...And that's also like a fixed mindset sort of way of looking at things where we talk about growth mindset a lot in our program, and it's like, well, what is available to you? And I don't think growth mindset comes naturally to a lot of people. I think it gets, like beat out of us in school or something. [Laughs]

JOSH

Totally. [Laughs]

JEN

But yeah, I just wanted to say that I think that's because I've experienced that as well as seen it in others and it's often happening during a victim mindset way of looking at the situation.

JOSH

Yeah, totally. I mean, man, is that so common. And talking about, like the growth mindset thing? It's very easy...I think there is sort of like a cultural conversation that we're just like good at things and not good at other things. And there's a component of that, that's absolutely true, right? Like people are better at certain things than other things. But like, we're talking about, like, in terms of basic emotion regulation is pretty is pretty doable if people actually have the skills, they just haven't ever really been taught them. And so I really try and dig in with my clients on the fact that like, of course, this is hard knowing that no one ever gave you any kind of framework for how to think about this or any of the skills for having to deal with it. So you know, I mean...

ANNIE

Yeah, even like, just like you were saying a little bit ago, acknowledging like, it is a lot, whatever you experienced in that day, in that moment, that week, and and if I remember correctly, our first episode together you talked about disrupting that pattern of emotional eating because...I have a situation that a member shared in our group, I think as I was telling you before we hit record, that the details of like what she's doing, and how many kids, and time of day she's up, vary from woman to woman, but it was all really, really common. So can I just read this and then we can walk through like the real experience. So she said, "Food was always used as a reward in my house growing up and as an adult, I tend to reward myself with food particularly after a hard day, after getting up at 6am to get a kid to hockey two hours away, and on the drive home at 6pm. I'm already counting down the minutes until I get the kids to sleep so I can put on PJs, relax, have some popcorn and chocolate and a movie. The story in my head goes, 'You had a big day

managing kids and hockey and the rink meltdowns and icy highways and you deserve a reward, a snack and TV.' This has been my hardest habit and thought pattern for me to break." Which reminds me, Jen, of like, when you would talk about how you would get your kids to sleep, and you'd be salivating.

JEN

I mean, that wasn't just about stress management, that was just, I think that was just a habit cycle, because that's the other layer that we could talk about here. But my trigger...It's Pavlov's...

ANNIE

Dogs.

JEN

Yeah. It was like I would be shutting the door to my kids' bedrooms, and I could feel my salivators starting up. It was like, "it's time. It's time for my evening meal." [Laughs]

ANNIE

[Laughs] Classical conditioning.

ANNIE

Yeah. I pictured Jen with like drool coming out of her mouth.

JEN

[Laughs] Leaking is the term we used when I was growing up, like, spit.

ALL

[Laugh]

ANNIE

And you're right like, there might be...because we talked about that in the first episode, too, like you stress eat enough, it might very well become a habit, and then your job is going to have to be to disrupt that habit pattern. So what would you say, like, what would step one be in a situation like this Josh?

JOSH

There's two things that we'll look at, we'll look at disrupting the pattern, and then we'll look at like the actual issue. Right? Disrupting the pattern is...so the whole game, everything we're doing here is about autonomy. It's about giving people choice. It's about putting people in the driver's seat. And the way that you know that you're not in the driver's seat is when you do something always or when you do something never, right?

ANNIE

Oh, wait, wait, wait, hold on. We need to say that again, because that feels like gold to me.

JEN

That's going on a graphic.

ALL

[Laugh]

JOSH

I made the graphic!

ANNIE

Okay, the way you know you're not in control. Say that again.

JOSH

The way you know that you're not in the driver seat is that you do something always or you do it never.

ANNIE

Okay, tell me more, tell me more.

