

Balance365 Episode 28 Transcript

Transcript:

Annie: Thanks for joining us on another episode of Balance365 radio. Today's episode tackles a topic that comes up frequently in our community. What to do when you're in a rut. You know that feeling when you're in a slump, you're stuck, maybe you've got a long list of things you want to do or need to do, yet you can't seem to get moving on any of them.

Thanks in part to social media it can be easy to think that everyone is productive, happy and firing on all cylinders at all times but that's usually not the case. Ruts and slumps happen and on today's episode Jen, Lauren and I share four steps to moving through them and include our own suggestions on how we tackle a rut when it happens to us. Enjoy!

Jen and Lauren, welcome back to another show. This is our last episode before we get together in real life next week.

Lauren: I'm so excited.

Annie: You two are coming to Des Moines to visit me and we are going to build some more content for our community and snap some new photos where Lauren is not pregnant.

Lauren: Yes. Yes.

Annie: Jen's not pregnant. I'm not pregnant.

Jen: I haven't been pregnant in a long time.

Annie: This might be the first photo shoot since the original that one of us is not pregnant, right?

Lauren: Yeah, it is.

Annie: Because I got pregnant and then Lauren got pregnant and then this time. Right?

Lauren: Right.

Jen: Everyone cross fingers!

Annie: We know how to prevent that.

Jen: Stay not pregnant.

Annie: We know how that works now that we are in our thirties. Well, almost. Wait, Lauren, are you thirty?

Lauren: Not yet.

Annie: That's right.

Lauren: Maybe by the time this podcast drops I will be thirty.

Annie: We are a little slow on that. Are you guys excited to come to Des Moines? We're going to have a nice community dinner, we are going to meet some of our members in the area and we're going to have dinner and have some drinks and have a good time. Are you excited?

Lauren: Yes.

Jen: Yeah, we have a huge community in Des Moines. Des Moines.

Lauren: Des Moines.

Jen: Des Moines.

Annie: French for The Moines.

Jen: What does it mean? What does Des Moines mean? Des Moines. It sounds like that should be Canadian. Is it French?

Annie: It's French. I'm embarrassed to say I don't know what it means. I really don't know if Des Moines means anything.

Jen: We need to find this out. It's important.

Annie: We do.

Lauren: Please message us if Des Moines means.

Annie: I am probably being a disgrace to the community right now. I don't know what my current town stands for.

Jen: After this podcast drops you're going to wake up in the morning and there will be eggs all over the front of your house. "Get out of town!" spray painted across the side.

Annie: You don't belong. Anyways, I'm really looking forward to it.

Lauren: So, Jen is going to bring us some gifts. From Canada.

Jen: I am.

Annie: Before we started this podcast we were talking about all the things that Canada has that we don't in the United States and one of the things I'm really envious is they have 500 mg ibuprofen which I don't think we have over the counter here.

Lauren: We don't. You have to get a prescription or you can just take 4.5.

Annie: Which, I mean, I have a friend that does that.

Lauren: She's talking about me and her.

Jen: I'll bring like six bottles. Hopefully I don't get pulled aside at the border. Like, what's with all the ibuprofen? Like, I get a lot of headaches.

Annie: And then, also, yeast infection pills. You have oral yeast infections pills.

Jen: Yeah, I find this so strange that you guys can't buy these off the shelf.

Lauren: No, we have to pay our deductible at the doctor and then go pay for it at the pharmacy.

Jen: That feels like such a money grab to me. That's crazy.

Annie: So if you could just bring us some oral yeast infection pills.

Jen: This is the second time in under thirty episodes that we've talked about yeast infections.

Lauren: is it?

Jen: Well when three women running a podcast.

Annie: It's bound to come up. Vaginas and yeast infections and migraines.

Jen: I'd like to get someone on here to talk about yeast infections with us.

Annie: That would be great.

Jen: Yeah, because there's a lot of woo, there's a lot of like pseudoscience woo that goes on in the yeast infection community.

Annie: Is that a thing?

Jen: Yeah, there's all kinds of remedies and yeah.

Annie: I meant the yeast infection community, like it there's communities devoted to yeast infections.

Jen: Well, if you have ever had one and done some googling.

Lauren: There's protocols devoted to it.

Jen: Yes.

Lauren: Like yogurt.

Jen: Which is woo, by the way, everybody. We're not endorsing a yogurt insert.

Annie: We've learned that through trial and error. As we say, yet again, you pay for an education.

Jen: We need to get started. We are getting way off track.

Annie: Is this TMI? Did we cross the line? I don't think.

Jen: My face is getting a little red.

Annie: There's no such thing as TMI in my book. Anyways, what we wanted to talk about today is kind of a topic that shows up in a variety of shapes and forms in our community a lot and that's what to do when you're in a slump, when you're in a rut, when you're just feeling like "blech." When I picture that feeling, I picture

me hunched over just like "ughh" I don't want to do anything, I don't know what to do.

Jen: And you may or may not have a yeast infection during the slump.

