

Balance365 Episode 40 Transcript

Annie: Most of us have experienced the uncomfortable feeling that comes with overeating. Sometimes overeating is totally intentional, like, you know, come holiday time you are going to go all in on Aunt Jan's green bean casserole and pumpkin pie and sometimes it's more accidental, like, "Oops, I think I just eat too much!" I know both have happened to me multiple times. Either way the physical and emotional response that can accompany over eating can sometimes be problematic and our first reaction or impulse after we overeat might not be what ultimately serves us best in the long run.

On today's episode, Jen, Lauren and I share some of the common impulses women have experienced after overeating and offer alternative solutions that encourage self-love and moderation. Enjoy!

Lauren and Jen, welcome to the show. We're all together!

Lauren: Hi!

Jen: Hi!

Annie: How are you, Lauren?

Lauren: I'm good.

Annie: Good, Jen, how are you today?

Jen: Great. Good.

Annie: Good. So we are talking about a topic that I think is going to come up, I anticipate is going to come up a lot around the Thanksgiving holiday season and that is you over eat and like, now what? Now what do I do? And I know and you guys know that what our impulses might tell us to do or like our reaction might not be the best thing for us in the long term. Have you ever experienced that, like, where you over and you have this like "Oh my gosh! What do I do? I need to do something to fix that. I need to make it better." Lauren, have you ever experience that?

Lauren: Yes, definitely during the dieting days it was, it's that diet cycle, right, that we so often go through you over eat and then you're like "Oh no!" - cue the shame, cue the guilt, cue the planning my next diet pretty much.

Annie: Yes, exactly. Jen, what about you? Have you ever over eaten and then kind of panicked for a moment.

Jen: Yes and then went and jumped on a treadmill for 2 hours, that would be the other impulse that we get. That's, listen to zoom out, I don't know if when we make decisions impulsively if they're ever a good idea, you know.

Annie: Are you just saying that because you watched my insta story yesterday?

Jen: Oh yeah, I forgot. Yes that was like, I was cringing for you. I was like, "Oh. This girl."

Annie: So I am impulsive and that's something I'm working on. There's a difference for me from responding versus reacting and I'm working more on responding versus reacting.

Jen: That was my, you know, in when everybody picks a word on for like the new year, what's your word? So in 2017 I picked "respond not react" and it actually worked really good. I made so many strides in 2017 on reacting and observing my emotions without judgment and letting the logical side of my brain come back into the equation.

Annie: Yes, because my impulse is not logical.

Jen: Well emotion isn't logical and our first reaction is always typically emotion but when that settles down like, have you ever done something and look back and gone like, "Oh that was a little impulsive."

Annie: No, never. I have no idea what you're talking about. Like, why did I buy that? Why did I do that? Why did I say that?

Jen: Yeah, "Why did I say that?" would be my typical one. Getting myself in some hot water once in a while.

Annie: It's that emoji with her hand on her forehead like, "Argh!"

Jen: Yeah, well if you think I've been online blogging since 2013 and the blog doesn't exist anymore but it's Mama Lion Strong so you think somebody who identifies with like a lion might have some impulse control.

Annie: Yeah, maybe. But you know what in our defense I've also said that that's really served me because I have an ability to just make snap decisions and just go with it and it helps me to get stuff done so it's not all bad but anyways, we got a little off track. But as it as it relates to over eating, it's not uncommon to get together for parties, holiday gatherings, family gatherings especially around Thanksgiving and you overeat and overeating is really just described as eating past comfortable fullness, satiety and this is really relative, it's very person specific and just to use us as an example, overeating for Lauren looks very different than what overeating for me looks like. I'm guessing I could consume a considerably more higher quantity of food than Lauren just based off my size and my eating preference, so there is no, like, you ate too much, this is the line, this is finite for everyone. It's really relative and kind of subjective-

Jen: And you're going to feel it you will feel when you've overeaten.

Annie: Yeah and sometimes it happens intentionally, sometimes you're like, "Yeah, I'm going all in on this, I'm so excited" and sometimes it's just like an accident, like, "Oops! I ate too much," like and you don't, especially me, I feel like I eat too fast that I don't even have time to have the awareness like, "Oh, I am now past full" but either way eating, feeling too stuffed doesn't just physically affect us, it can often be accompanied with an emotional response too, which we'll get into and sometimes, as we said in the beginning, our impulse isn't always something that serves us well or at least in the long term so we kind of have a compare and contrast, a couple situations, your impulse and some alternatives to navigate that instead.

