

Balance365 Episode 180 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. Welcome back to another episode of Balance365 Life Radio. Before I tell you about today's topic, I want to read a review one listener left for us on iTunes. This is from MsMarshmen. She says, "Really good practical advice. I have saved several episodes to re-listen. That's the sign of a podcast worth listening to." If you have subscribed, left a review shared an episode with a friend or a family member, we cannot thank you enough. Jen and I read every single review. Without you listening, there's no need for a podcast. So thank you for your continued support. Okay, now let me tell you about what we're talking about. Today we are talking about three sneaky weight-loss saboteurs. I hope this goes without saying that there are actually a ton of different things that can hold people back from achieving and maintaining weight loss results. But in today's episode, we've chosen to share the top three that we've been seen in our members recently. Now of course, your journey is unique to you, and exploring what's holding you back will be pivotal in you ultimately finding success. Get to know yourself. Less judgment, more compassion, less focus on what, and more curiosity on why. And on that note, if you are ready to explore your why you can't miss our next free workshop at the end of August, "Three Steps to End Emotional Eating and Stop Self Sabotage." You don't have to do this alone, my friends, come join us. And you can sign up at balance365life.com/endemotionaleating or click the registration link in the show notes of this episode. Enjoy.

ANNIE

Jen, three sneaky weight-loss saboteurs. Dun dun dun.

BOTH

[Laugh]

ANNIE

I think some of these might surprise people.

JEN

Yeah, I think that people fall into these without realizing they are there. Or they've been taught that this is how you are successful with weight loss.

ANNIE

Yeah, that's actually that's what I was thinking looking at a couple of these, that people might think that these are actually required to achieve weight loss. And we're over here true to form on the other side saying, "Actually, it's maybe what's keeping you stuck." Yeah. So should we get into it?

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

Okay, tell me what number one is.

JEN

So number one is scarcity mindset. But I also want to talk about negativity bias inside of this. Okay?

ANNIE

Okay.

JEN

So scarcity mindset is the belief that there is not enough. And the opposite of that is abundance mindset. And that is the belief that there is plenty. So scarcity mindset can show up in any area of your life. I really loved Molly Galbraith's book talked about scarcity mindset a lot. And we had her on our podcast. And she talked about how it shows up in women's relationships with each other. So this is this can show up anywhere, but we are going to talk about how it shows up in your relationship with food and your ability to stick to changes.

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

So the vast majority of people approach their nutrition habits with the mindset of what do they need to stop doing? And that makes a lot of sense, right? Since the majority of nutrition and weight loss information we get either from the media or from fad diets is this food is bad, that food is bad. Cut this out. Cut this out. Stop this, take this away, less of this.

ANNIE

Yep.

JEN

It just kind of catapults us into that scarcity place. And then in addition to this, many of us have what's called negativity bias, which essentially means we are constantly scanning our environment for threats. And that's kind of an evolutionary thing, right? So we've survived this long by being able to identify threats. So it's actually common, normal, whatever you want to call it, that we might have negativity bias. It can take some intention to not be applying that bias to every relationship in your life, every situation in your life. So when it comes to health and wellness habits, we might have a whole host of great health behaviors. But a negativity bias has us honing in on the bad habits and ruminating on them.

ANNIE

Which we see time and time again, when we talk to women about like, "Hey, tell us what's going on." And they're like, "This is the 100 list of ways in which I failed." And they might have triple that of what's going well.

JEN

Yeah. And that's why we actually start out coaching calls, we often start out with asking what's going well, just to get into a different mindset.

ANNIE

Absolutely.

JEN

So there's just a ton of focus on the negative, so bad habits, what we're doing wrong, and also what we need to stop, what we need to get in control of, what we need to cut out. And when people start ruminating on these thoughts, and all the rules and restrictions they need in their life with food, it launches them into that food scarcity mindset. And some of those thoughts in action might look like, "I have to stop eating at night." Or, "I'm going to cut out bread," or, "Sugar detox starts tomorrow. So I'm throwing out all the sweets in the house, or, "I'm eating all the sweets." [Laughs]

ANNIE

I would say it's not even or, most of the time. It's: "And I have to cut out alcohol, and brownies and pizza and go to bed at 8pm." Like I just you know, it's like, just layer on top of layer on top of layer.

JEN

Yes, yeah. And that's well-intentioned, sure. But the intention here doesn't match the impact. Because the result more often than not, is an increase in food preoccupations, eating urges cravings, right? It might work for a few days. But as those cravings or preoccupations intensify, you eventually lose your handle on it.

