

Balance365 Episode 24 Transcript

Annie: Jen & Lauren, welcome back to the show, how are you?

Lauren: Good, how are you?

Annie: Good. There's always that silent, awkward moment, like "Which one of us is she talking to? Who is going to speak first?"

Jen: Right.

Annie: Jen, how are you today?

Jen: I'm really good. I'm super stoked that my business partner Annie was elected as the new Des Moines Lululemon ambassador this morning.

Lauren: Yay!

Annie: You told me you weren't going to share that. John pulled me out of bed at 5 am and he was like "Someone destroyed the car, I don't know if it was the bat or what?" And I go outside, no glasses, in my crummy jammies, morning breath and they were like, "Surprise!" and I was like, "Oh gosh, I am really touched but could I have just five minutes?"

Jen: So they surprised you at 5 am?

Annie: At 5 am. Because I had told this story about how in high school our homecoming court was selected and the night before they would come and the band would play in your front yard and they would like rip you out of bed and most of the girls I knew wanted to be picked but you didn't come out and say "I want to make homecoming court" but you went to bed that night with your no makeup makeup look, and your cutest jammies and your hair was curled, like you're not trying but you're trying.

Jen: Just in case.

Annie: Just in case. And I wasn't picked. And so I told one of my friends this story and that's why they surprised me this morning.

Jen: Oh, it was like reliving the homecoming experience.

Annie: Fulfilling high school dreams at 35.

Jen: Nice. Very special.

Annie: Yeah. Lauren, how are you?

Lauren: I'm good. I apologize for being so late. I was getting my hair done. Shout outs to Lacey, she is a big Healthy Habits Happy Moms radio fan.

Annie: Hi Lacey!

Lauren: She does my hair. But I've never had blonde hair before, I dyed it blonde or highlighted it or however you say it a couple months ago so I've never had to do touch ups for the roots and I thought it was just going to be a super quick thing like they just paint it on and just wait, I don't know, but it was not quick.

Jen: So, I'm blonde, have been my whole life, welcome to the blonde side.

Lauren: Thank you.

Jen: `So the other option for you is to just grow it out so it looks nasty, then start calling it ombre, and then it's trendy again. That's what I did.

Lauren: I will keep that in mind.

Annie: Or you could also look like me in high school who didn't see the Sun In effect quite quick enough so I just dumped the whole bottle on my head.

Lauren: So it was like orange.

Annie: Yeah. It was bad. But as we say in our business, you pay for an education. Lesson learned. I had to go to Yonkers Salon to get my hair fixed. Anyways, we have a really, really good topic for you today, it comes up a lot in our community and it just happened yesterday so we kind of put this together on the fly because we felt like there was quite a buzz about this topic and it was quite relevant in our Facebook community, which, side note, if you're not a member of our Facebook community, please join. It's a great way to continue the

conversation if you have more questions, get support, we have almost 40,000 women worldwide, moms and non-moms, just no dudes, that's our only rule right now but Jen do you want to share what happened yesterday because you were in on it.

Jen: Sure, so what happens quite, not frequently, but often enough, maybe once a week so as most people will be familiar with is before and after photos especially if somebody is on a weight loss journey or on a diet or whatever. They'll post photos of themselves before they start the diet or day one of the diet and then when they complete the diet or midway through their journey or whatever it is and so we see this a lot on social media but we actually don't see it a lot in our group because that's not the kind of community and culture that I think we have created or necessarily encouraged however some women, they might be new to our group and haven't quite clicked with the culture yet, they might post a before and after of themselves and we don't see them often but when we do see them we sort of have veterans of our group or Balance 365 members who will comment, not your usual repertoire.

Typically when people do when someone posts a before and after photo is say "you look so amazing, well done, good job, keep going etc etc" and what our Balance 365 or maybe our veteran Healthy Habits Happy Mom community members will say are things like "Can you tell us what healthy habits you've incorporated?" Or "How do you feel?" or "I see a woman who was lovable and worthy before and a woman who was lovable and worthy after." And so those are sort of the different types of comments that people might see in our group.