So the first one, we were kind of already talking about, the first one is your impulse might be to panic and instead of panicking, we want you just to pause. Like, that would be that "respond versus react" and you might feel like after you have overeaten that you just fell off the wagon, like Lauren was saying, that you messed up on your diet and "Oh my gosh, you have to do all these things, XYZ" to make up for what you just did and combine that with maybe even berating yourself, eating too much, you could be feeling anxious, sad, angry, upset, embarrassed, ashamed, any or all of the above. I mean, I personally have felt a nice combination of all of those before and instead of panicking try just pausing.

We've talked about this on past podcasts before that you can notice your feelings and your impulses and remember that you don't have to act on them and I know this is an area where I have a great opportunity for me to practice self compassion and think about what I would say to a girlfriend, a sister, a daughter, a son that just overate. Would I tell them to, you know, pull that pendulum ball right back and say, "Oh my gosh, I've got to get right back on the wagon, go exercise, go do this, go do X, Y, Z."

No, I would probably just say, "OK, this is a learning opportunity. Take it easy. Just pause. Just notice the feelings and move on." Right?

Jen: Yeah the other thing that people need to understand is that overeating sometimes is part of having a healthy relationship with food, like it's just part of it. It's not ideal but that's like, you know, your relationship with food is a relationship. It's like your relationship with your partner or your kids or us 3, it's not always smooth sailing, right?

Annie: Right.

Jen: And the other part of having a healthy relationship with food is trusting your body to correct mistakes intuitively. So knowing that when you overate there's nothing you need to do or act on to counteract that. Your body will intuitively do that.

Lauren: Right, you might be less hungry in the morning-

Jen: Exactly:

Lauren: or for your next meal or whatever and another thing that I like to do too is sometimes I just do nothing. Like we're saying here, like, just I let my body kind of take care of it and guide me and then other times if it's maybe happening more often than I would like or it's becoming a pattern, I use it just to reflect.

Like we say in Balance365, there's no failure, right, there is either winning or learning. So I take it, I'm like, "OK, what can I learn from this? Maybe I'm rushing through my dinner or maybe I'm not eating enough at this time" so there is also a space for reflection here and you can learn a little bit about what to do next time without berating yourself for what just happened.

Annie: Because like Jen said, I mean, this happens. I don't know anyone that hasn't overeaten at some point, some maybe more frequently than others, but this is part of being a human, right? You experience a range of it.

Lauren: Yeah, balanced eating doesn't mean you're never going to overeat again, like it happens and it's normal.

Annie: Yeah and again, sometimes it's intentional and sometimes it's on accident, but either way, you can take a moment instead of panicking afterwards and just pause and just notice "What am I feeling? What are my impulses?" knowing that you don't have to act on them. You don't have to actually do anything with them. You can just acknowledge it, like, "Yeah, I feel that urge. I notice that urge."

Jen: I think it's also normal. People should know that it's normal, that most people would overeat if they're having a special meal like a Thanksgiving meal or Christmas meal or it's kind of, it's like that scarcity thing, right-

Annie: It's the Last Supper.

Jen: The Last Supper, like if you're having a meal you never, you don't typically have and it's something that you just love, it's your favorite and you know, maybe you only have it on holidays then you may overeat. I think that there's also a line of like overeating and then like eating until you are uncomfortably full, which I can handle overeating a little bit but when I, I mean, I don't remember last I did it but eating, when I used to diet I used to do it all the time.

I would eat until I was uncomfortably full, like laying on the couch after like I can't move for 3 hours because I just ate WAY, WAY too much and I think that, as Lauren was saying about reflecting, like, where you are in that overeating scale as well and why did you do that, right? Because if we're doing things to our bodies that brings us pain, that's not natural and it's like, then you kind of have to reflect on like why you did that and for a lot of women, listening, it could be that they are trapped in that diet cycle, like they are, the reason that they overate so severely was because they are just so restrictive in their day to day lives and the answer to that is not more restriction, it's to ease up in your day to day life.

Annie: That's a great segue into our next kind of situation, your next impulse might be to skip your next meal. Instead, we would offer that you make your next meal balanced and satisfying because on paper, skipping meals might seem like

a great idea for like a caloric balance standpoint, but just as Jen was saying, eating too little or nothing at all can set you up to overeat again later because so often people want to stop the binge and pull it back to restriction.

