

# Balance365 Episode 36 Transcript

Annie: Thanks for catching another episode of Balance365 Life Radio. Gathering data and feedback about how we live our lives is more accessible than ever right now thanks to activity trackers, sleep trackers, food trackers and even scales. Statistically speaking, approximately one out of every three of you listening uses an app or a wearable device to track your food or your fitness and, full disclosure, I am recently the owner of a shiny new Apple Watch.

On the surface, it would seem as if the more information we have about our lives and our bodies the better, right? Well, it might just depend. On today's episode, Jen and I discuss how access to all this data and information affects us and when it can become problematic to our health. Enjoy!

Jen, welcome to the show, how are you?

Jen: Good, how are you?

Annie: Good, it's kind of early where you're at, you have started a new work routine, haven't you?

Jen: Yeah, so two days a week I get up at five thirty and I start work at six am.

Annie: How is that going?

Jen: Well, as well as we were just laughing about, I look like the crazy scientist off of Back to the Future on those mornings, especially because I'm still in my housecoat.

Annie: But it is kind of nice because Lauren is three hours ahead of you, she's an hour ahead of me and you are two hours behind me so from a work perspective it's nice.

Jen: Yeah and honestly, this was just, I don't know why I wasn't doing this years ago, it just was a light bulb for me this summer as my childcare situation changed, and I thought, "Well, I'm going to have to get creative" and it just occurred to me that I can work earlier and that would actually probably be better

for us because, you know, I used to work, I used to start work after I got my kids to school and it felt like you and Lauren were halfway through your days already.

Annie: Yeah, we were.

Jen: It just always felt very rushed and and now I'm starting at about the same time as you guys and then I'm leaving earlier, right, so now on Tuesday and Wednesday when I start really early I'm picking my kids up from school and that's like the end of my day and you guys are done as well, you're moved on with your days and yes, I think it's working really good.

Annie: We've moved on with our days, slash still checking work incessantly from our phones.

Jen: Yeah. I think, yeah-

Annie: Just not at a desk.

Jen: The only thing is that it's also, like, we can podcast earlier right, because it's always better to record a podcast earlier in the day, except I'm kind of rushing down to my computer now so, if we're starting a podcast at six am, right on the nose I am just rushed, I basically have time to get up, get my coffee, throw my housecoat on and get down here and then we'll record several podcast in a row so I'm sitting here looking like I do right now and it's like nine in the morning already, I'm like, "OK, I need to take a break and go get dressed."

Annie: You can take a break and get dressed just after we record this episode.

Jen: Right.

Annie: Because this is a really important episode, this has actually been on our "to talk about" list for a while and that is when tracking, whether it's food, fitness, body weight becomes problematic and the negative consequences or outcomes start to outweigh or overshadow any positive intention that you might have had when you began those behaviors or those methods or using those tools. A recent study, I thought this was interesting, estimated that one in three people track their food or fitness using an app or wearable device, that's clearly difficult for me to say. And I know you and I both have, you have a Fitbit, correct

Jen: Yeah and I just got an Apple watch and it seems like everyone has a Fitbit, an Apple Watch or uses My Fitness Pal or something similar. What we're talking about today could even be applicable to tracking your body weight, but so often it seems like we purchase these items, we engage in these behaviors like logging your food, tracking your macros, logging your body weight and we start with the best of intentions to help us support our health and wellness goals, but on the flip side, compulsive tracking of our activity or food or body weight can have adverse effects, especially on our mental and emotional health, and in researching this topic, I actually came across the term that has been coined because of this, like phenomenon, this obsessive tracking tendencies as a trackaholism and it's been coined by some leaders in the wellness field as a term to describe the obsession or addiction that can accompany tracking. And we just wanted to talk about this because of our last practice we talked about the kind of the downside of counting calories, why you should take counting calories with a grain of salt, but also to follow that up because if you did our Power Bowl Challenge with us, you know that we did include macros, we included calories, we do have people talk about their fitness wearables or body weight and it's like, where is the line of, you know, "I'm interested in these numbers and I want to keep an eye on this data or this information, I want to collect this information about myself," versus "OK, now it's problematic"?

