

Balance365 Episode 53 Transcript

Annie: Welcome back to another episode of Balance365 Life radio. Before we get into today's podcast episode with an amazing guest, I want to share with you a super sweet message that we received from one of our community members on Facebook today. Christy says "I have been a part of Healthy Habits Happy Moms for almost 2 years now and a Balance365er since May of 2018. I am all in to the way this group thinks and believes.

I'm at the point now that when I workout I channel Annie Brees, when I mention establishing habits to coworkers I channel Lauren Koski and when I'm trying to give some perspective to friends about diet culture and treating myself well I channel Jennifer Campbell. I can't thank the three of you enough for how you have changed my outlook and daily life. I'm chipping away at the program but at this point my greatest takeaway is the way I live out each day because of this new perspective. I can go on and on but I just have to give a big thanks to Jennifer, Annie and Lauren.

Thank you so much, Christy and I want to share with all of our community members that any email, any message, any direct message on Instagram we read them all and we are so appreciative of any reviews that you share on the podcast. We love them all. We cannot thank you enough.

Alright, let's jump into this podcast because I'm super excited about it. I'm not sure if we have referenced any other book on this podcast as much as we have her book, *Secrets from the Eating Lab* by Dr Traci Mann. Dr. Mann is a professor of Psychology at the University of Minnesota and an expert on the psychology of eating, dieting and self-control. In addition to all her impressive professional experience, she's also a mom who loves those ice cream, super relatable, hey?

If you're curious about how much control we really have over our weight, how you can avoid temptation and why diets don't work and what to do instead then you have to listen to this interview with Dr Mann. Enjoy!

Jen and Lauren, we have a special, special guest are you two pumped for the show or what?

Lauren: So pumped.

Jen: Yes, I've been waiting. We arranged this well before Christmas I think so I've just been like vibrating waiting for it.

Annie: Yes and what our listeners didn't catch before we started recording was Jen gushing for about 10 minutes about how she loves Dr Traci Mann. Welcome to the show, thank you for joining us.

Dr. Mann: Well, thanks for having me, you guys are so nice.

Annie: We, the 3 of us have read your book, The Secrets from the Eating Lab and we reference studies, quotes, information from this book so often in our community and our podcast if they haven't read it, if listeners haven't read it we would highly recommend it and it's heavy on the science because you're a researcher but I wasn't overwhelmed by the science when I was reading it. I felt it was very like, I could understand the concepts that you were sharing. So, thank you so much for joining us.

Dr. Mann: I would also say I'm sure I shouldn't say this but it's free Kindle right now.

Jen: OK.

Annie: Oh my! How long is it going to be free for?

Dr. Mann: You know, I have a vague memory of agreeing to this with my agent like a year ago thinking it was like a month long thing and I think it's possibly forever, I don't know.

Jen: OK we will

Dr. Mann:-never sell another book. So, whatever, it's fine.

Annie: Well I will-

Dr. Mann: Better people read it than buy it.

Annie: say if you look at the 3 of our copies they are highlighted, like top to bottom, they have been like, right, like, they've been used, they've been well loved.

Lauren: I think the name Traci Mann has been on probably 90 percent of our podcast.

Jen: Yeah and this, so I have this page highlighted, what I was gushing about before we hit record was how Traci, Dr. Traci, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to-

Dr. Mann: Just call me Traci.

Annie: We're besties now.

Jen: So you are very much a messy middle writer in that you really objectively look at the research, you haven't gone headfirst into any kind of movement or philosophy and just looked at research to support your philosophy, you've looked at the research which has allowed you to come up with a very objective, balanced message.

Dr. Mann: That was the goal for sure.

Jen: And so I just I highlighted this a long time ago because it was perfect. It says, it's on page 20 and so what we hear a lot and what our audience is very aware of is that we hear two things, we hear that you cannot control your weight, you should not even try to lose weight, it's pointless, your weight is predetermined, what you have, what you've got, that's what you're going to have forever and then on the other side of the spectrum, we have this whole industry of transformations that it is totally realistic and sustainable to lose half your body weight forever etc, etc.

When what we actually know and what the research provides is is that you, it's actually like in the middle but what you had written and I feel like I was waiting for this message. When I found your book I felt like "I have arrived. I am home. Like, this is what I have been looking for, somebody who is just sensible."

And you say, "I'm not saying you can't influence your weight at all, just that the amount of influence you have is limited and you'll generally end up within your genetically determined set weight range" and I thought that was so perfect in that you're not willing to say you cannot control your weight, you're trying to say "Hey,

we can influence our weight, it's just not to the level that you have been led to believe by the fad diet industry."