JOSH

You're not making...So if you always do something in a situation, then you don't have choice. And if you never do something in this situation, you don't have choice, right? It's like being on a diet. You're like, "Oh, I'm never eating carbs," no choice, right? If you're like, "Anytime I'm stressed out, I have to have cookies," no choice. You're not driving. And so the goal, the goal is to have a choice, right? And so the thing is, we'll play games like the 50-50 game, where people, if they're used to having cookies every single night at the end of the night when they put their kids to bed right? Because that's half the clients I've ever had. Then we'll play the game of half the time I will, and half the time I won't, as just like a game, but it can't be every other. They can't say like, "Okay, so that means Tuesday I do, Wednesday I don't." No, that's like another set of rules, right? This is a game to play, so you can think about it, and actually make a choice and say like, "Oh, you know what, tonight I do want that." It's like not another rule, or it's just like a little structure put into a game to play. Just start pausing. And thinking about it and actually having choice. And that's the goal. The goal is to choose, the goal is to choose in context. The goal is to choose the context of who you're with, how you feel, and where you're at and make your own choice.

JEN

To be a conscious, mindful, empowered person.

JOSH

Yes. Yes. That is the goal. That's like always the goal. So that's half.

ANNIE

Okay. So that's the idea, is just to a reduced frequency, right? And that disrupts the pattern and shifts the focus on like, "Am I doing this on autopilot? Or am I actually like, want the cookies?"

JOSH

Yeah. And you can like put in a gap of like five minutes to wanting it and having it or whatever, you can play the 50-50 game, you can put in like whatever kinds of little structures you want that set you up to have the opportunity to choose, the opportunity to consider like, why and how and what. You know, like to think through, right? The whole thing is just about thinking through.

JEN

Yeah. And back to what you said about you're not in control if you're always or never doing something. The solution to reducing night time stress eating is not to never have night time stress eating because then you're just placing another rule on your life, and I think a lot of our clients, they really do not celebrate their progress as it comes in increments. And I saw one woman say the other day in our community that she didn't snack...Because, you know, our clients use habit trackers. And so she didn't snack for...Her goal was to reduce nighttime snacking. And she didn't snack for two evenings in the past week, and she was so bummed. And I was like, "Girl like, that is the disruption, right?" And now you're not always doing something. It's not being all or nothing, or zero percent or hundred percent. It's just about sliding that scale back to a different range that you would prefer to be in that's more aligned with your values and the person you want to be. Boom.

JOSH

Boom!

ALL

[Laugh]

JOSH

Because that's the thing, you know, I mean, like extreme examples. I'll be like, "Yeah, you know, like when it's your grandma's hundredth birthday, you better have some chocolate cake, right?"

JEN

Yeah.

JOSH

But like, there's also, you know what, I actually just really want a chocolate chip cookie." That's fine. If you can make, if that's a choice.

ANNIE

And being at peace with those choices, like, not shaming yourself, not feeling bad, not coming into the group and then I failed or whatever, being really like...You can do that, of course, and we would welcome you with open arms, but like hopefully building the perspective that this is a choice, I'm going to own it and it is what it is without all the baggage.

JOSH

I'm actually fine with the baggage in their head, like, that's the monsters that are riding along with them on the bus. If someone's been...I get a lot of clients that have been dieting since they were like 12 or 14, if you've been dieting, like by far the majority of your life a lot of those thoughts are still going to come up again. It's like we just don't need to act on them, we don't need to feed on...We don't need to like spin them over and over again, we can just realize where they came from be like, "Oh, it's normal to have that thought about that. It's normal to have that like guilty thought. But I know where it comes from. And I know what my values are. I know who I want to be for myself about food. And I want to be someone that actually has some choice about treats and the kind of example I want to set for my kids."

JEN

Yeah, and there's this misconception. The first section of our program is called diet deprogramming, and it's really about unpacking a lot of those beliefs about yourself, the world, food. But what can happen in our community is women get stuck there because they feel like they can't take action until they are deprogrammed. And I'm like, "You may never be. Like you may never be, you have to learn to take action. While you're simultaneously holding on to some of that baggage. It will get lighter and lighter and lighter over time, but you may be carrying some throughout your life."

ANNIE

Yeah, exactly. Exactly. [Laughs] Yeah. I mean, it's one of those things where like, just in our, in our social media landscape and magazines and whatever like that, we're always going to be getting those messages and we can get, like more distance from them, but they're just around a lot.

ANNIE

And in the particular context of stress eating, I want to circle back to having...You said something earlier a couple times about, like, having food be the only tool in the toolbox.

JOSH

Or like, the last person you mentioned, the only reward.