Jen: Right.

Annie: And I just want to, before we dive into that, I just want to say there's obviously nothing inherently wrong with fitness or food trackers in general, I mean, Jen and I both use them and have them in various ways, but like I said, we do think it deserves a conversation to create awareness about where that line might be, where it becomes more negative than it is positive.

Jen: Right and it's like what we are always talking about, whether that's in our free private Facebook group or with our Balance365ers in our paid, private Facebook group, it's not necessarily about the "what" we're doing, it's about the "why" we're doing it and how we're doing it that becomes the disordered relationship, right?

Annie: Right and I think this is obviously going to vary from person to person and we can't just throw a blanket statements out like "These are bad, these are good" which is essentially what we did with the calorie counting, like, we didn't say "This is bad" or "This is good," it's just, like, let's just have some awareness about how

we're using, why we're using it and make sure that we're kind of staying mindful of that throughout the process, because it can be a slippery slope, especially if you have a history of maybe some disordered eating tendencies, that, like, this could be kind of Pandora's Box for some people and the couple eating disorder advocacy groups have even said that, they've been talked about that with the harmful side effect of, you know, posting calories on every restaurant menu, that that could be triggering for a lot of people, just having that access to that information all the time can be harmful to some people, and again, that's on a person to person basis, so we're not saying-

Jen: And it can be harmful and yet it can be helpful, right? Depending on the person.

Annie: Yes.

Jen: So it definitely deserves a conversation.

Annie: Yeah, so the first thing that and I can attest to this, that the first way these wearable devices, or tracking our food or our macros can impact us is it can gamify our food and our fitness routine, which, if you know me, you know that I am quite competitive and it can mean competition with yourself, just you versus you, but it can also mean competitions with others, like friends or even strangers and I know there are ways to, I just had lunch with a girlfriend and she told me that she gets an alert every time her friend works out, her phone or her watch buzzes to say that, you know, Jen went to the gym and if that were happening to me, like I'm notorious for like one upping. Like, "Oh, you can do that? I can do it better and I can do it more."

Jen: Right.

Annie: And I even think back to when I was a member of the Y.M.C.A. there was a group of girls and they were they were pretty good friends and they all wore Fitbits and they could see each other steps on the Fitbit app, can you do that still?

Jen: Yeah, you can.

Annie: Like be friends with people?

Jen: Yeah, I'm not friends with anybody but so I am different to you in that I'm not overly athletic and I am also not competitive so the sports I enjoy most, I snowboard, I climb, I really like mountain biking, I've just started kind of getting into that, and they're kind of like Lone Ranger sports and I noticed about myself is that when I was younger I used to play volleyball and different team sports and I just buckle under pressure, like just buckle, and I just don't enjoy it, like, some might argue "Move into your discomfort and get over it" and I don't know, like of course, I could be great, but I just don't enjoy it and if I were to see, you know, if you and I shared that Annie, sometimes I see, like it you work out far more than I do or Lauren, as we've talked about on many podcasts and sometimes when I see your workouts, you know, cross my feed from your Instagram profile which is @anniebrees if anybody wants to go follow her, I feel motivated to go work out. I'm like, Annie's doing it, you know, I'm going to go do it, that looks fun, awesome, I bet that feels good.

But I think if I was alerted to every time you were working out, I would have a lot of trouble not comparing myself to you, and I would have a lot of trouble not eventually feeling discouraged by that, like, you know what I mean? Which is something, you know, we all kind of fight and something that we talk about is you shouldn't compare yourself to others and ultimately in a perfect world that's where we'd all be, we wouldn't care, I would get alerted of all your workouts and I just wouldn't care, I'd be doing what was right for me, but I do think that eventually that could become information that I just don't need to see. I don't need to think about it. It doesn't really matter, right? And just for me, personally, I would eventually feel sort of discouraged.