The post that came up in our group yesterday wasn't that different than what people might see on social media but stood out about this one and why I ended up going in and addressing it was that she posted her before and after and she had written a couple paragraphs and inside one of those paragraphs she said, "I am so embarrassed and ashamed to be sharing this before picture with you all, however this was me. And this is me now." With her after photo which showed, I think she said a 50 pound weight loss. And so there were lots of comments.

Now our group Healthy Habits Happy Moms is very big, I don't know how many people are engaged, I don't know how many people are even picking up on our culture, some seem to take quite a while to adopt it, you know they might join our group but they haven't listened to any of our podcasts or read anything on our blog yet, so it might take some time but I did see there was a ton of comments

underneath saying "You look so great. You should be proud. Look at you go. Keep going. You're an inspiration."

And you know, all of that is fine however it does keep perpetuating that whole idea of your larger body is your unworthy body and the way she spoke about her before body is very troubling especially because in our pinned post, our very, very first rule, which is in an infographic, has silhouettes of women of all different sizes and we say "We are inclusive to all women, it doesn't matter what their size, background, colour, ability is, or even if they're a mom. We strive to be an inclusive community."

So what I wanted to say and what I want everyone to know just about our community even in particular is are we being inclusive of women of all different sizes, abilities and weights if we are sharing photos of ourselves and basically saying we are disgusted with the body we once had and we are embarrassed to be even showing it. In a group of 40,000 women, there are going to be many women who are living in that body and maybe happy with that body and not trying to change it.

Annie: I think that's one of the missed, or between the lines, messages that happens with Before and Afters is that often times the after gets a lot of the praise and attention but what really goes ignored is these kind of underlying messages about what we're saying about the before body and often times, as you said, Jen, the message is that the before body is something to be ashamed of, to be embarrassed about, that it's not okay, that it's wrong, that it's bad, and that's one of the kind of, what do I want to say? Bones we have to pick with before and afters because honestly the three of us have gone back and forth "Should we use them? Should we not use them?"

Because they are a cornerstone marketing technique of the health and fitness industry. People are used to seeing Before and Afters, they want proof that whatever you are selling works, right? And that has caused us, we've gone rounds, "Should we use them? Should we not?" And that's one of the downsides of before and afters is that it often really, really has really not so kind things to say about the before body. Where the before photo is sad and the after photo is happy. Before photo is bad, the after photo is good. It's just a lot of judgment and morality around those bodies.

Jen: And I understand, I used to use before and afters all the time, I used it as "motivation" and I remember almost obsessively taking them after the birth of my second son and I remember texting them to my sisters and they would do the typical thing, they would sit back and say "Amazing, good job" all of that, but really that was a lot of shame based motivation, it wasn't that I was simply neutrally looking at those photos and saying, "Oh here is how my body has changed as time has gone on and I have been consistent with my habits, I was thinking "That body is gross and the faster I can change it the better." The other thing that happens in the health and wellness industry is the quicker you can produce those results, ahem, 21 days, ahem Beach Body cough cough, the quicker you can show those results the more excited people get.

But we know, and if anyone's listened to our podcast any amount of time, we know that that can often be extremely unhealthy, rapid weight loss can be very unhealthy for many reasons we've talked about on many podcasts, the physiological and psychological rebound effect that happens, the fact that rapid weight loss usually means you're about half of the weight you lose is probably muscle not just fat, there's all those reasons but people are obsessed with weight loss so that type of thing works and of course we've gone around talking about that because we're saying we know that we do help women with fat loss, we just take a much different approach, do we want to be lumped in with those companies?

We don't. And what does that say about us if we're using those photos and what are we saying about our clients? Like, you know, because for me a success story about balance 365 isn't about the weight, we aren't a lose weight at all costs company. Some women come into Balance 365 without weight loss goals.