Annie: That could have been the trigger. Who knows? Or a migraine. And you're bummed that you can't have extra strength ibuprofen. Anyways, we hear that a lot from women in our community and what can happen often is they start thinking about all the things they should be doing and they get overwhelmed really easily and then they almost kind of get paralyzed or you can get paralyzed because you think "Oh my gosh, I should be doing all this and I'm not doing any of it and I don't even know where to start and now I'm overwhelmed because it seems like everyone else was doing everything and everyone's doing it really well and I'm just over here just sitting on the couch, unmotivated, and I just cannot take action." And how to get out of that rut and at the end of the podcast, three of us are going to share what we do personally and I can already tell you it may or may not align with some of the advice that I wrote out in the outline here. If you're feeling like you're in a rut or a slump, hopefully you'll have some takeaways on how to get out of it. Sound good?

Jen: Sounds good.

Lauren: Yeah.

Annie: Okay. So, the first thing I think is really, really important when you're feeling this way, when you're feeling kind of down, when you're feeling like you're stuck is to acknowledge and accept it and this is something, admittedly, I'm not very good at because I like to cruise social media, I'm on Instagram frequently and it's really easy to get sucked into thinking that everyone else is great all the time and they feel great, they're doing great, they don't have any doubts.

It's all peaks, no valleys, and when you are experiencing your own valleys or your own lows it can feel like you're not doing something right and you can beat yourself up. And what I do is I feel down and then I start feeling down about feeling down which I think Mark Manson kind of coined that as the negative feedback loop or he was the one that made it popular at least.

Like you're feeling bad and then you feel bad about feeling bad. Which isn't a really productive circle. Have any of you, Lauren or Jen, have you experienced that?

Lauren: Yeah, definitely and for me, too, the longer I'm in my slump, the longer it seems to take me to get out of it.

Annie: For sure. One of the things that I know from personal experience that I do instead of acknowledge and accept it, is I kind of go into this resistance and denial and avoidance and I try to stay busy or I try to superficially pull myself out of the slump and what I found as much as I don't enjoy acknowledging and accepting and saying, "Hey, I'm just in a rut right now or I'm just a little lost or I'm a little confused or I'm not really sure what I'm doing right now."

Instead of just accepting that, trying to deny and avoid it takes a lot longer to move through it than just say, "Hey. I'm just in a slump now. And I'm just going to deal with it and feel the feelings that come along with being in a slump and move past it." Like if I can just acknowledge it and accept it I move through it a lot quicker it seems than if I try to stay busy and not feel the feelings that come with being in a slump.

Lauren: Right. I think for me too I often get in a, I don't know if you can see, you can't see, but I'm quoting in a slump.

Annie: Air quotes.

Lauren: After I had a really stressful time, and just like you said, instead of just kind of giving myself that space. When you avoid it, it does last longer. And it's hard, I don't notice that when I'm in it but like looking back I can see that's definitely what has happened.

Annie: For sure. That's a really good point. I notice slumps or ruts after I get something big accomplished or something really big happens and the three of us have talked about that. Like after we come back from a meetup we have like a little like postpartum like not postpartum.

Lauren & Jen: Post meetup.

Jen: Depression.

Annie: Yes. That we're like-

Jen: Because it feels so good when we're together and we feel so connected and we're productive and we're such good friends and then coming back to real life. That probably happens a lot for people maybe after holidays.

For me, I find I kind of go into a slump after I have a baby. The euphoria of having a baby and then visitors and lots of attention and then like when you're around, i don't know, 4-6 weeks postpartum and that all dies down I feel like I've just like usually slide into a little slump.

Annie: For sure if we're talking about, in terms of exercise, you know, a lot of people maybe set a role that they're going to run a 5km or maybe participate in some sort of competition or they're going to reach some performance goal, squat their body weight or a hundred pounds or deadlift 100 pounds or something of that nature and then they reach the goal and then it's like 'Okay, yay!' and then "Now what?"

Lauren: Right.

Jen: Right.

Annie: Coming down from that can be a little blue sometimes. A little lonely. A little like, okay, what do I do now? Where am I going? What am I supposed to be doing?

Jen: Yeah. I feel like it's the part you said about acknowledging ups and downs of life is really important, Annie, because we sort of live in a society that celebrates productivity and I think it's really important to acknowledge that that's an unrealistic expectation of anyone to be productive 100% of the time and we can't always be going at 100. And I actually feel like, for people who do go at 100, their slumps take them down to 0. Do you know what I mean?

Lauren: Yeah.

Jen: The higher you ride, the longer your fall kind of thing.

Annie: Are you looking at me?

Jen: No. That can be around expectations. People who are at 100 have very high expectations of themselves. You just can't keep that up, really. So, I like to keep it at about 60.

Annie: You know, we kind of touched on that topic too in our podcast where we talked about the myth of doing it all. That was really, really early in our podcast days but that would be a great one to listen to, too, because it is, like I said earlier, you open up social media or you even just in conversation, in passing, you usually here just about the highlights. It takes some digging in conversation and relationships to find out what's really going on with people. So often we just share the good stuff, you know. The highlights.

Jen: People aren't posting about their slumps. Did nothing today. Watched 6 hours of tv. Wore my robe til 3. Jen's typical day.

Lauren: That's why I'm laughing.

Annie: True story. What was it? An interview or a meeting or something where you showed up at like noon, and you were like "I just woke up."

Jen: In my defence, my kids were away at their grandparents for a week and I wouldn't, it's like, I don't know if I was in a slump that week, like I feel like my kids left and I just like crashed.

Annie: No, not at all.

Lauren: Yeah.