Annie: Absolutely and I have talked about this just with my, actually with my social media use, but I think the same principle applies is that I have tried to curate my news feed with people I find inspiring or people to kind of push me, which I find in a healthy way, I find them motivating, right, and I think people, if you're adding friends on your tracking device or whatever it is you're using that you might do the same thing, you might find people that are maybe a little bit more active than you to kind of like, you know, the carrot, you know, we're dangling the carrot, right, but sometimes I open up my newsfeed and people that I may have found once motivating or inspiring, I'm now jealous of or I'm feeling resent of-

Jen: Right.

Annie: Because they are now serving as a reminder and this can vary from day to day for me, but they are now an example of all the things I'm not doing.

Jen: Right.

Annie: Or all the things I'm not doing well or all the things I think I should be doing, you know, like, "Oh look at Jen. Jen got twelve thousand steps today and I only got six thousand steps" and now I feel like crap because I'm not-

Jen: And as we talk about seasons of life change, you may have entered a season where that is as good as it's going to get for you. In fact, my step tracker, so by the way, I'm not wearing it today, I took it off a couple days ago, and I'll get into why in a couple minutes but my, so first first things first, there is just no science behind ten thousand steps a day. That is a very random number and we have millions and millions of people around the world aspiring to get ten thousand steps a day and there's no science behind it-

Annie: And you know, I was just having this conversation because it is so like, notorious, like that's the goal, right?

Jen: Got my 10K steps.

Annie: But I swear, I swear I looked into this and at one time, the only information I could find was that the original people that were making these pedometers, I want to say it was in China, that the technology available at the time it was, it could not go past ten thousand. It was like 9999.

Jen: So that was the-

Annie: And like people just accepted it after that, that there is no like, I think it's now accepted that like ten thousand is something that people need to kind of work a little bit towards, you know, like it's not so unattainable for some people that they just can't do it-

Jen: Right.

Annie: But it requires a little bit of effort, like a moderate effort, like you have to take a little extra walk or-

Jen: For some. So my step tracker, like my goal per day was six thousand and I just recognize that that was a realistic goal and through, for anyone who has

joined Balance365 and is listening or has followed us a long time, they'll already know this, but it's very, very important when goal setting to choose a goal that you are, that is attainable for you. So in Balance365 we say to set your goals that you believe you are ninety percent more likely to achieve, if that just made sense, I feel like I just jumbled my words there.

Annie: Yep, got it, I'm with you.

Jen: So, I was ninety percent certain that I could hit six thousand steps a day. I was not ninety percent certain I could hit ten thousand steps a day, and then you scale up from there, right, and if I bring that back to watching how much you work out, you know, I am ninety percent certain that I can workout twice a week in my garage gym. I am about one percent certain that I can workout five times a week and so I think, I think, surrounding yourself with people who have similar goals to you, or goals that are just slightly more or higher or "better" than you could be very healthy, right, always kind of inspire you to get to the next level, but somebody whose goals or aspirations or time or whatever they have is way, way ahead of what you would be able to manage, in the long run would probably end up just being discouraging for you.

Annie: Yeah, because so often people just need a win and then that win turns into "Hey, I can do this! I, like, I can get that six thousand steps" and then maybe in another six months we're shooting for seven thousand steps, eight thousand steps, nine thousand steps, you know-

Jen: Yeah, right, you can scale up.

Annie: And it fosters this belief that I can do this, like, this the term is self-efficacy but, like, that you believe that you can actually do the thing you say you're going to do.

Jen: Right and that's so important,

Annie:- really really important.

Jen: So important.

Annie: And we love, I love big goals, like, I've got a list, I mean, you, Lauren, and I all have a three year vision. Mine is hanging on my wall in my office, some of it's

physical, some of it's mental and emotional and professional and personal. I love, love big goals, but you have to be able to break those big goals down.