They're just there for the food freedom, the sanity and all of that and some women come inside and change their goals because once they start working through the program and different self-acceptance levels and cultivating healthy habits physical and emotional, they realize that these huge fat loss goals they once had aren't actually realistic for them, the habits they would require aren't sustainable for them for life and they're trying to find a new place, a new healthy weight for them, so we haven't used them, it may have hurt us, I don't know, marketing wise, I mean we don't have, people just like break their necks when they see a before and after photo come across their feed or whatever, but yeah, so far, I don't know, never say never but so far we've decided not to use them.

Annie: Jen, will you share, you had a really great response, if you are in the community that post was ultimately deleted unfortunately but you had a really great response, you made the comparison to bodies to our homes. Will you share that?

Jen: Right. So, I'll read what I wrote. So, if you're struggling to understand, try putting it into the context of a home. What if I posted a photo of the house I grew up in versus the house I'm living in now and called my before house an embarrassment, or ugly or disgusting and it looked like the house you're living in now, a house you're working really hard on loving because you can't change it or it's going to take some time the changes you would like to.

Most people agree that could fall under house shaming or poverty shaming yet we see people doing it on social media every day because nobody thinks anything of degrading different body types. Our bodies are our homes and we may not love the way they look but we can respect them.

And in doing so, we are role modelling to other women that they should value and respect the body they have now, no matter what. I think comparing photos of before you started your healthy habit journey to after is totally fine but it really comes down to how you talk about that journey.

I have photos of me from different stages of my life and I can see how different habits have changed my body. Many years ago, I would have also felt disgusted with my before photo and used it as shame based motivation to keep going. Today, I just see two different sized bodies, neither better nor worse. Both worthy of love and respect, just different because of the different season of life I'm in.

Lauren: That was really great. I hadn't read that before because it was deleted but I think it's really important, I really like that analogy and I think it's important that we are having this conversation because I know that a lot of women don't realize that that's what they are doing.

Because just like you I used to share Before and After photos, take Before and After photos and think of myself as disgusting in the Before photo and for me, that was not a conscious representation of what I thought other people looked like of that size, I only felt that about myself, so I think that's important that we bring this to the forefront of people's minds that a lot of people probably aren't realizing this does have an effect on other people and when you do say those

things about your Before people it affects yourself and it affects others as you said, so I think it's really important to bring this up.

Annie: I think what really, really breaks my heart when I see Before and After photos and there's a lot of shame or embarrassment or disgust expressed about the Before photo, what breaks my heart is that you're talking about a woman, I know that often times we think about "Well, that was me then" but that's still a woman.

And I have almost, now that I see the implications of using Before and After photos and really thinking of yourself as just a body, I have almost this kind of out of body experience when I see photos of me, which I shared in our podcast about what to do when you hate photos of yourself the photo of me and Blair one week postpartum, that was me then and I look at it now and I feel heartbroken that I couldn't be more compassionate towards her that I couldn't have more love and respect for her and it just breaks my heart, that even though you're talking about yourself like that's still a woman and as Jen said, what are you saying about other women that look like that? You know?

Does the message carry over and I know a lot of people would say, "No, no, no, I'm just talking about myself" but it's kind of hard not to carry over.

Lauren: Right.

Jen: The thing that's important to understand is that the female body is objectified and sexualized by our society and it starts at a really young age, I think research is showing girls at age 4-5 years old are already starting to exhibit signs of preferring to have a thinner body and we weren't born like this so they are getting the message really early and then we grow up in a society that objectifies women's bodies which is basically a way of dehumanizing them, right? So I'm saying "Really all that matters about you as a woman or your number one priority for pursuing worthiness should be a body size."

So this is the whole mindset that we are in and we don't even realize when we're doing it to ourselves. The other thing we sometimes see in our group, is I think it was last week someone shared a photo of themselves and they also did a Before and After and she didn't even include her head in the picture.

It was just like a body with no head, no personality, no... and that's heartbreaking to me and we had some awesome comments come in "We'd like to see your smile next time" because we are so much more than bodies and we get treated as if we are and then we start reducing ourselves to bodies. It's tragic and we are capable of so much more.