ANNIE

Yep.

JEN

So we had Dr. Traci Mann on our podcast. And she is a food psychologist who runs the eating lab at the University of Minnesota. And she's done tons of behavioral studies on adult children, her students. And she has a really good handle on why people do what they do and what are positive ways to interact with food. And she's done studies that show that as soon as a person is told they must cut out a food for any amount of time, they start thinking about it more. So even the foods that the individual doesn't particularly like when they are told to cut it out, it leads to an increase of thinking about it more.

ANNIE

[Laughs] You don't even have to like the dang food. And it's still effective.

JEN

Years ago, I think it was in 2015, 2016, I was working with a registered dietician on some issues I was having. And she suggested one step we take is to cut out dairy for one month, just see what happens. I like dairy. I eat dairy regularly, daily. And as soon as she said that, I kind of knew it would be challenging, and I set a date that I was going to start. All I could think about and wanted to eat was dairy products. Yeah. [Laughs]

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

So the solution here is to shift to an abundant mindset. So what does that sound like? So back to the definition in the beginning that there is plenty. So when you're spiraling into a food scarcity mindset, or if you recognize that you are spiraling into the negativity bias, looking at everything that's wrong in your life, recognize that it's happening, right? So, just the awareness. "This is what's happening and this is what this is. I heard Jen and Annie talk about it." And start observing your thoughts. So shift from "I need to cut out bread" to "I'm having thoughts that are telling me I need to cut out bread." And I'm, you know, this is a food, this is going to take me right into food scarcity, framing my health and wellness behaviors from this perspective is only going to increase my cravings for bread, etc. James Clear, he's the author of Atomic Habits. He recently wrote about thoughts and suggested looking at our thoughts like invitations. So our brain is bringing us an invitation, an option. And you don't have to act on the first invitation. You don't have to go to the first party you get invited to. [Laughs] And in Balance365 we often ask our members when we're coaching them, "What else could you think? Does your brain have other options for you? Or can you create that?"

ANNIE

Yeah, but so often, we get so caught up in that first invitation, that first thought that we fail to acknowledge, that we actually do have other options.

JEN

We do. Yeah.

ANNIE

And/or, it's just so habitual, we're so used to thinking that thing, because it's the only thing we've ever considered that, I mean, we see members' eyes light up, and like brains practically explode when we're like, "What other options do you have?" And they're like, "Oh, my gosh, wow."

JEN

Yeah. And that's when we can give ourselves the invitation to shift into an abundance mindset. So rather than, what do you want to stop cut out and reduce? What about, what do you want to start doing? What do you want to add to your life? What do you want to increase? So for example, I'm going to start taking my vitamins in the morning, I'm going to add fruit to my breakfast, I'm going to increase the amount of water I drink in a day. So coming at it from what can I add, instead of coming at it from what do I need to take away?

ANNIE

Yeah, and we've said this before, in relation to other topics, I just generally find life pretty miserable and not enjoyable when I am walking around looking at all the things I need to stop doing, all the things I'm not doing well, versus it's actually much more encouraging, and I've seen this in myself, like in coaching through athletics, when someone tells me, "Hey, you did that really well." Or, "This is working for you. This is clicking," I am so much more excited to add to that and continue versus when, "Here's all the ways in which you're not thriving."

JEN

Yeah. And that's kind of bringing it back to that negativity bias and recognizing, if when you're doing that and start looking at what you're doing really well. Yeah. So, imagine having a coach, imagine if Annie had a coach following her around critiquing her performance on the field, it would likely lead to her overall performance suffering, right? Rather than a coach that's encouraging, and telling her everything that's going well.

ANNIE

Or compassionate, being like, "Hey, this isn't going so well. But you're doing great here."
[Laughs] Like, both, right?

JEN

Yeah. So, and all of this, you know, back to the food scarcity mindset, sometimes there's a deeper mindset there. Because you've been, you know, you've been dieting for so many years. Or maybe you could have grown up with food insecurity. And you could be actually experiencing food insecurity right. Now, I just want to acknowledge, that that absolutely is the case for many families out there. So the belief there, and I guess the point of honesty is like, number one question, is food scarce? Right? It might be. For me, it isn't. For me, we have the resources to buy food and have it in our fridge. And so it's kind of acknowledging for a lot of our listeners that their years of dieting have given them a food scarcity mindset. They see a piece of cake and have a strong urge to eat the whole thing because they're kind of inner, what do we want to call

it? Their inner soundtrack is like, "Remember, we get rid of that," like, "That's gonna be gone tomorrow." [Laughs]

ANNIE

"This was a special occasion."