Jen: Yeah into little micro goals of how you're going to get there. And the other thing is, people have a lot of trouble, like we talk about scaling up, you can scale up slowly, but sometimes you need to scale down, and scale back, and I hear a lot of people say, you know, "In this season of life, I need to lower my expectations" and I'm like "Hey, it's not lowering, it's changing." You know what I mean? So it's rather than just like, let's respin this as just a change, it's not lower, it's not worse.

Annie: Yeah, how we describe it matters.

Jen: Right, so just change your expectations. So, again, examples of that might be pregnancy, postpartum, some kind of family trauma, kids super involved in sports during certain months of the year, you may need to change your expectations and maybe that means you're changing the number of workouts you're getting in a week, the number of steps you're getting on your tracker or the, you know, hitting your nutrition goals. The amount of hours of sleep you're getting, you know, those types of things, so-

Annie: And you know what? Kind of, so we talked a little bit about competing with others but that makes me think of competing with ourselves and how often times in my experience women see body weight, that you have this, like, you know, you have your lowest adult weight or whatever and that like somehow becomes the bar for which everything is measured against, like you're ten pounds from this, you're fifteen pounds and it's like, a) was that even reasonable or like realistic? Was that, like, were you that for five minutes? Were you that for five years? Like, where does that number come from? Why does that matter?

But like, we do the same thing with, you know, even steps walked, like, "Oh, this one day I walked twenty six thousand steps and now it's like my P.R." and I have to like be constantly trying to beat my P.R.

Jen: Right, totally.

Annie: Like, it's just, you know, like sometimes that's fun and you can, you know, some people, again, like we said, this is very person to person, some people can

have those kind of goals and they can have them in a part of their brain where it doesn't seem to bleed out and flow over into everything else.

Other people, it's like, again, that's the bar, that's the standard, that's-

Jen: Yes, that's the kind of person I am.

Annie: And then if they're not at that, they feel discouraged, they feel less than, they feel like they're not enough, they feel like they're failing, and that's really not, I mean, that's not the case.

Jen: Yeah, I should say that's who I used to be. I have really evolved over the years and I really get it. I mean, sometimes I have that niggling like perfectionist achiever side of me that wants to do better and better and better. Like even back when I was in school, if I get ninety nine percent on an exam, I would be like "What did I do wrong?" Like, it really, do you know what I mean? Like, I just really have always judged myself, measured my worth with achievements, right, and I think a lot of people do so, yeah, the weight thing is very interesting, because first, that would require you to have the belief that the lowest weight you can achieve is your best weight, which is really an idea that women, they just got to get out of their heads, they have to.

Annie: You know, I've shared this before, but my lowest adult body weight was, and I don't recommend this, this is not where I needed to be in my prowler lifting career, this is not what my priority should have been, but was when I was cutting weight and I was severely dehydrated and starving, like, I was trying to cut weight for a meet and that was my last bodyweight, for adult body weight, but that's not, like, that is not realistic for me to walk around at that body weight forever and ever. Like that was like lasted five minutes, a five minute period.

Jen: Right, so we just had a Balance365er talk about this and so she's decided to track her fat loss progress in Balance365 and what we tell women is you track or don't track, it's up to you and if you decide you do want to track, because there's different ways of tracking, right, like you can track your habits, like, you know, you can track different things that have nothing to do with numbers, you can track your habits how consistent you are, you can not track that if that gets too obsessive for you, you can journal daily and track how you feel and look back on the month of "How do I feel with these changes I'm making?"

So there's all different kinds of ways to track and you can not track at all, that's a choice, but if you decide you want to look at numbers, and you want to track your fat loss goals, it has to be from, there's also different ways of tracking inside of there, so Balance365er recently shared, that was Beth, actually, she said "I am not going to track my weight. I have just, you know, spent way too many years measuring my self worth against my weight" and she knows what her lowest adult weight is and she is struggling to not judge herself against that weight constantly, so she's decided to measure.