Another example I use to illustrate my point here is that we also have posts in the group of women who say they are not showing a photo but they might be talking about their Before and After of pursuing therapy and feeling better or they might talk about how much better they feel after starting an exercise habit. And those posts never get as much attention as the before and after photos of physical changes.

So that point there alone is showing what we have come to value and what society looks at and so you see it on social media every day, I mean, I don't have that kind of stuff in my social media feeds anymore but I know a lot of people still do and they're exposed to Before and After photos all day long, a Before and After photo will get 10,000 likes. There's just so much praise going on for it, it just becomes "Oh this must be normal." And our society has completely normalized and rapid weight loss and dieting as a healthy part of life and it isn't.

Annie: Absolutely. You know, the other thing, the other downside about Before and After that you kind of touched on a little bit earlier, Jen, is that they tell us nothing about the person's health or wellness other than their body weight and their body composition they have changed, that they are simply a different size, but that is it, but so often we assume that because they are maybe smaller, they're lighter, they're leaner, that they're healthier or that they're happier and we know that body size does not correlate with body love or self-love and that lower weight or lower body composition does not always correlate with improved health.

And it also tells us nothing about their mental or emotional wellness. And I think the three of us have all had periods of our life where we've been leaner or lighter and miserable.

Lauren: Yeah.

Jen: Right.

Annie: That's not something we're into promoting either or celebrating for other women. If weight loss is a goal of yours I can support that but I'm not going to support it at the expense of your mental and emotional wellness.

Jen: Right because it's all connected, our health. You're not healthy if you are in an emotionally stressed state at all times. If you're obsessing over every macronutrient that passes your lips, every step that you didn't take on your step tracker that day, that's not healthy at all.

Lauren: Right, and I'd argue that even if you're losing weight, being in that state is less healthy than being at a higher weight and not always stressed.

Jen: Not emotionally balanced.

Lauren: Yeah.

Jen: Right, totally. The fitness industry and diet culture in general they really have portrayed health as something that you basically need to be obsessed with and that is a major failure to the population at large when really our job in the health and wellness industry should be about portraying what a healthy balanced life looks like and can be.

Annie: I'm looking through my Instagram quotes because I swear I came across a really, really great quote and I'm just going to try to paraphrase but it was pretty much this woman saying that she's just not interested in celebrating weight loss anymore. Like, she's not going to clap for you. She's not going to boo you if you gain weight, she's not going to clap for you if you lose weight, that's just not an interest of hers, she doesn't place value on that anymore and I really, really like that a lot and I think that's kind of where I'm at because a lot of people can lose weight, that's not usually the difficult part, the difficult part is doing it in a healthy way that you can sustain it and maintain it and really like loving yourself in the process versus just dropping weight as fast as possible.

Jen: The other thing is that when I see Before and After photos because we know how prevalent fad dieting is I think we have stats on that, Annie, that X percent of Americans are on a diet at any given time.

Annie: Yeah, I don't know off the top of my head but it's an insane amount.

Jen: it's a very high amount. So, and because I also know not enough people are talking about behaviour change and the science of habit change, so people aren't even going through the correct process to make these habits stick, when I see a Before and After photo I know that there is a very high likelihood that this person lost this weight because of a fad diet and their picture is before the diet and after the diet and then when we connect those stats to 95% of diets fail, the vast majority of people end up heavier, unhealthier physically and mentally within two years of starting that diet. I can't clap for that.

The other thing is, people have to understand is weight regain is emotionally awful for people. It is humiliating so if you are a woman who "is overweight" and you do lose 50 pounds, and all these people were clapping for you and six months later you've already gained back 30, that is just shrouds you in this humiliation cloud and it's hard to even run into anyone. I think we talked about in on maybe the Sisters podcast.

Annie: Yes, that's exactly what I was thinking.