They want to stop at the binge portion of the cycle where we would offer that if you stop at the restriction part, if you stop restricting so much that you wouldn't be as likely to binge in the first place. So it might seem like a good idea just to say "Oh, I'm just not eat the rest of the day" but then you can find yourself in the same place you were before where you're starving, where you're hungry and all of a sudden you're going to eat and because you're so hungry you're going to overeat and then it just perpetuates that cycle over and over and over again.

Jen: Yeah and I will say anecdotally that, being out of the diet cycle, I have not overeaten to discomfort in years, like I may have overeaten a little where I'm like, "Oh I'm full. I ate a little too much of this meal but not how I used to."

Annie: I would agree and in fact, Lauren you gave some advice, I don't know if we shared it on a podcast before but you said a good rule of thumb is that you should be able to take a walk after your meals and I think that's kind of a good barometer because I would, I would do the same as Jen, like, I would go all in on meals, like we would have cheat meals on Friday nights and I would just eat until I, like, had to roll myself off the couch. I felt just so stuffed.

Jen: Yes, I used to do that with girlfriends in college and we would-

Lauren: I used to too.

Jen: We would bring in every, like, indulgent food you could think of, we'd start with a big tray of like nachos and cheese and I would bring like 4 litres of chocolate milk and I remember those, and we'd watch movies and just eat and I would just eat and eat and eat and eat and I would feel so, so sick after those evenings and now I'm like, "I could never," like that doesn't sound fun for me at all.

Annie: Yeah. Oh, times have changed, huh?

Jen: Yeah.

Annie: But that's a good place to be at because you can still enjoy all those foods just-

Jen: Oh and I do. I totally do. I mean, me and my kids and I might have a random Wednesday night, we'll have nachos and cheese for supper because that's what we have-

Annie: With chocolate milk?

Jen: I don't drink chocolate milk as much anymore but we do still enjoy it in this house.

Annie: Yeah, Lauren, anything you want to add from a nutrition standpoint about skipping meals?

Lauren: No, not from a nutrition standpoint. I think you covered it, right, that's the cycle is you restrict and then you binge and your impulse is to restrict again but that just continues the cycle but I will say that an alternative or kind of a meet yourself in the middle here is don't skip your next meal but if you're not feeling hungry for your next meal because you overate at your last meal, it's OK to maybe push it back a bit. Like, listen to your body and if you're not hungry maybe wait an hour, maybe wait 2 hours and then have your next balanced, satisfying meal.

Annie: I tell you, hunger has been such a game changing habit for me, like that is, like, noticing when I'm hungry, eating when I'm hungry and then not eating when I'm not hungry. It feels like freedom to me. It's like, I'll eat when I'm hungry, thank you. Like this like, "I'm in charge!" sort of thing, but yeah so if you find that you just overate at, you know, a 2 pm Thanksgiving family meal and you're not hungry for dinner at 6, like that's totally cool. Like, you can push it back or eat something a little bit lighter but don't just totally ignore your hunger signals in attempts to negate overeating at a earlier meal.

OK, next impulse, as Jen brought up in the intro here, punish yourself with a tough workout. Instead return to your normal exercise routine as soon as you can. Using exercise as a way to negate the food we eat is unfortunately a really common approach in the fitness industry but using our food intake, either the quality or the quantity of it to determine how much or how hard we should exercise doesn't support a healthy relationship with movement.

And I think we've talked about this so many times on the podcast before that if we're using our food choices as a barometer for how frequently we should be

exercising you can really set yourself up for inconsistent exercise, because that to me says "When we're eating well, we don't need to exercise. When we're eating not so well we need to exercise all the time," right? And that's not how we develop solid routines and there are so many benefits of exercise regardless of how we're eating. So even if you're eating, you know, all the ways, is it doesn't matter, you can still benefit from exercise and Jen, you've done this before it sounds like, jumped on the treadmill.

Jen: Yeah, I mean, that was my life. Yeah, I used to, exercise to me was just to negate food, there really was no, I could not really think of any other purpose at that certain time of my life for exercise. I definitely was not thinking about getting stronger or faster or healthier. I was thinking about getting thinner and negating all the food I had eaten. Or any food, period.

Annie: And truthfully, I've been a situation where if I just overate, putting myself through a gruelling workout is likely to leave me feeling worse, so sometimes a gentle walk or just like some light movement can leave me feeling a little bit better and then in the days in the head if I want to pick up intensity or return to intensity, that's, you know, something different, but when I think about overeating and then going and like, punishing myself in the gym, I just think that that sounds miserable.