So she'll measure her, you know, her bust, her waist, her hips and that's how she's decided she will track her fat loss because she says she has no baseline, she has no idea what her measurements are, were, ever, so it's a really good, she, you know, she has no standard there.

Annie: Right.

Jen: No judgments around it, that's the best place for her to track, so the problem is if you've been like me and tracked absolutely everything your life and Annie, you recently did an Instagram post about this that I thought was so great, you talked about knowing your adult weight during various times in your life and really not having memories of, you know, lots of memories drift in and out and we don't even remember exactly different details of different situations, whether it's having a baby, or you know, different pivotal times in our lives, but a lot of women can remember what they weighed during those times.

Annie: I don't, I specifically remember, you know, like my first day, high school graduation, my wedding, what I weighed the morning I gave birth and, you know, what I weighed a few days after coming home from the hospital and it's like, yeah, I feel a little bit heartbroken for myself because I can't remember, you know, what we served at the menu at our wedding reception. I don't remember what my babies weighed when they were born, which could just be the chaos, but I remember my weight, which to me really speaks to the importance that I placed on what I weighed and that that was, like, that really held, clearly held a lot of value that, you know, I don't remember who all stood up with me at my wedding, I mean, I'd have to really, really think about like, to name the seven girls or whatever it was, but I could tell you that I was two hundred sixteen pounds that morning. You know, like, it's just weird to me that those are the things that I have memory.

Jen: it is not, it's not uncommon. Definitely not uncommon.

Annie: No, no, and in fact, from the response from that post, it's definitely not uncommon and I think there's a lot of women that feel that way about their body weight or, you know, people if you're tracking your body composition, you remember that, OK, when I did this X, Y, Z for six months I got down to this body fat or when I you know with during the summer when I was really exercising, I was burning this amount of calories during the day per my apple watch, or I was getting this amount of steps, you know, on vacation and now I'm only getting, you know, it's just, again, it just goes back to this, like, we kind of make a game out of it and games can be fun, games can be like, there can be a healthy challenge aspect to games, competing with yourself or competing with your other, but it's just important to stay mindful that, like, where does that slip into this is now not fun anymore.

Jen: Your weight does not have to be your story.

Annie: No.

Jen: That's what we want people to know is that there's a lot more important things in life than tracking our weight-

Annie: or our steps or our macros. And in fact, one of the food bloggers I follow just posted a little meme she says there's more more interesting things to you than your deadlifts and your diet.

Jen: Which via social media you would never know that.

Annie: No, I like talking about deadlifts though.

Jen: It is, it's more your life than, I thought, look, if you zoom out on my social media feed, I really think a lot about posting on social media in a way the portrays what my actual life is like and look, I'm sitting here going, currently I'm working out twice a week and my cardio is, you know, happening during my workout and when I am out walking with my kids or biking or whatever. I'm not doing any, like, intentional cardio right now. I'm not going for runs or or whatever.

And if you were to zoom out on my Instagram feed, I hope that the amount of hours per day that I have is portrayed in my Instagram feed, that if I have, you know, ten posts over a one week period, one of them might be about working out,

because that is how much my life revolves around working out, which is basically not at all.

So, and I think via social media what is portrayed by many people is it looks like they work out and cook food and eat food twenty four seven and it is portrayed that you have to be thinking about and doing those things twenty four seven in order to, you know, meet any of your goals or whatever and that simply isn't true.

Annie: Not the case.

Jen: Right.

Annie: No, absolutely. OK, moving into the second reason, and this is really the end all be all for me, like this is quite all encompassing, but if your tracking, again your food, tracking your food, tracking your body weight, tracking your fitness, if it's sparks feelings of anxiety, guilt, shame or fear it might not be serving you in a positive way anymore.