Jen: Yeah, so we talked about, my sister Janelle shared on the Sisters podcast about how awkward it is, all these people clapping her on as she's basically pursuing disordered eating to lose weight and then she has to run into those people when her weight is 30 pounds back up and it's like avert your eyes awkward, don't, because-

Annie: I want to say she said it was like she was wearing a scarlet letter. Like, she felt people were whispering, or she left the room and people were like, "Look at Janelle!" Which "Who knows if they were or they weren't", it absolutely is, it's like "Cheer, cheer, cheer," and then when you gain weight it's silence. And it can be painful.

Jen: So that quote you are talking about, Annie, I actually shared that as well, and I had it on my instastory and I started following the woman who said it and she is @lebo_lion and what she said was "you can miss me with your diet culture, I won't clap for you if you lose weight. I won't judge you if you gain weight. None of it means anything. There is absolutely no morality or intelligence in monitoring another person's physical appearance. Just let people be."

Annie: Mic drop.

Lauren: I think, too, to add to that, so in our program we are all about body autonomy. So we have nothing against weight loss goals or fat loss goals, I mean, I currently have a small fat loss goal, but I think we can applaud someone for reaching their own goals without it being about weight or before and afters. A phrase we often use is "I'm happy you're happy."

Jen: Right.

Annie: Absolutely. And Jen, you kind of started talking about that's another downside of Before and Afters is what happens after the after? And you said at the beginning of the show a lot of these Before and Afters are 21 days, 6 weeks, 12 weeks, even at the longest period of time maybe 6 months but what happens, like show me again in 5 years, let's talk then.

Jen: I think we have shared your before and after, we've shared various before and afters over the years just sprinkled them like on our social media so Annie used to be a size 24 and now's she's a size 12 and 7 years has passed. So here we have some sustainable weight loss which you are not attributing to any fad diet.

Annie: And I had some babies in there.

Jen: Right. And we shared Lauren, a weight loss before and after, where Lauren specifically said, this weight I was at, this high weight is the result of dieting over and over and over again and having rebound weight gain, rebound weight gain and me here at this lower weight this is me finding my healthy weight, healing my relationship with food and cultivating healthy habits in my life. This is a healthy space for me, that was a very unhealthy space for me.

Alternatively, we present a balanced view. So my before and after has been different than your guys' in that I used to be a size 0 and I used to be 118 pounds, now I'm 5'9 and I had a BMI of 17 at my leanest and now I am about a size 6, so I'm naturally a lean woman, so I'm about a size 6, I'm around 140 pounds, and this is me today, also living at a healthy weight for me right now. So I feel like the times we have shared before and afters we are trying to show a balanced perspective to say "hey this about finding your healthy weight. If you believe you are living above a healthy weight for you, that's okay, we can help you with those fat loss goals but in Balance365 we are not helping women get from a size 6 to a size 0 if that's not healthy or sustainable for them.

And I guess bring it back to the whole point of this podcast is going like "Even though we see changes in bodies, Annie, I imagine you look back at your size 24 self and those photos of you at size 24 and there was a time of your life where you just cringed to look at it where now you can say "That was a woman doing the best she could."

And same with Lauren, you were doing the best you could, you were dieting and rebounding, dieting and rebounding, your weight going up and up and up with each diet. But you were still doing the best you could and you were trying and those women are still worthy of respect. We don't have to be disgusted when we look at those women, that is just part of your story.

Lauren: Yeah.

Annie: Absolutely. Amen. Right on.

Jen: Amen emojis. Amen emojis.

Annie: Yas Queen! The last point and one of you already kind of brought it up too, is that before and afters, and this is tricky on a photo based platform like Instagram or where photos are pushed in the algorithms like Facebook but when we share pictures of our bodies all the time it pushes the notion and the agenda that our bodies are the most important thing about us and they just aren't and as you've noted before, Jen, it often turns out that women's are objectifying themselves, that they are breaking themselves down to parts of bodies which I have done, admittedly, I've done to myself but that's why conversations like this are really, really important to give you an alternative perspective that this is the implication of what you're doing to yourself and others and here's an alternative.

Like you don't have to do this. Just because everyone else is sharing before and afters doesn't mean you have to too and it's not the only way you can celebrate weight loss or change in your body composition or reaching a goal. There's alternative ways to celebrate that aside from before and afters.