JEN

Yeah. So we have to kind of dive into those deeper beliefs of what's kind of running in the background, and realize how much that's driving our decisions.

ANNIE

Absolutely.

JEN

Yeah. And also, I guess the last thing I want to say about this is, often what we see is when we approach health and wellness habits from the abundant mindset, or what do I want to start doing instead of what do I want to take away? Often those good habits end up crowding out the bad habits, so no intention to pull back on those bad habits was even necessary. And I see this, like where I see it happen most often is when a woman comes to me and says she is overeating at night, she's not hungry, she's having cravings, and she's overeating or binge eating at night. The first step I would take with that person is to actually look at her protein intake. And talk about increasing her protein throughout the day. And I love when this happens. It's not every time, but a lot of the time, women will come back to me and say, "I'm not even craving anything at night anymore. Once I got my protein where it needs to be."

ANNIE

You had that happen just recently, right? You added in an afternoon protein shake.

JEN

I was getting snacky at night. And I started having a protein shake mid-afternoon. And don't even think about food at night anymore. Yeah, but I do find, and I do find when I'm getting snacky in the evenings, or another time for me is when I'm cooking supper, I'll have a box of crackers while I'm cooking supper. If I just pause for a moment, not launch myself into a thought spiral around it, I can almost always take it back to my protein intake and go, "You've had like 40 grams of protein today."

ANNIE

It's crazy.

JEN

It's crazy. The last thing I want to share here is actually something a member went through recently, and she shared it with, in our member group. So she was watching a movie with her family. And they had already had ice cream. But all she could think about was wanting more ice cream. And she had a look through her day and it was you know, healthy, balanced. She said

she missed her protein shake. So she probably could have had a little bit more protein. But she really identified the biggest thing was that she didn't want to say no to herself. So she really identified that she was, had moved into a scarcity mindset around this ice cream. So she's ruminating on it. And so what she did in that situation was ask herself, what did she need to think, in order to not feel deprived? And what she didn't want to feel deprived of, what the ice cream actually represented for her. Well, she didn't want to feel deprived of joy. And she didn't want to feel deprived of an opportunity for a moment of indulgence. So instead of saying no to the ice cream, she asked herself, what can I say yes to? So for her, she thought fizzy water. I can say yes to fizzy water, I can say yes to an herbal tea. I could say yes to a walk with my husband, I can say yes to a hot tub. And so she started, again, when you stop fixating on that one thing, all these options start appearing. Right? And that's, that is shifting into an abundant mindset. What are all my options here? And so the choice she made was she had a hot tea, and she felt totally satisfied after and her craving just went away.

ANNIE

I love that. So many more possibilities than we often initially think.

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

Beautiful. Okay, so the second sneaky weight-loss saboteur is micromanaging your weight, your habits, your steps, calories, your macros, whatever, any kind of micromanaging. So why is this not helpful?

JEN

So micromanaging is when you are trying to closely control aspects of your health behaviors, or the outcomes. So this is often something we are taught that we need to do if we want to be successful in reaching our health and wellness goals. And it can look like every decision you make in a day becomes about how it will impact your scale weight, like what the scale will show you tomorrow morning, right? Like that's you micromanaging your weight. It can look like every day, every meal, every bite of food matters. That's you micromanaging your nutrition. It can look like obsessing over a step counter, like your Fitbit or your Apple watch or whatever, to the point that it stresses you out.

ANNIE

I often, I think we both had this experience tracking various elements of nutrition that if you don't hit it perfectly, if you're under, if you're over, that it creates a domino effect of various behaviors. You know, I'm eating now, I'm eating when I'm not even hungry just to hit this number, or I'm over-exercising to try to negate the overconsumption, right?

JEN

Yeah, the truth is that this just isn't sustainable. It is not sustainable to micromanage anything, and to look at other parts of your life, like when is micromanaging ever successful? Like when

an employer micromanages an employee, like, we know we're not on a good road here. When parents are micromanaging their kids, we're not on a good path here. Right? So people just, they don't have time. And they don't have the energy and they don't enjoy micromanaging themselves. And more often than not, all it leads to is rebound eating and bingeing the same way a child who is micromanaged by their parents ends up with some very rebellious behaviors.