Jen: I thought I had all these plans of getting stuff done and then I just was like "Eeeeeerumph" like nosedive of an airplane. But I have not slept til noon in years. And yeah, that day I woke up and I saw the clock and I was like "i just slept 12 hours." It was crazy.

Annie: It's like Sleeping Beauty. Like you'd slept six years. No, I don't blame you. I would have done the same thing had I been kidless. Good for you.

Jen: it was glorious.

Annie: Which walks us right into our next point too. So, after you acknowledge and accept that maybe you're riding a slump or in a rut to give yourself a personal day and I know women are going to hear this and they're going to be

like, "Yeah, right, I can't give myself a whole day, but can you give yourself an hour because ultimately, as Jen just noted, it's hard to feel invigorated, energized and motivated and excited when you're overwhelmed and exhausted. Or even if you're just tired of firing all cylinders at all times.

Like Jen said, you can only maintain that for so long and that's just because we're human. Like, you cannot continue to output output output without also input. Some rest. Some calm. Some peace. So are you able to just press pause for a moment, rest, collect your thoughts, notice your feelings.

This is a big one we've talked about on podcasts too. What are your impulses telling you to do and remember that you don't have to act on your impulses. You can just take note because I think what happens a lot of times, if you're anything like me, when you're in a slump or rut you want to do all the things.

You start making a list of all the things that you're not doing that you want to do and you're going to change them all tomorrow but you could just take note that, hey, that's kind of what my impulses are telling me to do, to stir all these projects, so I can feel productive again. But you don't actually have to do it. You can just acknowledge them.

Jen: It honestly sounds a bit like the diet cycle. You know, so you think... you crash because you've been firing on all cylinders and you think the cylinders to getting out of your crash is to fire on all cylinders again but it's actually to take a step back and have a little rest, rest those cylinders. Whatever those do.

Annie: Is that a car thing?

Lauren. Yes. It's a car thing.

Annie: Thanks, Lauren.

Lauren: That's about as much as I know about it.

Annie: Maybe we could ask James some questions. Your husband.

Lauren: He could be a guest and explain it.

Annie: That is a really good point, though, Jen, because you do just wanna fix the problem and it just perpetuates the cycle over and over and over again, you go, go, go, go and then you get tired and then you have to rest and then you go, go,

go, go, go because you think going is going to fix the slump and if you can just press pause and just chill. Just chill.

Jen: Then you're just on the pendulum swing.

Lauren: I want to initiate a challenge here. Give us a situation we will relate it to the diet industry. Try us out.

Annie: For sure. But it does come back to that. Especially like I said, I think the instinct is to fix everything right now and to do all the things that you're not doing or that you think you should be doing and just kind of power through that. I don't know if that's a mom thing or a female thing but, again, as Jen noted, we do really value productivity and we praise productivity, and if you're not being productive then what are you doing?

Jen: The other thing when you say to take a personal day, or maybe just an hour, my kids were just away so that was amazing, that hasn't happened since last summer so I get about a year between things which I am grateful for, I know a lot of people get no help with their kids but for me, I'll take an evening. So I'll get my kids to bed early and then it's like, I know that evening is about resetting my brain.

Lauren: Yeah.

Jen: Yeah.

Annie: I'm kind of the opposite, like I said, I want to stay busy and I do that to essentially avoid feeling what I'm feeling. Like if I can just take my mind off of it, which is not what I'm recommending. I'm working on that.

Jen: Right. So people often, we hear this a lot and this is just like, I hope people will hear me out here. So, there's a difference between numbing and self-care. So when it really depends why you're doing it so once and a while it is nice to take an evening and just watch tv for a couple hours. You really just need to turn off your brain, relax, it feels good, watch your favorite show, have your favorite snack, all of that.

But then there's also people who numb and are avoiding their feelings and they are watching tv like every night and actually, day after day after day that becomes then, there's a law of diminishing returns there where all of a sudden you're

neglecting your selfcare so all of a sudden you're watching tv every night and you're eating treats every night, not getting things done, not organizing yourself for the morning. Maybe eating a bunch of food that don't align with your goals and so that's one thing that it's-

Lauren: It's sort of like a delicate balance.

Jen: It's nice to acknowledge. So rather than and then I see it, we see it in our community sometimes women saying, "I'm doing this" and they're calling it self care and you know, great, but then at some point you have to decide when it's not selfcare anymore and it's actually just avoidance and numbing because your life is really stressful and you just can't deal. And actually, numbing and avoidance really leads to your life feeling worse because you're doing things that don't align with your long term goals.

That would be a sign for me that I'm in a rut is when I am starting to do numbing activities too often and in balance 365 we have this saying, we didn't make it up, one of our students brought it to us. I just called one of our Balance 365ers students but-

Annie: That sounds very academic. I kind of like it though.

Jen: So one of our Balance365ers had this idea and I can't even remember who it was but she called it the canary in the coal mine. So now we talk about it quite often. If you're going into a slump or you're in a slump, think, really think about what your canary in the coal mine is.

So that's the analogy where miners used to take canaries in cages down to the coal mines and if the coal mine is filling with poisonous gas the canaries would die and the miners knew they better get out of there. So it's just a warning sign. So for me, I know, social media scrolling in the evening, sometimes I do it and it's fine, but it's about that law of diminishing returns.

There comes a point where I log off social media and I'm like "Ugh, I feel gross." I just spent two hours scrolling Facebook and commenting rude things to people and news sites. Not rude things, but just getting little bickering and it's like, I do not like spending my time that way. I don't. It is not a productive use of my time.