Jen: The other thing is that weight loss is just a result of changing your behavior, so sustainable weight loss, weight loss that you see in your body and that stays, that is a result of changing your behaviors forever. When you do a diet and you aren't working on behavior change, that is a result of temporary behavior change

and usually like severe caloric restriction and then when you rebound and eat all the things your body will reflect that.

And I guess what I want people to understand that it is just as important if not more to celebrate the processes of getting you to different places in all realms of like, even in our business, sure we can celebrate hitting x amount of members or x revenue, we can celebrate that, but it really came down to the day to day hustle that the three of us are committed to day in and day out and if we only celebrated the results we would forget what went into our day to day and people around us might think it was just that easy.

Lauren: Right? Who was it Dan John that says "You have to fall in love with the process, that's what matters."

Annie: That sounds like something he would say.

Lauren: It might not be Dan John. Maybe James Clear. I don't know.

Jen: Somebody smart.

Annie: Somebody really talented like Dan John or James Clear. Either one of them. We've said that a lot about having weight loss as a general goal as well that what happens if you have weight losses as like the ultimate goal, you change all these habits for the better, you start eating vegetables, you're walking, you're sleeping more, your self talk is improved, you're exercising, you're getting up and off the ground with ease and you step on the scale and your weight hasn't budged or you've gained weight and it's like, all of it goes to crap when that's your only priority and it's like, that's one piece of the puzzle, it's not the whole pie, it's just-

Lauren: And we hear that so often too.

Annie: And the thing about Before and Afters when women don't get the results that they think they are supposed to get because Susan is sharing this amazing Before and After, if I don't get that then I'm somehow a failure and that's not how it works. I know that's what can happen, that's the interpretation of it a lot but that's not the whole picture.

Jen: The other thing we see quite a bit is women who have started, say, an exercise habit, this happened two days ago, a woman posted that she's

consistently been going to the gym and she feels really good but she's pretty bummed that the scale hasn't budged.

And I just replied to her, "Maybe instead of weighing yourself in the morning and letting that determine how you feel about your life, maybe you should stop weighing yourself so often and go by how you feel each day. How does that workout make you feel?" There are so many ways to measure progress outside of how much you weigh.

I mean that is just one tiny, little data point out of thousands of data points that we could track about what's going on with our bodies yet we are consumed, obsessed with that one tiny data point.

Lauren: Right, and let's be honest, is how much you weigh really more important than how you feel? Isn't it the point to feel good in the first place? Like, I would rather feel good.

Annie: Absolutely.

Jen: Right.

Annie: And feel loved. And feel confident.

Jen: In our podcast with Sarah Cole that we did, she's been in Balance365 for 18 months, she's lost 50 pounds, she talks all about the process in that podcast, she shared with us when she used to just diet and she would choose these obscure goal weight that she thought she needed to be whether that was her 17 year old weight or her friend's weight or whatever and then she would change her whole life about and it was all about getting to this weight and I think she shared she was eating like 1200 calories a day and running ten kilometres a day.

It was crazy. And her weight plateaued and then she said, I thought this was so profound, in that podcast, she said, "Where do you go from there?" Like as a busy mom, when you keep pursuing that leaner, leaner, leaner, more, more, more, more, there's only so much time for that. So, I found that really interesting that you can always get leaner, you know what I mean? And the other thing is that most people's goal weight, I find, ends up being the leanest they can possibly be. Do you know what I mean?

Lauren: Yeah.

Jen: So we have a range of weight that's healthy for us. There's not like one number that's our magical healthy number, I fluctuate probably between 135 and 145 ish throughout the year, the month, whatever and it's like there's a range that's normal and healthy for us to fluctuate. Seeing huge, wild fluctuation, like Lauren I think you shared before that you used to fluctuate in a 90 pound range. which I would say that's not overly healthy-

Lauren: I went from 0-12 so that's a lot in like a year.