ANNIE

Yeah, this is like white-knuckling, you know, your way through life, or we say like sprinting a marathon like, good luck.

JEN

Yeah. And I really felt this when I was macro counting, and I wasn't macro counting in a healthy way, I wasn't doing it in, I wasn't just, you know, looking at a label and getting some more nutritional information. I for months and months was trying to count every single macro. And it brought me a lot of stress. I had three kids under four, I was cooking spaghetti, weighing food, calculator out, it was just, I had a lot more going on. And that ended up being the focal point of my days.

ANNIE

Absolutely. I remember one time sitting outside of a fast-food restaurant with, I was just so stinking hungry, and I was with my family. And I was holding everyone up, because I was like, I got to figure out what I can eat first. I've got to like pull up the menu and do the calculations and I just could not make that choice without that information.

JEN

Yeah. And so I guess if you do have time, and you do enjoy it, go you. [Laughs] That just, that wasn't my experience, especially in that season in my life. And now I know there are a lot of other options. That was unnecessary. I'd say most of our listeners probably relate more to me and you. And it is painful to be micromanaging their health behaviors.

ANNIE

And people crave autonomy. Right?

JEN

They do.

ANNIE

Like, and often times when we're micromanaging, we're micromanaging based off of like outside external goals and values and ideals versus our own.

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

And it's just, it just can so often feel like another way in which you're failing or not measuring up.

JEN

Yeah. And, I want, I want people to know that not only do they not need to micromanage their weight, or nutrition, or exercise, that it's often harmful.

ANNIE

Absolutely.

JEN

Yes. So the solution is that you have to learn how to recognize when you're doing this. And ask yourself why and learn the skill of what we call zooming out in Balance365, zoom out, look at the big picture, life ebbs and flows. And the more flexible and realistic you can be, the more integrated your health behaviors can become in your life, when you are going through those ebbs and flows. And the trouble is, in situations where someone should probably be zooming out to gain a little perspective, they start zooming in instead, getting super granular. And they're just, they're missing the forest through the trees.

ANNIE

Oh, yeah, that's when, I mean, a number of stories come to mind. But when in general, it's like people are seeking a sense of control. And so then they go in all in hard on everything, am, pm, midday, weekdays, weekends, like yeah, we're changing everything, right?

JEN

And they can't sustain it right? And so, and I have noticed this in myself, when I feel urges to micromanage. It's actually there's something happening external in my world. So might be stress, might be anxiety. It's like I get this urge to start micromanaging either my nutrition or whatever, sometimes it's my kids. And you know, it's like, for me asking myself why I come to my truth of, you're trying to find something you can control. But that's not a solution. The solution is to accept there's a lot in my life that isn't controllable.

ANNIE

And that you don't need to control everything to get results.

JEN

Right. [Laughs] The third sneaky weight-loss self-sabotage is called calorie clumping. And this is a term Dr. Freedhoff came up, with he's an obesity medicine doctor here in Canada. He's pretty active online. He's been on our podcast, wonderful man. And he shared this in a blog post, that after observing 1000s of patients over I think a decade plus in his practice, weight gain is never linear. And PS, just a little note from your Balance365 team, weight loss is never linear either.

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

So he shares that he isn't seeing people put on weight because of an extra 10 calories per day, accumulating over a year. What's more common is short but intense periods of eating energy-dense foods. Or as he calls this, calorie clumping. So calorie clumping could look like a lot of different things. Here's a few examples. The rebound bingeing that happens when you come off of a restrictive diet. Weekends, right? Your weekends might be eating out, boozing, treating yourself, just not being mindful at all. Evenings. A lot of people struggle with evening eating, and nobody's reaching for a salad after nine o'clock at night. A stressful season of life with a lot of emotional eating, vacations, etc. Can you think of any others?

ANNIE

Well, the one that I personally have the most experience with is, I guess it could kind of fall under weekend/the rebound bingeing. Because what I would do is, I've talked about it before, is like cheat meal on Friday night.

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

And that was definitely a session of calorie clumping for a different, a couple different reasons. But I remember when I first heard the news that, hey, that cheat meal might be causing you to maintain your weight or even gain weight, because essentially, I'd built up this caloric deficit throughout the week, and then totally just blew it out of the water. As the Chinese buffet going all in on pizza or whatever.