So a canary in a coal mine for me is social media use and tv really in the evenings. And just not doing the things that I know lead to my life feeling easier.

So I have a night time routine where I clean my kitchen, organize my kids' lunches for the next day, might organize my own breakfast for the next day and if I'm not doing those things it just puts me in a downward spiral then my mornings are stressful which leads to being late for work, which late getting the kids, like it just, you know, and once in a while that's fine, but when I get into a routine of doing that, that's my canary in the coal mine, like, you are in a rut.

Lauren: I was just going to add that doing that can also become a habit. Right it can be habitual when that happens. I have to be careful because for me, creating routines and forming habits happen really quickly and it's a blessing and a curse. So healthy habits and healthy routines they stick pretty quickly for me, but also the negative things that I do stick really quickly for me. So that's something that I definitely have to watch out for.

Jen: I find the snacking is one that will quickly stick for me so I typically do not want to be snacking at night because I'm not hungry at night and it just doesn't align with my long term goals. And if I have a snack once in a while in the evening that's fine, but as soon as I start making that a habit, my trigger is often getting my kids tucked in, closing their doors, walking down the hallway and I'm already salivating. Like I'm already like, it's like that trigger right-

Lauren: It's like your bell ringing.

Jen: You close the door, yes, that's my bell ringing and so and I find food habits are some of the toughest habits for me personally to break. And yes, so it's just kind of, so I can relate to that, Lauren.

Annie: I think that's a really good point you brought up, jen, about the delicate balance between "Is this self care or is this a bad habit?" and I think that's one of the ways in which self-care kind of gets abused, so to speak, that we're calling it selfcare but is it really self-care and when I hear women, we talk a lot in our community about being compassionate towards yourself and I think that that's also another label that kind of gets misused a little bit.

We think of being compassionate like, "Yeah, take it easy, you don't have to do anything you don't want to do. Do whatever you want." sort of thing. But if we apply that to our children, somebody that we're probably really compassionate towards, we wouldn't say that to them. We wouldn't say, "Sure, sit on the couch

for hours on end, eat whatever you want, don't take care of your health, skip brushing your teeth, stay up all night."

Maybe for a day, we would say, "Hey, you've had a rough couple of days or whatever, sure, take some time to yourself." But eventually you have to have the self-compassion to say, "This is no longer serving me."

Lauren: right.

Jen: Self-compassion, too, is about not feeling guilty. Like, so just and being able to move forward and go, "Okay, I did this, it's time to move forward without feeling ashamed about it."

Annie: Right. Right. And again, no judgment, you take the time that you need to deal with whatever you're dealing with but it can be a balance between the two to say, you've gotta give yourself a little tough love.

Jen: Yeah, sometimes.

Annie: We've done this now enough, it's not really serving me anymore, it's time to move on to try something different. AND you know, Jessie Newland, she used to talk a little bit more about fitness than she is now but I really value her opinion. She had kind of a good rule of thumb. She said like three days was her personal barometer.

If she felt like she needed time off, she gave herself three days and after three days she kind of reassessed. If she was hitting the gym hard, hard, hard, she'd go three days and kind of reassess. What am I doing, where am I at, what's my purpose here? How am I feeling?

Jen: She would take three days to just veg kind of thing?

Annie: Yeah, like, if she felt she needed time. That was kind of her limit. She would give herself up to three days and it's going to be different for everyone but that was what she felt like she could tolerate without turning into a habit before she decided do I want to continue or do I not want to continue this? It was just where she reevaluated.

Jen: I definitely don't have that problem with fitness. But I see, so for me, I could see how that would be helpful. I would say two days for me, so if I need a break, again, we're moms, so it's not like, I don't think Jessie is a mom.

Annie: No.

Jen: And she can take three days off and recover so the problem with being a mom is that if you work, or you're a stay at home mom and you like want time off, you know, you don't really get to just check out for three days to rest and recover. You feel like you're always at work.

So I would say, I guess 2-3 days for me might be, I'm super burnt out, I'm going to be doing the minimum and this is what I need to do for 2 or 3 days which might be frozen pizza in the oven and paper plates and really just doing what I can to reduce my workload and the things that don't really matter, that take away a lot of energy from me that I could actually just conserve during that slump.

Annie: Again, because you need to pause and allow input. You need to restore and to rest in order to feel excited about anything, to feel energized again. Because usually when we are in our slump we're not feeling energized or motivated so to expect to feel that way without pausing and resting and allowing yourself just to like be can be difficult.

Jen: The other thing I've done with the boys' dad in the past is when him and I were both feeling that way we would swap sleeping in in the mornings so one of us would sleep in on Saturday, the other one on Sunday or we've given each other a whole day off on the weekend or half a day so say a Saturday he might sleep in and I take the kids out for the morning and then I come home, have lunch and then he takes the kids for the afternoon and we're just giving each other restful time inside of our own homes which I personally find very valuable. I love having my home.

I'm an introvert, so maybe this is special to me but I like having my home to myself and I just sort of identified that a few years ago and it's been really helpful because when you say you need a break and then you have family come or you hire a babysitter or whatever you decide to do to get a break from your kids and then you have to leave the house to get that break it was just never really a true break for me.