And again, in researching this topic I came across this general practitioner in France, his name is Jorge Khan, I hope, I'm pronouncing that correctly, he has done some digging on the effects of wearable trackers in particular and he noted that unless people are suffering from chronic illness requiring constant monitoring such as diabetes, their practice of continuous tracking tends to increase patient anxiety and I wouldn't be surprised if we find more of this information coming out as they become more popular and we wear them more and we study them more, because again, you know, again, people, it seems as though people start to wear these with good intentions and then, all of a sudden, it's like, one day you feel, like, you wake up and it's like "Oh my gosh, I'm not wearing my Fitbit. Oh my gosh I'm not wearing my Apple Watch. I don't have access to my phone to log my meal right now" and you notice this, like, you're feeling anxious, you're feeling or you're feeling guilty if you didn't hit your steps, or if you over ate and your calories are over than, you know, what some apps says you should do, or something that's really common is you have, you know, what we call separation anxiety when you don't wear your fitness tracker or you don't have access to your app to log your food, you feel like your workouts or your movement just don't count, or that if you don't log your food, your meal that you're somehow failing, you're breaking rules, you're falling off plan and I think, again, this can this can manifest differently from person to person what that looks like, but I just think it's really important that you stay aware of, you know, I notice on the Apple Watch it has,

like, streaks, you know, like if you hit your activity goal for so many days, it's like the pressure to not build a streak once that streak gets like, you know, seven, ten, thirty days, forty days, it's like holy crap.

Jen: You don't want to miss even one day, right?

Annie: No and then you find yourself at eleven fifty at night, marching in your room because you don't want to break your streak, like some people it might not be an issue, other people it might be a little overboard, it might be a little unhealthy, and that's only something that the listener themselves can answer.

Jen: Yes so five years ago things were so, was it five years ago? It was just over five years ago now, things had gotten so bad and so disordered for me, I couldn't even track the weight I was lifting anymore, in fact, I ended up taking a huge big long break from weight lifting. It was like my brain was always looking for places I could judge myself in so even once I realized this macro counting is B.S. I can't do this anymore, it's too consuming, then all of a sudden my brain started focusing in on the weight I was lifting, and then I would find myself feeling discouraged when that weight wasn't, you know, always increasing or whatever, and I just had to take a break all together from numbers and I've shared this a couple times now, but I didn't weigh myself for about three years after I quit dieting.

I took a break from lifting weights for almost eighteen months. I mean, I was still moving my body in different ways but I just, I just needed to walk away from it all for quite a while and even just thinking about the tracking, like fitness trackers were on the rise, I remember when they were on the rise, my in-laws gave me one as a gift, I don't know, birthday, Christmas, whatever and I remember just seeing that package and feeling my anxiety going up and knowing, like, that is not going to be a healthy thing for me, I'm not there yet. And really, what it comes down to, I think, for people who use it healthfully and people who it becomes an unhealthy tool, it is "Are you using it to judge yourself or do you see it as just data?" So if you think about the general population they aren't, like, lined up at the pharmacy outside of those blood pressure machines, you know, trying to get their blood pressure every single day on a daily basis.

Annie: My kids are.

Jen: Your kids are.

Annie: My kids are constantly trying to stick their arm in there.

Jen: Or like, my husband has a high blood pressure. It's just a genetic thing, he takes medicine every single day for it. And when that was coming to his attention, I can't remember how old he was, he was in his late thirty's and he bought a blood pressure cuff and he had to take his blood pressure multiple times a day for weeks to get the data for his doctor and you know, so it's like, it kind of goes back to what that doctor was talking about in that study you just referenced, there's people with health conditions who need that data, but you, as far as, like, you know, your weight or even your daily steps is there reason to track that on a day to day basis?

And so where some people, they they like it and they enjoy it and they see it as just data, they understand the big picture, they know they can zoom out and it's not about every macro, it's not about every step, it's not about every pound lost or gained. It's really about the big picture and looking at trends.