Jen: Yeah that sounds like a recipe for vomiting.

Annie: I wasn't going to say it but.

Lauren: I used to do this too and it just for me, it took all of the enjoyment out of it and it made me not want to exercise, right, because it's like, this is all exercise is good for, why what I ever choose to do this?

Annie: Right.

Lauren: You know?

Annie: Yeah, because unconsciously we start associating those negative feelings we're having about our body with exercise, whether it's intentional or not, that's just what happens and honestly, I think I've talked about it so many times, I think that's why I really have a distaste for running, because I associate running with punishment, with trying to be something different, with trying to beat myself up for

what I ate or how I look and that's, like, taken some emotional work to work around and I'm still trying to work through it. But that's a great point.

Jen: I didn't run for years, I used to be a runner, that was my main thing for punishing myself and and I didn't run for years during my, basically Diet Deprogramming phase, I was like, "Uh uh, no, not doing it."

Annie: Yeah, it can be tough if you're used to using exercise as punishment for food you ate or how you look, that can be a tough connection and relationship to rebuild but it's totally possible.

Jen: Yeah, absolutely.

Annie: OK, so next impulse you might experience after you overeat is to step on the scale. I am totally guilty of this but instead we would offer that you just skip it for a few days because here's why, the increase in volume, just the simple volume of the food that you ate in that meal or couple meals is likely to result in a higher scale weight but that's not necessarily reflective of true weight gain, right? So fluctuations in body weight are to be expected. So often, and I'm speaking from my own personal experience here, we see women step on the scale to sort of assess the damage, like, "What did I do?" like how bad-

Jen: Just to further shame themselves, right?

Annie: Like how bad is it and then "Oh my gosh, here's the proof. I'm up 2 pounds, 3 pounds, 4 pounds, 5 pounds, whatever it is" and then you allow that scale weight, that increase in scale weight to dictate your next move but that's not your only option. If you just skip it for a few days, I'd be willing to bet that more than likely that weight will just slide right off again. I mean, for lack of a better word, it's just probably a matter of a few days, some hydration levels, sodium intake levels, carb levels and some bowel movements and-

Jen: Yeah and understanding, especially during holiday time, if it ends up being a high carb meal, you just retain, you'll retain more water. Like, a lot of people fall into this trap with weighing themselves. They might have, you know, even a Monday morning, like holidays aside, they might weigh themselves Monday morning, just "assess the damage of the weekend." It may not be anything, it may not be that you overate, it may just be the composition of your meals

changed and if you swing, if you're used to a more balanced diet, you swing into a high carb for a couple days, your body will retain water.

Annie: And it's temporary.

Jen: And it's totally temporary but, like, water retention is such a huge part of our weight, right, like you can go up and down in a day by what, like, 5-8 pounds just with just your changing fluid levels or water levels and after a high carb weekend or a high carb meal, you know, it's not just the volume of food, it might also be water retention as well.

Annie: Yeah, absolutely and I think the important thing is knowing that the scale, regardless of what you ate, doesn't have to determine your behaviors or your habits.

Jen: Yeah, absolutely.

Annie: That can get you, again, in a really slippery slope with scale weight, like, because when the scale says what you think it says or lower you're like, "Yay! I can take the day off" or, "I don't have to do anything" or "I feel good" and then the flip side of that is if the scale is higher than you would like, you feel like crap and you beat yourself up and all of a sudden we're having to do all the things because we weighed a few pounds heavier, which again, is not your only option.

OK, last one. The impulse might be to continue to beat yourself up and instead, we would offer that you let it go and try to move forward and I think this is kind of a culmination of all of the solutions or alternatives we've suggested already to the impulses but really, beating yourself up is just keeping you kind of living in the past, so to speak, and it's not helping you move forward and again, practicing self compassion, this can be a really really good opportunity to practice self compassion and think about what would you say to a girlfriend, what would you say to a sister, a son or a daughter that overate and I would be willing to bet that the words you would use would say like, "Hey, like, OK, we ate too much, like, food is yummy. Too much food sometimes leaves us feeling yucky and that's all it is. It's not a reflection on your worth, your value, your ability to do a job, how attractive you are, like, it doesn't matter.

It doesn't affect any of that and so letting it go and just moving on, continuing your day, your week, your month as you were originally planned can often be the best step.