Jen: Right. So that's an enormous fluctuation, that shows some serious habit non-control-

Lauren: Some serious reactive overeating. Yeah, so when you start seeing really crazy wild fluctuations like that, that's worth saying "What's going on?" but if I step on the scale and I'm a couple pounds up or down I think nothing of it, it's not a surprise to me, it's just part of my normal fluctuations.

Annie: I wanna share this, I shared it on instagram but inside my mall bathroom there is one of those, why do these even exist? But there's one of those scales that's like-

Jen: Put a quarter in.

Annie: Yeah. Check your weight and get today's winning lottery ticket numbers. Do you think this works? I took a picture of it because it has Male/Female and then your height and then your weight so this is like, I don't even know what the labels were but it had like three columns, like light, medium and heavy or something. I was heavier than the heaviest and so I made a joke and I was like "I don't even fit on the scale. Like what happens if you don't fit on the scale? Like do you die?"

Jen: Right.

Lauren: Right.

Annie: And the funny thing is I used to carry a lot of shame about my weight, I used to lie about it, I used to hide it, I remember going to the driver's license place and I was 160 when I was clearly over 200 pounds, this lady had to look at me like, "Come on, lady." And, "I know what you're up to here."

But I had a lot of shame and now I'm like, "You know what, I'm heavy, compared to that scale or I'm heavier than what I "should" be per this scale's recommendation which who knows where those recommendations even came from, but I know that my habits are healthy and I feel healthy and I'm living my life in a way that feels good to me and that it's easily maintainable and I'm able to enjoy all the activities that I want to enjoy freely and that's really of utmost importance to me.

If I am up 20 or down 20, I don't care about that. What I care is that I feel like this is maintainable and healthy and good and confident and that's worth way more than minus ten pounds or whatever.

Jen: Right.

Annie: So, anyways. But I didn't get the winning lottery ticket numbers.

Jen: What I want to say too which I really want people to understand that it's women of all sizes that struggle with these thoughts and behaviors so a lot of women who are larger think that becoming smaller is the answer to all of their emotional turmoil around their size and it isn't because thin women struggle with these things too, in fact, your license story reminded me that I used to lie about my weight on my license as well and honestly I have never been a really heavy woman it was just that if I went in and you're talking about lying about 40 pounds, I would lie about 5 or 10 pounds because it was like, I also carried that shame about just being a little bit heavier than I thought that I should be.

Like, I thought I should be this amount of weight and I was going to put it on my license because I was planning on becoming that weight as soon as I could, or that was what I was working towards and it's just crazy to me, like it's crazy to me now that I would think like that and I've always been sort of a tall, thin woman and I struggled with all the same things Annie was struggling with at over 200 pounds and a size 24.

So it's universal and if it's universal we have to start, let's start talking to each other and sharing these things and realizing that there's a lot of societal conditioning going on and it's directed at women of all sizes and we can do something about it, we have the power to do something about that.

Annie: And I think it starts by changing the conversations that we are having on a day to day basis in situations like this. Applauding the weight loss, being silent when people are gaining weight, applauding before and after, a simple actionable step is the next time you see a Before and After, try saying "How do you feel?"

Jen: Right.

Annie: "What habits were you working on?" Instead of all the clapping emojis and applauding how they look-

Jen: Yeah, take the focus off look and thinness and bring it back to health, wellness and how you feel. And if what you're doing is sustainable.

Annie: Yeah, I think the context really matters. I think we covered a lot of great points, do you have anything to add, or do you want to review?

Jen: I just want to add too that for people in my personal life, like, say my sister, if she had lost weight, it's a different story for me to talk to her about her weight and letting her know that I'm acknowledging her results.

It's a different story for me to acknowledge her weight loss results with her, because I know exactly how she's working towards them, I know her emotional wellness has been as important to her as habit building, it's a different story for me to acknowledge that with her than it is for me to acknowledge it to a stranger on social media who I have no idea, could have starved themselves and taken laxatives for the last five days to get to that after photo and so I was reminded of that because you said, "Context matters."