But for someone like me that really fights and struggles with her perfectionist side, I have to use, I have to intentionally be mindful of just checking in with those things periodically. So I weigh myself as much as I might get my blood pressure taken. So I think probably every, I don't know, two or three times a year I might step on the scale at the gym because that's as often as I really need to know my weight and, honestly, in the last four years there have not been any surprises when I've stepped on that scale. My weight always falls, seems to fall, within a ten pound range.

I got my step tracker this spring and I shared with our Balance365ers that the reason I got, I guess, I got another step tracker several years later for another birthday present from my husband, so it's like, which are all trying to tell me something, anyways, so my husband got me this Fitbit for my birthday and then ended up asking me a couple months later why I didn't use it and which I explained, well, look, like here's my situation with trackers, but I decided to put it on this spring just to check in because, you know, I was a stay at home mom for many years and then we started this company and as this company has grown it has required more of my time and that means more time actually sitting at a desk, so now I find myself, I am, I am a desk job person, which I kind of thought about the spring, you are a desk job person and, I thought, it might be time to check in with your steps, because it is really easy to lie to ourselves, right, that

we're more active than we think we are, that we're eating less than we think we are.

And I tracked my steps knowing that I needed to look at it as just data, I needed to spend a couple of days just looking at my usual patterns, not judging myself, not aspiring to anything, you know, any kind of greatness, just get your baseline, where are you at and on days that I was working at home, so if I had like six to eight hours sitting at a desk, my steps were under two thousand a day, which I thought was like crazy low, but when you work from home and you're not even walking from your car to your office or going to use the, you know, company bathroom or, you know, walking to the staffroom for lunch, when you work at home, you know, you don't move very much, and that's what I learned, and I think I had kind of been lying to myself that I moved a lot more than I thought, and so that's when the data was very healthy for me, like I needed that data and I needed that to give myself a little kick to get moving, right?

So now I kind of know, I don't need to obsess over the amount of steps that I take each day, but how I can take that data, I can say "Wow, on days when I'm working, I get very little steps unless I'm very intentional about getting more" so those are the days I might make a real effort to walk my kids to school, walk to pick them up, take a walk after dinner, and the other thing I learned from doing that is that it actually doesn't take much to significantly increase your steps, like a half an hour walk after dinner, you know, that can get me an extra, like three, four, five thousand steps, right?

And so it's just knowing that it's not something that's totally unattainable, like a half an hour walk can actually really, really, you know, triple, quadruple my steps in a day. I hear about people getting twelve thousand, sixteen thousand, twenty thousand steps in a day, and I'm like, "Are you just walking all day long?" because I couldn't do that. Hence my goal of getting six thousand steps a day, which is attainable for me with just a little bit of effort. But why I was saying earlier, I took my Fitbit off a couple days ago because I was walking down to the school, it was my second trip to the school that day, we live not too far from our school, and one of my sons and forgotten their lunch, so I had to, you know, second trip down for the day and I remember thinking, "This is going to be sweet, I'm going to have so many steps" and then I realized I forgot to wear my Fitbit that morning and I was like "Damn it!"

Annie: It doesn't count.

Jen: It doesn't count and then that was just a clue for me like, "Whoa, whoa, like, OK, Jen, like, this is getting a bit much and I'm going to stay on top of this and I'm going to take a little break from my Fit Bit." And you know, you don't need to know your steps every single day all the time, so I've taken a couple days off and I don't know how long I'll take off, but I think I just, my step tracker for me is like, it's going to be a tool, like the scale can be a tool, like a blood pressure cuff can be a tool in that I'm just going to have those accessible to me when I feel I need to check in, when I need a reality check.