I wanted to be inside of my home, and a lot of times for me restoring has to do with getting organized inside my home. So that I'm setting up my environment for success for example so that's one way, I know we haven't touched on that yet but coming out of a slump for me, that's part of it.

Annie: You're jumping ahead. Don't give it away.

Jen: Sorry.

Annie: I think yes. Those are all great suggestions. Just a quick review, we have acknowledge it, accept it, when you're feeling this way. Give yourself a personal day or if you can't commit a whole day, as much time as you can to just be, to rest, to pause, to acknowledge how you are feeling and then step 3, which we kind of already touched on as well is go on a positive mental diet.

And this is something I kind of struggle with but ban, as Jen was talking about, ban the negative information, the people, the situations as much as possible and feed yourself all the positivity and inspiration that you can which sometimes social media can be a large contributor to the negativity in our life.

And it may not even be people, I'm not even talking about people posting negative things. It can be a photo of somebody really beautiful and positive that just makes you feel less than, comparatively speaking. If you cannot be on social media without comparing and you're in a slump it's probably not going to end well.

Jen: You can log out of social media or you can deactivate your accounts for a few days or a week. I think it's really important, this is a really important conversation, social media in itself can be a whole podcast but knowing when to disconnect from social media can be really, really important. I think a lot of people in today's world struggle with social media limits for sure.

Us three just talked about this in the last couple weeks because we changed the way our corporate communications so how we communicate and our employees and our contractors how we all communicate used to be on Facebook. So we had a Facebook group for our company and we used messenger.

And I think all three of us were finding we are on Facebook a lot communicating for our day jobs but then you kind of get sucked into the personal stuff as well because everything was blended. So we started using Slack which a lot of

companies use and my social media use has gone down. I can't even believe it. I'm probably down to an hour a day. Or I bet you I was probably on for five hours a day before because that's how I talk to you guys.

Lauren: Yeah and I think it's important to note here too that we resisted this for like a year. We resisted moving our communication off Facebook. We kept trying but Facebook was so convenient and it was right there but we finally pulled the plug a few weeks ago and when someone would message on Facebook we would be like, "Nope. Put it in slack. We're not answering you here."

Jen: We're saying we but you more mean Jen. So I was the most resistant to this change but then finally you guys were like, "Don't talk to her on Facebook."

Lauren: She's like, "Can you put the link on Facebook" and we were like, "Nope." Go to slack.

Jen: Buy yeah, so it's good. And it also shows actually people will change when they have to.

Lauren: And now she loves it.

Jen: Now I love Slack.

Annie: But I think the three of us would probably all agree that our productivity is increased since moving off of social media for our professional communication and I've just been able to enjoy Facebook more, to be honest.

Jen: So when you go on it's not all these obligatory messages that you have to respond to because they're business related.

Annie: No and I can be more intentional. Now I'm going to be online to check on our communities and provide some coaching to our Balance365 members and check in with our free facebook group, which, if you're not a member of our free Facebook group, it's Healthy Habits Happy Moms on Facebook and we have almost 40,000 women worldwide. If you want to continue the conversation that would be a great place to do it because we have some really great members in there. But I can be more intentional about why am I on social media instead of just mindlessly perusing because I'm there out of habit.

Honestly, and I still cringe at admitting this but I grab my phone off my nightstand in the morning and the first thing I do is open Instagram. What did I miss? And you know, if you're coming from a position of feeling like you're in a slump, you're in a rut and consequently everyone's doing everything better and you open social media and it's like "Oh look at that person's vacation, look at that person's awesome workout, look at that person hit a PR, look at that person's beautiful hair" and I'm still in bed like "Meh."

Lauren: Right.

Annie: This isn't going to go well. It's like you can see it coming like a train. So going on a positive mental diet, doing whatever you need to do to band the negative information, people, situations, I mean, I've even gone through periods of my life where I can't look at the news because it's sad to me sometimes. The other thing I want to talk about is negative people. If you have people in your life that maybe aren't encouraging or that just aren't motivated themselves.

You know, the old adage is, is it Jim Rohn that says "You're the average of the five people that you spend the most time with." Something along to that effect. Again, dropping the sayings, every single podcast I've got like. I'm on it. But, you know, think about who you're spending a lot of time with. Are these people that reflect what you want, what you're trying to attain, that align with your goals, with your values, your morals, your ethics, and if not do you need to adjust? Spend more or less time with other people?

Jen: Or just address that. I'll tell something really personal.

Annie: Ooh juicy.

Lauren: Shocker.

Jen: The boys dad and I had a conversation a few years ago about changing how we talk in conversation with each other as more positive because we found, so first of all, before I share this, I'll say that him and I were both in a really negative space. Both very stressed. Him in grad school. Me building this company. And him and I got into the habit of just being really gossipy and gossiping about people and then but we eventually I don't know if he brought it up or I did, none of us felt good about these conversations and we acknowledge

to each other that we were in such a negative space it felt good to judge other people. Like in the moment, it felt good to judge other people because -

Annie: Totally.

Lauren: Been there.

Jen: We were struggling so much and yeah, it was, but we eventually so I mean that's a very vulnerable conversation to have but you could have it. If you have someone in your life that you love and the relationship feels negative or the conversations you have feel really negative, you could also acknowledge that or try and shift it, like how can we talk more about the things we love, what we love about other people. Dreams we have. How we are accomplishing those goals and I love having people like that in my life.