Dr. Mann: Exactly. That's right so it's partly genetic, but not 100 percent genetic.

Jen: Right and isn't there a percentage?

Dr. Mann: I think it was 70%-

Jen: Yes I think it was 70% but you have a, there's about a range of 30 percent in there that you can influence your weight.

Dr. Mann: Yeah and I mean, it's not just that and it's really interesting that people are staking out these extreme positions, you know, it's like, "Come on, people, nothing is black and white like that."

Jen: Right.

Dr. Mann: But with the weight thing, it's not just, it's not the case that you can't maneuver your weight around to some extent, obviously you can't, like you just said, you can't lose half your body weight but you can move it around to some extent but the problem is that it's really hard, it's hard to move it around a lot. It's not hard to move it around a little.

Jen: Right.

Dr. Mann: And that's mostly what we talk about in the book is ways to move it around a little without it taking over your life.

Jen: Right.

Dr. Mann: But to move it around a lot, it's not that it can't be done, it's just that it's really, really hard.

Jen: And it's very, it can be hard on us physically and psychologically to be trying to move our weight around to those different extreme ends.

Dr. Mann: Yeah, exactly. That's why I like to talk about this Leanest Liveable Weight idea. By Leanest Livable Weight I mean it's the lowest weight that you can comfortably have without having to work so hard at it.

Jen: Right.

Dr. Mann: Because the leanest weight you can live at comfortably, now that has been misinterpreted by the lovely people like GOOP.com - the lowest weight you can actually survive at without dying.

Jen: Right and that's not what any of us here are trying to talk about. That's what a lot of women are trying to be and they might they may not even realize it, that that's what they're actually trying to achieve but that's definitely not healthy, physically or psychologically.

Annie: And I just want to add to that we've worked with thousands of women across the span of the globe and one of the common themes that keeps coming up for women is goal weights or they have this like ideal body weight and oftentimes if you asked them, like, "Well, where did that weight come from?" it's, like, so, like, not evidence based, it's like, "Oh I weighed that when I graduated high school or that's what I weighed on I wedding day or that's my pre-pregnancy weight" and it might not be realistic.

Dr. Mann: Or it sounds good.

Annie: Yeah, or that's what I read on some chart in, you know, I even remember coming across a scale in the mall bathroom, why there was a scale in the mall bathroom I don't know but it had a chart of, like, body weights and like this is if you're large frame, small frame. And it's really not realistic, usually not realistic for those goal weights. So we love the idea that you have a range because as a woman I know that my weight can fluctuate you know 10-15 pounds versus in a month, in a year, how would you recommend going about determining a reasonable range of weight for someone?

Dr. Mann: Yeah, that's a really good question. That's the hardest question to answer and the question I'm least likely to be able to satisfy you with an answer to because there isn't, like, a scientific formula to figure out your sort of set range, so instead you have to just kind of make a guess based on your sort of knowledge of what your weight has done over your life and a lot of people notice that there's a certain weight area that they keep coming back to.

So they lose some weight but then they come back to this weight or they gain some weight but then they plop down in this weight without even trying very hard and so if it's, you know, the weight that your body seems to keep wanting to

come back to that's probably right there, right there in the set range, right where your body is trying to keep you because you're good at it.

Annie: Yeah, in your book and I know there's going to be people they're going to say, they're going to scoff at this but you didn't just look at people that have lost weight and then regained it, you also looked at people that were trying, studies that have tried to get people to gain weight and it was hard to even maintain a weight gain as well, which further supports the idea that, like, this is where your body can effortlessly live or with minimal effort.

Dr. Mann: Right, it's true and then the weight gains that are particularly interesting because so many people think, you know, I am so careful with what I eat, if I wasn't this careful I would for sure gain a whole ton of weight.

Lauren: Yes, we hear that all the time.

Dr. Mann: Yeah, you do, you know, I think people really worry about that and I think partly why they worry about it is because if they do eat a lot more than normal for a while, they do gain weight, but they only gain a certain amount of weight, you know what I mean? So maybe you'll gain your 5 pounds or 10 pounds but you're not going to gain 50 pounds, you know, or if you do you'll come back down pretty easily.

Jen: Right, we see a pendulum swing happen quite often with women who are coming off dieting, if they have spent a decade of their life dieting. We see this pendulum swing where they go from, you know, one weight and the pendulum swings up to a higher weight that they are comfortable with or that is maybe within their set point range but then it settles down somewhere in the middle and we talk about that and you reference this in your book, *The Minnesota Starvation Experiment*.