Annie: Yeah and continuously staying mindful, just like you experience, like when you notice that, like, your thought was like, "Oh yeah this is going to be sweet" and then the letdown of "I'm not wearing it, shoot!" You know, just might be an indicator that like, hey, maybe this is now carrying more weight than just some data or some information about myself and I, too, had the same thing, that's exactly why I got the Apple watches because I, you know, before we started this business I would get up, I'd go to the gym, I would run some errands, go to the grocery store, go to the park with kids, go to nap time, I'd probably clean during nap time and I just felt like I was moving all the time and then we, this business exploded in the best way possible and now I'm at a desk, you know, six hours a day, and I'm just not moving, and so I do feel like it was just a great tool to create awareness, like, "Oh look, if I don't make an intentional point to move, I'm probably going to be around five to six thousand steps a day."

And if, you know, it can be encouraging to see that number and then, therefore like offer to take the dog for a walk, or take the kids for, "Let's go for a family walk." It can just be a little extra incentive.

Jen: Yeah, the other thing is to just know that as you collect that data, you don't necessarily have to do anything with it, and that's the thing about data collection, so you know, when I collect data and I see that on my work at home days, if I don't leave the house and I'm getting like two thousand steps a day, I don't necessarily have to do anything with that, and that's part of the "not judging yourself", it's just a chance for you to say, you know, and let's add that into weighing yourself, or tracking your sleep, or tracking your calories, or whatever you are tracking, if you can look at it as just data and collect the data and then pause again, don't react, don't necessarily run out and think that you have to make a million changes, it's just a chance to look and say, "How off is this, you know, then what I thought and do I need to make any change? Can I make any

change and what are those changes?" Right, it doesn't, you know, it doesn't have to be, you don't have to change anything, really.

Annie: Or does it have to be a reflection of your worth or your effort or your value?

Jen: Yes, totally.

Annie: Or you know, how pretty you are, or how smart you are, like it doesn't, it's just a number.

Jen: It's just a number.

Annie: It's just a number. I want to summarize with this quote that I found on Outside online magazine and it says "The essence of the technology interface begins with a relationship with one's self. Those who have a healthy relationship with themselves, nature and others likely will also have a good relationship with the technology and information they choose to entertain" and I think that's just like, that's so beautifully said, like, really your relationship with you and yourself and your body is going to determine a large part of how you use these wearable devices or these food trackers or tracking your macros or your body weight and again, there's no right or wrong answer, it's no, like, "These are good. These are bad. These are harmful. These are healthy." It's really person this person specific.

Jen: What I think, the process that I went through, that a lot of people could try is that while I recognized it was, all about, it was, it was all about me, and I took a break from doing any type of tracking, while simultaneously working on improving my relationship with myself, in not judging myself, having more self compassion, being more flexible, and able to roll with things.

And you know, all coming down to self acceptance, right, and so, but what I realized why I weighed myself after three years is that, you know, if you are going to sit here and say it's just a number, it doesn't mean anything, then you shouldn't have to avoid it, right? That's just avoidance, that's just hiding and I thought the real test for me in the improvement of myself is actually facing these things that have been triggering for me in the past and choosing to feel differently about it and so that was, you know, after three years, I got back on the scale, I weighed myself, there was no surprises, I was not the leanest weight I've ever been, and I

felt that, but I worked through it, you know, I had spent that time working myself and building that resiliency and really being able to talk myself through triggers is what has allowed me to grow and become more resilient, not hiding from my triggers.

Annie: Not avoiding them. Excellent. This is a good topic and, you know, I would invite anyone that wants to continue the conversation to our join our free Facebook community, we are on Facebook as Healthy Habits Happy Moms, we have forty thousand women, this would be a wonderful place if you want to talk more about how you're tracking your food, your fitness, your weight and how that's harmful, healthy, hurtful, positive, negative experience for you, please do so in the group. I think our group would really provide some good experience on this topic, for sure. Jen, anything you want to add?

Jen: No, that was great.

Annie: Alright, good chat. Thank you.

Jen: Alright thanks, Annie, bye.

Annie: Alrighty, bye bye.