Lauren: And it's hurt people hurt people and not to say you were hurt but you were in a negative space-

Jen: I was hurting.

Lauren: Right.

Jen: Yes. I was hurting. And now I look back on some of the conversations we used to have, just reflecting on it like, "I don't really feel that way." It was just in the moment, it just felt good to, as a hurting person to-

Lauren: It's sort of like a rampage, the more you focus on the negative the more the negative is going to come out and that's what you're going to see. And if you can just switch it a little bit, you'll notice that it's easier the more you do it to focus on the positive about somebody or a situation.

Jen: Right.

Annie: I think that's a good point because often times those conversations feel good for a few minutes and then ultimately leave you feeling like either you need to repeat to maintain that level of "on top", like "I'm on top, I'm dominating, I'm doing everything right, they're doing everything wrong." Or you just end up feeling bad.

Jen: yeah sort of like eating junk food kind of thing. Like it's like junk food conversation where it's definitely low hanging fruit but yeah. I just, the thing is,

the friendships I have now in my life are with you two, my sister, my friend Chelsea, my friend Jasmine around here, I like love these women in my life who will actually even pull me back to reality and so you guys would go, "That's not Jen. Is something going on with you?" Do you know what I mean? If you saw me in a really negative or anxious space? I often get in an anxious space.

And another thing you could do is go to your friend or your partner and say, "I don't like when I behave this way and I want you to know that when I'm behaving this way I'm probably in a slump or a really negative space and I would love if you would hold me accountable for that behavior and remind me that this is the space I'm in." and this isn't typically my attitude and that could help pull me out of this slump.

Annie: Or you could just text message Lauren, I do that frequently. Because Lauren is a no-nonsense, no frills, like "Stop that."

Jen: Right, yep.

Annie: Cut that out. Do not do that. No, we're not going to talk about that anymore. This is not worth your mental energy. These are the kind of words that Lauren throws back. And I'm like, "Okay, yeah, right. Right, yes, okay, I can do this."

Jen: That reminds me of another saying we have in Balance365 called "Guard your energy." so we say that to Balance365ers all the time. We only have so much energy. And, let's be honest, life is hard. Improving your life, changing your habits, that all takes energy so really think, is this worth your energy, right now, because it really is taking, pouring energy out of you. So, yeah we should be a lot more guarded about what we put our energy into it. Whether it's negativity or positivity.

Annie: Absolutely. Okay, so if you're still with us by now we have acknowledged it, accepted it, we've got a little off track but that's okay. Give yourself some time, some space, a personal day, or even just an hour to feel that way, go on a positive mental diet, absorb all the positivity the inspiration that you can and then when you're ready to take action, start small. Do just one thing.

I pulled this, I read this article way before he even became super popular from Mark Manson but he has something called the Do Something principle. And this

has stuck with me since the day I read it because so often people think that motivation sparks action and they wait for motivation, especially if you're in a slump or a rut, to like strike them, like lightning comes down from the sky and that works sometimes, but the downside of that approach is that it leaves you at the mercy of motivation.

Lauren: Right, waiting.

Annie: You're just waiting like, "I hope something inspires me." And what he has found in his experience is that actions, and I pulled this from his website, actions create further emotional reactions and inspirations to move on to motivate your future actions. So he suggests that action can inspire and cause motivation. So if you're lacking motivation to make an important change in your life, he says to do something, anything and then harness the reaction that the action has a way to begin motivating yourself, so instead of waiting for motivation to inspire action, you can actually have action inspire motivation. So just do something.

As simple and as basic as that sounds, do something and a lot of times in Balance365 we talk about that something as being really really small that doesn't even require motivation. If you have the motivation do something big, go for it. I'm not saying pull back but if you're lacking motivation just do something small. It could be a shower. It could be a ten minute walk, it could be cutting up some produce, it could be grocery shopping, something really, really small and just do it once and then let that action create more inspiration and more motivation.

Jen: Right, then you're spiralling up instead of down.

Annie: Yeah. And, again, it doesn't leave you at the mercy of motivation. I just picture me waiting on my couch, looking up at the sky, thinking "Ugh. I'm waiting to feel some certain way." Like it feels so much more proactive to actually take action.

Jen: Absolutely.

Annie: And that feels way better than just sitting around hoping that I feel some sort of way in a day or two.

Lauren: Right.

Annie: So with that said, I know I wanted all of us to share what we do to break out of a slump, because I know it's different. Jen, do you want to start?

Jen: Sure. So I find my environment really affects me so for me to break out of a slump usually requires cleaning and organizing. So I shared earlier that I'll take an evening. I said when I know I have to pull myself out of a slump I will take an evening and I will do things that feel productive to me and that will set me up for success starting in the morning. So I will normally the things I like to do are clean my house which is my environment, and get it organized, grocery shop, and meal prep. And those three things I've identified as get my wellness wheel going, get me on that upward spiral.

So the next morning when I wake up I know I have a veggie tray in the fridge, some bagged salads, some lean protein made, and my space, my space is going to be organized and then my brain feels organized and clear and clutter free so that's what I do. And for me that also that spiral up usually involves the next day I'm more likely to eat the foods I want to eat, do the movement I want to do, and get accomplished in my day what I want to get accomplished.

I even feel more engaged with my children when my space is clutter free, when I've eaten better, when I've moved my body and as that spiral up happens, I mean, what does get endorphins going. We know that exercise does, but I personally, I know some people, like Annie's probably going to be like, "I start with exercise."