Dr. Mann: Right.

Jen: So if you are coming from years and years and years of restriction, you look at, we have a whole podcast on the *Minnesota Starvation Experiment*. So if you are coming from a period of very severe restriction, the pendulum swing is almost an expectation, it's almost, like, we would say it's a normal and natural response to dieting.

Dr. Mann: Oh exactly, it exactly is. I mean, we all need to reframe how we think about dieting. When people think about dieting, they think of that initial weight loss and that's their image of dieting and then they assume once they have that initial weight loss, they just stay down there.

Jen: Right.

Dr. Mann: But actually, if you followed all the research looking longer at dieters, you see it's completely predictable that the weight comes back on.

Jen: Right.

Dr. Mann: There's a tiny, tiny minority of people who keep it off.

Jen: Right.

Dr. Mann: But for the majority of people, it just comes back on, you know, over the next like 2, 3, 4, 5 years. So we need to realize that that is a normal part of dieting and not a failure by any particular individual dieter.

Jen: Right, right.

Dr. Mann: And the thing is they always blame themselves for that.

Jen: For that pendulum swing.

Dr. Mann: That's just what happens. Your body needs that to happen, your body is making that happen.

Jen: Yeah, it's like, I think you also, I think we've used this analogy and I think it came from your book, it's like gasping for air after holding your breath.

Dr. Mann: Right, I didn't invent that analogy but I did include it, yes.

Jen: Yes.

Dr. Mann: Yes, it's true. I feel like anything I say you've already talked about but I mean the things that happen when you restrict for a while. Your body, of course, doesn't know you want to look thinner, your body thinks you're in the process of starving to death and so it makes these alterations to save you which is so kind of it and yet everyone gets so mad about that because all those changes that

save you from starving to death, make, basically make it very, very, very easy to regain the weight.

Jen: Right and it probably, well, you can correct me if I'm wrong, it doesn't really matter what size you are, if you are 120 pounds or if you're 220 pounds when you do that restriction, your body still, you know, it doesn't matter how much body fat you have, your body still thinks you are starving.

Dr. Mann: Right, if your body detects that much less is coming in than it than expected then it just, all these changes just click on, you know, your metabolism changes, uh oh, now you have to eat less to keep losing weight.

Jen: Right.

Dr. Mann: Hormone levels change, uh oh, you're going to feel hungry.

Jen: Yeah.

Dr. Mann: When you eat an amount of food that didn't used to make you feel hungry, you know and then there's all these attention changes too, right? So you notice food more if it's around, you can't get your mind off it once you start thinking about it, so all those things make regaining the weight way too easy and keeping it off way too hard.

It doesn't make it impossible, though and so this is a key, another key thing that I think people sometimes don't realize. Any person who knows someone who has lost weight and kept it off, you know, comes and says to me "You can't say that your body does this stuff, you can't say your body makes these changes that cause you to regain the weight because I know people who've kept it off."

Well I'm not saying that these changes make it impossible to keep off the weight, I'm saying these changes make it really, really hard to keep off the weight. So hard that most people can't do it.

Jen: Right. We were talking before we hit record, again, another thing I had brought up is that because we are, you know, we try to navigate that messy middle and help women figure out what's right for them, I had said, you know, hearing these two, I remember when I was first getting into this and starting to read about it like 4 to 5 years ago, I would start hearing that extreme messaging "You can't keep off weight, you just can't" and actually my husband has lost about

60 pounds, he was, I think, he was about 300 pounds when he graduated high school and now he sits at between kind of 220 and 245, I think.

I mean, he's going to be horrified that I'm talking about this but anyways but that just, that comes very naturally to him to kind of sit around there and so I would, you know, I was the same as those people. I kept hearing that it's impossible to lose weight and I thought, he has now kept that off for 20 years and he's not working, like, I don't see him get up every day and like work at it, he's not like, he's not micromanaging his food, he's not, he has some great habits, he, you know, he eats balanced meals, he tries to get to the gym 3 to 4 times a week but he's lived a high stress life like the rest of us, he's had kids, gone to grad school, all of that and so that just didn't sit well with me and I thought, instead of looking at everybody who is failing, what are these successful people doing? Like why are they able to do it? Which kind of comes why, again, why your book is so refreshing, because you sort of, you've got that sort of nailed.