ANNIE

Okay, yeah, yeah. So in this particular case, if she decides, like, "Yeah, okay, 50% of the time, I'm gonna let myself, I'm going to just play that game." What is she doing the other 50%? Trying to build some of those other self care and reward systems?

JOSH

Yeah.

ANNIE

Okay, great.

JEN

We've also recommend a bridge before so, like, if you're trying to bridge your emotional eating habit to having a bath, just like take your cookies to the tub with you and combine them for a time and see if...then you can just sort of like leave the cookies in the kitchen at some point.

JOSH

Love that. That is brilliant. I like that a lot. I'm gonna steal that.

JEN

Sharing is caring. [Laughs]

JOSH

[Laughs]

ANNIE

There's a lot of that between us and Josh I feel.

JEN

Yeah.

JOSH

There is.

ANNIE

In a loving way.

JOSH

Yeah, yeah.

ANNIE

Okay, so yeah, tell me about the other 50% of the time. So 50% of the time she eats the cookies. And it's great.

JOSH

So the other 50% of the time, she has something that's good for her. Right? Something that's a reward, right? Like, food probably isn't the only thing that was rewarding in her entire life. You know, maybe she likes to read, or maybe she likes to take a bath, or go for a walk, or call a friend, or mindlessly scroll on Facebook or I mean, like, there's a whole world of things you could reward yourself with. And we're just not used to using those things. And another thing that I always need to handle about that is that for people that have a really strong history of using food to manage that, food does do like a calming thing, that these other things might not do, right? Like, I really like reading fiction, and it's cool, but it doesn't have, like, the same like bodily reaction as like eating a chocolate chip cookie. And so there's a certain amount of rewarding

yourself with something that's non-food, and like a certain amount of like acceptance and willingness that doesn't like fix the stress and it doesn't like have that immediate change to your physiology.

JEN

I think it's important for people to understand that food was your first soothing. You know, you were born and you were fed. And that is our very first primary mode of soothing. So it's in us, it is part of us, we are not going to eliminate it or escape it. And so just like release the guilt and shame around it. You and every other human on this earth.

ANNIE

What's coming to mind when I hear you talk about finding other rewards or finding other activities. It's that you might have to brainstorm that ahead of time.

JOSH

Oh, yeah!

ANNIE

In the middle of it, you might not be able to come up with things that like are going to fill that cookie void. You know?

JOSH

Yeah you're not gonna figure that out at the moment. I recommend, absolutely recommend brainstorming or making lists, I recommend...if food's the only thing you've used in a really long time, I recommend being really curious and experimenting with a bunch of stuff and you'll find stuff that really doesn't work and stuff that really does. And my client, I've got some clients that have like a menu, I've got some clients that have like, three options for different situations. And also like don't don't worry, if you try something that's not like the best thing. Yeah, you want to have those options ready ahead of time.

ANNIE

Yeah, and I love the the idea of experimenting, like just try it, like and that comes up, I mean, in so many ways, in my life and our community. People, I think, want us to have the answer for them. And half the time our answer's like, give it a shot. You'll find out real quick if it works or if it doesn't work and like it's just information that you can then use to make different choices or better choices.

JOSH

Yeah. Yeah. And I've had clients in that experimentation process where they're like, "Yeah, I did that. I didn't like it," but they still didn't like have the same staff that they normally had, you know, and they did a different thing the other time, but like, it still like broke the pattern. Because it wasn't like their favorite thing.

Unknown Speaker

That's interesting. So even if you don't love it, it might be enough to break the pattern, to disrupt that cycle, just enough.

JEN

It's like, I quite get a kick out of cleaning and organizing. So I'm going to organize this closet before I chow down on a bag of ketchup chips, but like organizing the closet is just enough for me to be like, "I don't need these chips anymore."

JOSH

It's a pause.

JEN

It's a pause. Yeah. And it's a different feeling of accomplishment. You know, it's a different way of dealing with all those feelings.

JOSH

So, like that I would say falls under the effortful self care.

JEN

Oh, yes. Okay. So it's a different form. It's just -

JOSH

Like you feel good about it being organized. Right?

JEN

Mm hmm. Makes our life easier later it...Yeah.

ANNIE

You can periodically, like throughout the day, go open that closet and be like - [unintelligible]

JEN

Oh I do that.