We have all these conversations going on in the body positive world, and in the fitness world and everyone wants to talk in the black and white. Everybody. They want to have rules because rules are easy to understand and I want to just mention that context always matters. Just use your brain. What's appropriate in this situation and you'll be okay.

Lauren: I'll add too that I was at the doctor's the other day and the nurse who was weighing me was like "Oh you lost weight" and like congratulating me for it and I was just "Oh, okay." She doesn't know whether weight loss is a goal of mine, she doesn't know anything about me besides a brief medical history that's on her one sheet of paper and so it was eye opening. Sometimes we get in our little bubble in our community-

Jen: Our Balance365 bubble.

Lauren: Yeah, and we forget this goes on all the time everywhere.

Jen: Yeah, it does. Yep.

Lauren: So I just tried to be like, "Oh, okay." Like it's not a big deal. I'm not going to celebrate with you.

Jen: The thing is same as if you had your blood pressure taken, or you cholesterol measured and that's back to weighing and we've talked about this in previous podcasts. I didn't weigh myself for a long time because I had such a disordered history with it I really just needed a break from seeing my weight. But I do weigh myself now occasionally, I don't own a scale but I'll weigh myself maybe every four months on the gym scale.

Annie: The scale in the mall.

Jen: Right. Put a quarter in. There's never any huge surprises. Back to what Annie was saying, I feel good, I'm doing the best I can right now. I have good habits that are supporting me and so nobody should be afraid of looking at their weight, the same way it's just smart to collect data about your body, it allows you to make decisions so if you can take the shame out of the equation.

You know, we don't get ashamed about our blood pressure, maybe some people do that have really high blood pressure but if we just see fluctuations in our blood pressure or cholesterol, or vitamin D levels, nobody's panicking in the same way that they panic about their weight.

And so for me, monitoring my weight or keeping track or checking in on my weight, I have the same mentality behind it the same way I might check in on all those other data points about my body because it really does allow me to make objective decisions and if I do see my weight is up, it's up or down it allows me to reflect and say, "Is there anything going on here?" And hey, maybe there is. Or maybe there isn't. And then you move on with your life.

Annie: It's a great place to be able to be so much more objective about it instead of reactionary and panicky and anxiety and-

Jen: And emotional.

Annie: And to know that, okay, I have the tools that I need if I want to make any changes, if I don't want to make any changes I can just sit here and maintain for a bit and I know what I'm doing, I know what I need to do if I want to change anything.

Jen: Exactly.

Annie: Awesome. Okay, well, thanks so much, ladies, another good conversation on the books.

Jen: Yes.

Annie: Keep pumping them out. Do we ever have any bad conversations?

Jen: No.

Lauren: No.

Annie: We're kind of brilliant.

Jen: Hilarious, brilliant, intelligent. Someone go write an itunes review!

Annie: 5 star. 5 star please. No, on that note though, if you do have time, we do appreciate the reviews and I'm starting to share them in the intros. They're super fun. We read them. We read all of them.

Jen: And here's the thing. If you love what we're talking about and you think that this message needs to get out to more women, please go and review us because the more reviews we have the higher we start ranking in itunes and the really cool thing is, thank you to everyone who has been leaving reviews for us because we are starting to get women into our community who said they found us on itunes which is so, so cool.

Annie: And the quicker we can rule the world.

Jen: Yes.

Lauren: That too.

Annie: Kidding. Not kidding. No, we really do appreciate it. I mean, even if it didn't do anything for the algorithms, it's just nice to hear that people are listening and

that they enjoy what they hear and that they feel like they're having coffee with us. Because that's ultimately the goal.

Jen: And if you have any negative feedback if you could just slide that through our email.

Annie: CC Lauren Koski on that.

Jen: Not in the reviews. Not on itunes.

Annie: And if you have anything bad about me then you can just keep that to yourself.

Jen: Keep your opinion to yourself.

Annie: Susan.

Jen: Bye, Felicia.

Annie: Okay, thanks, ladies. This was fun, we'll talk soon, okay?

Jen: Okay, bye guys.

Lauren: Bye!