Jen: Yeah, I think we just have such a complex relationship with food and people wonder why they have, why do they feel so ashamed around food or why do they beat themselves up so much and that is just because women and men, to a degree, are raised to have a very complex, emotion-based relationship with food. So if you think, if you, I often take, so if I have some behavior with food that's triggering emotion, I will take the situation out of food and think, "When I feel this way in another situation, like, if I sat down to watch T.V. and that felt really good but then I watched it for too long, would I shame myself after?" Do you know what I mean?

Annie: Right.

Jen: Probably not, like, I would go, "OK, I watched T.V. for a little too long today, time to move on with my day."

Annie: Lesson learned. Note to self.

Jen: Lesson learned. Right. But with food, it's just we have so much heavy feelings, you know, and such a complex relationship with our bodies that we can just get stuck there-

Lauren: Right.

Jen: So you can... Sorry.

Annie: I thought you were going to add more.

Jen: I was like, "Oh, she's got something here. It sounds like a good one."

Lauren: I thought you were done.

Annie: She's just giving you that affirmation.

Jen: I love it. I love it. Words of affirmation is my love language, so, thanks Lauren.

Annie: Lauren's a good hype woman.

Lauren: Get it!

Annie: And, you know, ultimately too, sort of off topic, sort of on topic, I just, I really don't want overeating or the experience of overeating again, whether it's intentional or by accident, Lord knows I've done both, to affect our ability to enjoy a holiday time with friends and family because food is the center of so much we do around the holidays, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years with parties and get together and just being social in general, it's often like, the thing that brings us together, right, food is and my hope is that our listeners find a way to navigate these situations that allows them to, A, feel good physically but also feel good mentally and socially and that they're not living in fear or anxiousness around food.

Jen: You can remind yourself during any holiday, whether it's Halloween Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, all of that food is available to us year round, actually. There's no reason you can't throw together a turkey dinner on a random Sunday in February. You could, if you really wanted to, same with chocolate at Halloween or chocolate at Valentines Day. That stuff is all readily available to us at any time and as soon as you take the scarcity out of that food choice, that impulse to eat all that food because this is a precious resource. So, take that away, it's not a precious resource, you can have that any time and then logic can come back into your brain and you can make the right consumption decisions for you in that moment.

Lauren: Yeah, yeah, I'll also add too, like with all of these steps like Jen mentioned, this is, we've been programmed to kind of feel this way around food for, you know, 30, 40, 50, 60 years, so when you overeat and you have that impulse to panic or feel bad, the last thing we want is you to feel bad for feeling bad. Like realize it's going to take some time to, like, undo-

Jen: So complex.

Lauren: -that impulse. And it's okay.

Jen: Yeah. Yeah and what we find with Balance365ers is it's so great, you know, because these feel like little things, but they are actually such big things but women in January saying this is the first time I've gone through the Christmas holidays and not gained weight.

Lauren: Right.

Jen: You know, because they've been in Balance365 for a little while, they've gotten rid of that diet mindset, they, you know, they have embraced eating till satisfied or, on the flipside, if they did put on a little bit of weight over the holidays, it's the first time they're not panicking about it and they're trusting their bodies to adjust and know what to do.

Annie: Well, I mean, this is the epitome of why we have New Year's resolutions or why weight loss New Year's resolutions are so popular, right, because people spend the holiday season like a free for all because they spend a lot of the year restricting and then it's like "Ah! Game on!" and-

Lauren: It's panic mode.

Annie: -after the holiday and then they go right back to the panic.

Jen: I actually read, I read not too long ago that the diet industry spends 70 percent of their marketing budget in January, February, March, like it's just, they're really catching people on the downswing from the holidays.

Annie: So our alternative suggestion is to just treat the holiday season like you would any other time of the year. Like, you can have those foods any time of the year. You can enjoy those foods in moderation. Sometimes you might over eat, that's fine, one meal or even a day of meals or a week of meals, for heaven's sakes, in the grand scheme of a year is not going to make or break your habits or your body composition or your weight, whatever your goals are, your health and practice some self compassion. Go easy on yourself, let it go, move forward and enjoy the holiday season, right?

Lauren: Right.

Annie: Yeah, awesome, anything else you two want to add? OK.

Jen: Lauren's afraid of interrupting me now.

Annie: OK, well, thank you both so much for joining me, it was a good talk.

Lauren: It was.

Jen: Yeah.

Annie: Okay, bye bye.

Lauren: Bye.

Jen: Bye.