ANNIE

And Josh, you don't know this. But the episode we you recorded right before, which will be on the week before this. It was all about meditation.

JOSH

Oh, cool.

ANNIE

For, I mean, as a large benefit, stress management. That could be an option, that could be a tool in your toolbox.

JOSH

For all my clients who meditate I always have them take their meditation out of the meditation time.

ANNIE

Wait, hold on. Wait. [Laughs]

JEN

That's exactly what we talked about, because the woman we interviewed is like, "There's so many myths and misconceptions around meditation and you can put..." You know, she was just talking about, I think that's what you're saying, Josh, it can happen anywhere. It's about just getting out here and getting back in here. And that can happen in two minutes. In just like a space where you just go inside yourself.

JOSH

Yeah. Yeah. Because it's one of those things where like, that time that you spend, like in focus meditation practice, is like strength training. Right? You're practicing noticing your thoughts and you're practicing awareness, right? And then when you're doing any of these things related to stress eating, you want to take that same noticing your thoughts, bring that to this waiting period where you're trying to decide if you're gonna stress eat.

JEN

I like it.

JOSH

Noticing your thoughts is the jam. It's all meta cognition. It's just like, can I notice my thoughts was just thoughts and not as being from me and being me. Right? So, that's that's the thing like you're not your thoughts you're not your cravings, you're not your emotions, you have all these things, you can have all these things, you have no control if these things show up. But they aren't you. So meditation is a great practice for that.

ANNIE

Well, perfect. I didn't plan for you to say that.

JOSH

[Laughs]

ANNIE

That worked out well. Yay. Okay, Josh, anything else on stress eating before we wrap up that you...

JOSH

Just that these are all really high level skills. These are like really high level skills. These are like things that take time and practice and in the same way that like, we have sort of these, these

messages like, "You should never be stressed out, you should have it all together all the time, you shouldn't be exhausted." We also get the sense of these kinds of messages like, "You should be able to break this out tomorrow." And that's not really accurate, you are probably going to practice playing with different kinds of self care and awards, you're going to practice with different ways of approaching, like willingness to feel stress. And notice how you might need different ones in different situations or like, where you might be like, "Oh, I'm at work, like, I can't really put in self care right now. I just need to be willing to feel it." Or maybe like, "Feeling this now I can remember and actually, like, do something to take care of myself later" or, you know, like, you'll have to sort that out and that takes a little bit of time. And that's okay. And so I want people know that takes time and I also want people to know that they can use these combinations. I mean, I think we probably talked about probably like 12 different things on this. And so you might find your three or like the two or three that work in this situation and the one that works this other situation and just yeah.

ANNIE

I love that you called that out, that these are high level skills and if it's taking you some time, and it likely would take you some time, that's exactly what we would expect and it's okay if you're working through this over the long haul. Awesome.

JEN

Thank you Josh.

ANNIE

Yeah, thank you so much. Once again, another amazing episode. You're just like, I just can't help but like talk to you and have a smile on my face.

JEN

You're a great podcast guest, you're really engaging and fun. It's like you could come on as another host. We've got an opening.

JOSH

[Laughs] I love doing this podcast. I think we're so on the same page that it's so much fun.

[Laughs] So much fun because we do the same thing. So that's...[Laughs]

ANNIE

Yeah I really appreciate it, I appreciate your expertise and the skills and the strategies that you bring to our podcast every time you come on, so thank you so much, I'm so appreciative of your time especially because I know you're super busy. Anything you got going on that you want to share with our audience that they need to know about or where they can find you, where they can follow you?

JOSH

So a lot of things, a lot of places they can follow me at I'm changing, so right now my blog is losestubbornfat.com but that's a really old blog name and I'm going to rename, I'm gonna rebrand as joshhillis.com and I'm rebranding like everything.

JEN

You could make a fortune selling that domain.

JOSH

Probably. [Laughs]

JEN

To evil, to the dark side.

JOSH

Yeah, I'm like, it doesn't fit. So I should hold on to it just to like save...[Laughs]

JEN

I don't put my old diet books on the local buy and sells, I throw them in a bin and I burn them.
[Laughs]

JOSH

[Laughs] Exactly.

JEN

I'm not passing that on to someone else.