JEN

And that's, I hope, hopefully, part of a bigger conversation of like, "Is that something you are able to deal with?" Because you just need to be honest and develop some new skills and habits for managing weekends. Or is your calorie deficit so extreme that that's a physiological rebound? Right? So that's definitely what my experience was. So I would say, sometimes in my life when I've gone hard on the calorie clumping was that rebound binge eating that happened after a diet, but it was just so physically and psychologically restrictive, that there was no other outcome that was going to happen.

ANNIE

Yeah. And I just I want to like, if you're hearing this, and you're kind of like salty or defensive, or like, I don't know, I guess I remember hearing this concept and thinking, just kind of pissed, you know, that, like, I worked so hard, and you're telling me this is the one area, like this is the one thing that's like keeping me from reaching my goals? I just don't, I don't want people to hear that.

JEN

We're not saying work harder. We're saying, work less hard during the week. [Laughs]

ANNIE

Yes, yes, exactly.

JEN

You don't have to go so hard on the weekend. So, yeah. And the other thing is different seasons of my life, aka college having like, an evening alcohol habit. Not every evening, but I just definitely drank more when I was younger than I do now. And it wasn't just the alcohol, it's the habits that would follow. So drinking, followed by eating without abandon, poor sleep, hangover eating the next day. That was a huge source of calorie clumps for me.

ANNIE

Yep.

JEN

The other one I have is when I have intense work periods, whether I'm studying for something or I'm writing, I eat, or have urges to eat, I would say, so there's some and I think that's more rooted in procrastination and feeling sorry for myself. And the other one I wanted to mention for me is pumpkin spice latte season. [Laughs]

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

So pumpkin spice lattes are no joke. And I've had to learn over the years and the various pumpkin spice latte seasons how to manage my indulgences with pumpkin spice latte.

ANNIE

Yeah. And again, like the point isn't necessarily to just identify the areas of maybe potential calorie clumping in your life, and then cut it out. Right? It's not like, to like white knuckle even harder, double down even harder. It's more like get curious about like, "What's going on here? Why is this happening?"

JEN

Yeah, and I would bring you back to point number two, right? So instead of micromanaging nutrition habits 24/7, what about looking at some sticky areas of your life that are causing you to, you know, feel poorly or gain weight, or the thing that's standing in the way of you losing weight. Right? It doesn't have to be about weight either, it can be about your health. So just your overall health, how you feel. Zoom out from your day-to-day, what patterns do you see? Are there times of your day, times of your week, times of your month or year where you are calorie clumping? And what are the habits and skills you need to do to do a little better? It's not all or nothing, we have to think of our health behaviors, our eating behaviors on a spectrum. And we're not suggesting you go from all to nothing, we're suggesting you just nudge that along the spectrum a little bit. And maybe just do a little bit less calorie clumping. I still indulge in pumpkin

spice lattes, I still indulge in sweets and treats throughout the week on the weekend, Christmas, all of that, I'm still participating in my life. For me, it was about doing it a little bit less.

ANNIE

Absolutely. And I guess, too, when you have that awareness that that's one of those times, seasons, experiences that you are going to indulge. You can do that without the shame.

JEN

Yes, you can.

ANNIE

You just own it. Okay, Jen, do you want to walk us through a quick recap of the three sneaky weight loss self sabotagers?

JEN

Yeah, so to wrap it up, three sneaky weight-loss sabotagers, there's our scarcity mindset, or your negativity bias. So approaching health and wellness habits from what you need to take away, what you need to stop doing, everything you're doing wrong, to shifting to more of an abundant mindset. What can you start doing? What could you use more of? What are you doing well. What's already going well for you? That just feels better, just saying that doesn't it?

ANNIE

So much better.

JEN

Number two is micromanaging. So as soon as you start micromanaging your weight, your habits, your steps, you know, whatever, you're getting into the danger zone. So zoom out, keep your eye on the big picture. And the long-term life ebbs and flows and we can flow with it. Number three is calorie clumping. And that's just to have an honest, nonjudgmental talk with yourself about if there's some intense periods of eating in your life where you could put some effort into.

ANNIE

Or maybe not even effort, just attention to.

JEN

Attention to. Yes.

ANNIE

Yeah, maybe it's effort. Maybe it's attention. Maybe it's attention and then putting effort in elsewhere.

JEN

Yes.

ANNIE

Who knows? Okay, wonderful. I love those. Jen, thank you for sharing.

JEN

Thank you.

ANNIE

Awesome. We'll talk soon. Bye-bye my friends.

JEN

Bye-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 balanc365.co to join coaching.