Annie: Did you hear that? That's so condescending. "I start with exercise."

Jen: I'm just kidding.

Annie: You're totally right though. By the way, that's right.

Jen: So, I first need to, of course, I know that exercise will get my endorphins going, I know that I feel better after I exercise, but I personally need to do that organization tasks and I will be more likely to exercise. I work out at home and I currently work out at home. I go through different seasons where I'm at a gym, or I'm at home. I cannot workout in a messy house, like I just cannot so I'm more likely to do my workouts as well when I've got my space clutter free.

Annie: I can complete relate, it's like you can't, it's almost just a vibe, like I feel like I cannot breathe as well, I cannot breathe as easily when I look around my house, it's overwhelming to me.

Lauren: Yes.

Jen: So those three things, so I might do those three things, so I might clean and organize, grocery shop, and meal prep, and those would be three smaller things I'll do but I've also noticed another way I get out of a slump is doing one major thing so I will clean out the storage room that really needs to be cleaned out or clean out the garage and there's something about for me about being able to step back and go "I was just productive. I just did a really good job. This looks fantastic. What else can I do?"

Annie: That's kind of the premise of what Mark Manson was saying that it's like building momentum, you know.

Jen: Exactly.

Annie: Your action results in inspiration and more motivation to do some more action and I think of like pushing a big boulder up a hill. It takes a lot of effort sometimes to get that boulder kind of going.

Jen: Get started.

Annie: But then eventually you find yourself building some momentum and gaining speed and then before you know it you're at the top and you're coasting.

Jen: Right.

Annie: Downhill or it requires much less energy and effort. Absolutely.

Jen: Yes.

Annie: Lauren, what about you?

Lauren: Mine's kind of similar. I get in a slump when I don't have a plan, shocker, so for me it's about making my meal plan, going shopping and getting things prepped for the week. And that will really get me out of my slump and just like Jen said, then I am eating what I want to eat and my week just goes really well. When I don't do that, I get busy and just kind of all "s" breaks looks and I just do

whatever. So that would be one and on the movement side, it's a little different. So, Jen and I are a bit different than Annie, we are a little-

Jen: Lazy for life.

Lauren: We're a little more sloth like. We're a little more slow moving. When I'm in a movement slump I just do one thing, like I just go for a walk and that's what I do. And it helps me, it takes just a small tiny bit of effort but it makes me feel so much better and gets me going.

Annie: I bet you guys are going to be surprised to find out that I go work out.

Jen: Right. Totally. Lauren and I clean and organize our homes. Annie leaves her home, which is also a good strategy. Get out of there.

Annie: But you know what really helps me, I have a couple elements here. I shower, do my hair and do my makeup. Like I cannot, like you can think that's vain or whatever-

Jen: No.

Annie: I just know that I feel good when, I mean, that adage, look good, feel good.

Jen: It's like getting your game face on.

Annie: Yeah.

Jen: Yeah.

Annie: It's funny that you say that because when I was in college we would, I think this is where it started, why I wear makeup every day, we would put on makeup for every game and it was just like this like this is just what we did. We felt ready.

Jen: Like A League Of Their Own.

Lauren: It was like a ritual.

Jen: I'm so jealous of your college experience.

Annie: Yes. But I think part of it had to do with the fact that we would show up at practice after a full day of class and we would have our makeup and our hair done, we were in sweatpants but just from being in class or whatever and so then to show up at a game any other way felt a little foreign to us, so even if we had early games we would get up, we would do pretty ponies and put on mascara and eye shadow and eye liner and all that stuff and we just felt prepared to like tackle our day.

So I always shower, hair, makeup, workout and then if I can work out with a girlfriend that I know supports me and that I can be like, "Hey, I'm just in a slump, I need some social interaction" because also contrary to Jen I think I'm pretty extroverted so time with people re energizes my battery. Even if I'm not interacting, like going downtown, just being around people helps me to feel like, the hustle and bustle, I just feed off of it, it recharges my batteries.

Jen: I could do that, I mean, contrary to popular belief, introverts do like socializing. But I see that I could see if I, for me it would be like connecting with one person so my friend Jasmine here, or my sister, in fact my sister and I used to be really good at pulling each other out of slumps and we might meet on a Saturday together and like help each other get organized and do the meal prep for each other and then just the visiting we did stuff would help to energize me.

Annie: And you know, as far as food goes, if you follow me anywhere you know that I don't cook. I don't enjoy it. I'm not great at it. So John and I have actually been using. We have a couple stores here that do meal prep for you

Jen: Oh nice.

Annie: Sorry, not meal prep. But they'll make meals that just sit in your fridge.

Jen: Right, that you just throw in the oven or whatever.

Annie: Yeah, the microwave, whatever, and I also don't use my oven unless it's for frozen pizzas. Jen's talking about frozen pizza and paper plates as like her survival strategy, that's like my go to every day. A different set of standards for a different house. It's fine.

Jen: This is why I create the recipes for the company. For all of our challenges.

Annie: It's true and I'll figure the macros and the calorie count. Anyways, we've been taking advantage of that and yes, we have to pay a little bit more per meal but it helps us actually to make better choices throughout the week. We're not eating out, we're not running errands last minute, we're not making extra trips to the grocery store because we forgot ingredients. And it's just the reduction of stress that it gives us when it comes to meal time.