JOSH

Yeah, exactly. So that's like going away and changing. I've got a new product with GMB Fitness. I've got a book coming out in two months.

JEN

I reviewed your book and it was awesome.

ANNIE

And I got to read it. And I also thought it was awesome. I was like, "Yes! Yeah!" Just even in the intro, like nodding my head, like, this is so good. So cool. And that's...When is that out?

JOSH

So real, real talk. Supposed to be March, we'll see. It was supposed to be January. But like, beset laid plans. Like there are issues with photos, and -

ANNIE

Look, we get it. [Laughs]

JOSH

Real life stuff. So probably March.

ANNIE

Okay, and can you can you publicly share the title?

JOSH

Yeah, yeah, it's called "Lean and strong." And it's about eating skills, psychology and workouts.

JEN

Yeah, it's got a whole program in it. It looks awesome.

JOSH

And I've kind of shifted things I think even since the last time you guys saw it, where "lean" is kind of really about like, being economical and agile and pursuing your goals and "strong" is about doing what matters to even when it's hard.

JEN

Awesome. I love that. You and Annie program very similarly.

ANNIE

Well, you want to know why. I think we have a common mentor

JEN

Oh! [Laughs]

ANNIE

With Dan John.

JOSH

[Laughs] Shocking that we have a -

JEN

I was like, "Am I reading one of Annie's programs?" That's rad.

ANNIE

Which is probably why I look at Josh's stuff and I'm like, "God this is good" because it's like looking in a mirror.

ALL

[Laugh]

JOSH

This is so good.

ANNIE

My narcissistic self is like, "Oh, he's smart." [Laughs] Yeah, I think we've been positively influenced by -

JOSH

Each other.

ANNIE

Yeah, yeah, each other and Dan. Yeah. Have you ever been to his house by the way? Are you gonna -

JOSH

Yeah.

ANNIE

- do that? Okay. Yeah, me too. I think we had maybe talked about that. But that was just like, meeting like the kettlebell god, you know, and then he's, like, "Come into my house and have Thanksgiving dinner" and I'm like, "Okay." [Laughs]

JOSH

Okay, so, for people that don't know, that are listening. Dan John is sort of like, elder statesman of strength and conditioning.

JEN

[Laughs]

JOSH

And he has practice Thanksgiving. I don't know how often but like a lot.

ANNIE

I like to pretend it was just like once a year and I just happened to be there when it happened.

JOSH

I think it's like quarterly.

ANNIE

Okay. Okay.

JOSH

Like I was at his house. I've been to his house a couple times. And I was there once and there was like, kind of a get together. And I'm like, "Oh, how do you know Dan?" And I'm like, "I'm writing a book." And like, "Oh, how do you know, Dan?" And this guy is like, "Oh, I came to Thanksgiving last week." I'm like, "Oh, yeah?" And so I assumed like, he came to like his

practice Thanksgiving, like, you know, he'd known Dan forever. He's like, "No, I met him. I met him at like a restaurant, like the week before." He went to practice Thanksgiving. And I'm like, that's so Dan, he just like, he's just letting anyone in and brings people together.

JEN

That's so sweet.

ANNIE

And in the moment, like, I felt like I was family when I was there.

ANNIE

And like his wife and his daughters. I've met them all, too, they're just good humans. And fun. Like, let's go have a drink and talk about life stuff.

JOSH

Did you see his gym in the garage?

ANNIE

Yeah, that's I did the RKC. So we spent a lot of time in the backyard but I did my RKC certification at his house.

JOSH

That's amazing.

ANNIE

It's like legendary.

JOSH

Yeah. Yeah. Also for people that are listening that don't know who he is, his garage was rated by Men's Health to be like the third best gym in America.

ANNIE

Yes.

JEN

No way. Oh, that's awesome.

ANNIE

Yup.

JOSH

And it's free.

ANNIE

Yeah. Whoever wants to show up just shows up. Anyways, we'll have to have you back and we can talk about like simple strength and conditioning principles because I think it gets like so complicated and... Okay, well anyways, thank you so much, Josh, for your time. I appreciate it.

JEN

Thank you, Josh.

ANNIE

We will talk soon. All right, thank you.

JOSH

Thanks!

ANNIE

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