Jen: Totally. That sounds heavenly. There's nothing like that here but what I've been thinking about, I met a man at that conference I was just at which I talked about in one of our last podcasts but he's one of the board of directors for Chef's Plate which is a meal delivery service and him and I were talking about their company's strategies and stuff and I was thinking after that it is more expensive to order from those places than obviously going out and shopping for yourself and all of that but I was thinking, that's something I could do for maybe three months, get a meal delivery service like 2 or 3 nights a week, just for a couple months, maybe in September when the boys are back in school just to help me ramp up my cooking skills again.

I feel, there's different types of slumps, but I have been in a cooking slump for probably two years. I'm just making the same things over and over and over and I used to enjoy cooking and my partner and I would cook different meals on a Saturday night, try new recipes but I'm just in a major slump and I was thinking that might be a good way to get me out of my cooking slump, just kind of forcing me to try new recipes and it is a bit more expensive but I'll just use it as kind of a starting point to get going.

Annie: Absolutely. I have been in a cooking slump for about 15 years.

Lauren: I think I'll-

Annie: It's okay.

Lauren: Annie, will you send me some information on that grocery store.

Jen: On cooking slumps.

Lauren: No, on her grocery store service. I want to see if there's anything like that where I live.

Annie: Yeah, absolutely I will. I know here in Des Moines if you're local there's Beefcake Fuel, there's Fresh Fit Meals, there's Macked, there's quite a few meal prep services here in the area so I'm sure you have some in Detroit. Maybe some local listeners would know.

Jen: And I think the whole point of using something like that as well, as far as it relates to slumps, is like how we are talking about how sometimes you were in a slump because you're just firing on all cylinders, going too hard for too long and you go into a slump and while you're in that slump a really important thing to process and you might want to identify is how can you reduce the stress and decision making that you have to do in a day.

Like how can you just bring down the overwhelm and I think a lot of families do struggle with the food component.

Feeding your families, you've got to feed, you've got to keep feeding those little buggers and they just keep wanting to eat. And it's huge, it's physical and emotional labor for a family is feeding. So as much as you can reduce that. And we talk about this a lot in Balance365 but, you know, it is not a failure for women to buy the bagged salad or the pre cut veggie tray or the cooked chicken. I mean, that stuff all, it's all good. It's still food. You're still getting what you need.

Annie: Yeah, and we have another saying in Balance365, "Good, Better, Best" The better option, or the best option may be not always available. You may not always be able to make that choice but can you make a good choice or a better choice, and then being at peace with making those choices, just saying that I can let my best be enough, whatever this is, right now and then just letting it be.

Jen: A lot of people just were striving for good and sometimes better, they would be better off in the long term anyways. We talked about this in our last podcast or two podcasts ago on the personality traits of people who overeat and I had said in there that striving for good health instead of perfect health often leads to better health, anyways, for most people, because they don't get stuck in that pendulum swing so you could expand that to so many facets of life if you just were striving for good enough you could probably meet that most of the time rather than always striving for perfect and getting on that pendulum of best, worst, best worst.

Annie: And I would add to that that the good enough is very individual.

Lauren: Right.

Jen: Exactly.

Annie: It's not good enough compared to Jen, it's not good enough compared to Lauren, it's good enough for you. Yeah, okay, so I think we're close to an hour and we want to be respectful of our listeners' time but just a quick review if you're in a slump, if you're in a rut, acknowledge it, accept it, give yourself a personal day, or an hour to feel those emotions, to acknowledge it, go on a positive mental diet as much as possible being the negative information, the people, the situations, do just one thing. When you're ready to take action, start small, or as Jen mentioned, you can go big if you're feeling motivated to tackle that garage. How do you say it? Garage.

Lauren: Garage.

Jen: Garage.

Annie: Garage.

Jen: Garage.

Annie: Garage. Go for it. You don't have to pull back but if you're not feeling motivated you don't have to do anything big. Small changes do add up and it can spark more motivation if you're not feeling motivated to begin with.

So I hope you leave this podcast with some suggestion about how to break a rut or a slump and if you need help, if you want more support, why don't you join our Facebook group, as I mentioned we've got a really, really strong supportive, non-judgmental community of a lot of moms but growing number of women without children in our Facebook group talking about this sort of topic and struggles and we'd be happy to help you troubleshoot some ideas to help you break your slump or your rut. So anything else to add before we sign off, ladies?

Jen: No, I think that covers it.

Lauren: No.

Annie: Awesome. It was good, as usual, this was fun!

Lauren: yes it was.

Annie: Alright, we'll see you in like a week and a half in real life.

Jen: Yeah.

Lauren: Yay!

Annie: Make sure you're following us on Instagram too so you can catch up on all the shenanigans. Lauren, what's your handle on Instagram?

Lauren: lauren_koski

Annie: K-O-S-K-I. Yes. Jen, your handle.

Jen: I'm @mamalionstrong - m-a-m-a-lion-strong

Annie: And I'm @AnnieBrees and we'll put all these in the show notes so you can maybe get a-

Jen: And Balance365 is @Balance365life.

Annie: Yes. It's going to be fun. There's going to be lots of laughs. I can feel it coming. Okay, thank you, ladies.

Lauren: Alright, bye.

Jen: Bye.

Annie: Bye bye.