Dr. Mann: Well, you know, I mean, I don't even know and it's interesting how you describe your husband as not having to work at keeping it off. Because what the research shows of the people who lose weight and keep it off is that those people are, you know, fairly obsessed with every little calorie that goes into their body and with every little bit of exercise they do to burn calories.

So that's what I expect to hear when I hear that people kept it off for a long time but one thing that I've been wondering about lately and no one has done the study that I know of and I don't actually even know how to do this study but I've been wondering like, the people who lose a lot of weight and keep it off are those people who had happened to recently gain a bunch of weight but weren't normally really heavy? You know what I mean, like I'm wondering if those who end up taking, you know, people who have had this unusual weight gain as opposed to people who are just always some high weight and took it off.

Lauren: Yeah we see.

Jen: I have theories. Go ahead, Lauren.

Lauren: Yeah, we kind of see this and this is, I think, kind of in my story too, we see people who start dieting at a young age, right and then they just keep putting on weight as they do the rebound and you know, their weight wasn't maybe supposed to be quite that high but because of the dieting it keeps going up.

Dr. Mann: It got inflated from their-

Lauren: Yeah and so for me, when I, after I stopped dieting and I did gain a lot of weight, when I finally went came to this place of balance my weight did go down and I think it's kind of just like that it came back to its normal range.

Jen: My husband also, I haven't seen any research on this, he has put on a significant amount of muscle over the years so he, you know, at 18 years old, he didn't go to the gym. He just, you know, his body composition is completely different, he, you can just tell by looking at pictures of him that he had a substantial amount of body fat and then after he left high school he got into boxing and ended up boxing professionally or sorry I should say semi professional, he's just going to die, when he listens to this, I'll just give him a little plug, he won the gold medal at the Canadian games in 2007 for boxing.

Dr. Mann: Wow.

Jen: I know, amazing, but he just gets so embarrassed when I talk about this.

Dr. Mann: You know, just to revise what I was saying, he's an elite athlete.

Jen: Well, he wouldn't, I wouldn't say now, I think he's got more like Dad bod now but he did, he just, he got into, so what we tell our girls in Balance365 is to find movement they like, like if you and you talk about this in your book that if you don't like what you're doing you're never going to stick to it and so when I say my husband doesn't work at it, it's not that he doesn't prioritize exercise and doesn't prioritize a balanced way to eat, he really enjoys that so it's not that, so I think what what happens is there are people out there that are just never, they're never going to enjoy my husband's lifestyle. I'm not athletic and I am not competitive. I would never have enjoyed training for a boxing match like that or several boxing matches so, but through that-

Dr. Mann: I don't think I would like that either.

Jen: Right and so you have to kind of go, you know, and Annie, for example, Annie crossfits like 4-5 times a week which helps her to sustain that 40 pound fat loss that she has done but and so it's like Annie, personally, doesn't feel like she wakes up in the morning and micromanages her weight loss, however if I had to get up everyday and go to Crossfit 4-5 times a week, that would feel like I was micromanaging my loss, do you know what I'm saying?

Dr. Mann: Yeah, it's true, so everyone needs to just find a sort of a set of lifestyle habits that aren't soul crushing for them.

Jen: Right, for them and that's the sort of key that it's like, what do you like to do and it may not be what somebody else does and so you won't get the results that person has gotten but hey, that's OK, like, let's just be sensible here kind of thing.

Dr. Mann: True, I mean, like in the last year or so I've had this just chronic hamstring injury, just won't get better no matter how long it just doesn't get better and you know, finally my physical therapist was like, you know, it doesn't hurt when you do spin class, doesn't hurt when you do yoga, it hurts when you run. It's like exactly that part of the answer and she's like "You have to not run" and somehow, her saying that I don't have to go all winter onto the treadmill, it's like so freeing to allow myself to do the kinds of exercise that I, I don't want to say enjoy but that I don't hate.

Annie: Right.

Dr. Mann: Even though to me they don't seem as potent You know, I mean like, my brain is running this but I feel like, you know, all signs are that I'm just as healthy as if I were running as long as I'm doing these other activities and it's not miserable.

Jen: Right.

Dr. Mann: So thank you, Christina, for freeing me from feeling like I have to use the freaking treadmill.

Lauren: Can I, can I go back to, I want to go back to something that Jen said because this. is something that I've been wondering about when we hear this about the set weight range is that total weight or is that like fat percentage? Because we do see people who do build muscle, right and they're the same weight but their body composition is very different, like, how do you know how that plays into this?

Dr. Mann: I don't. I don't recall ever hearing anyone talking about set weight ranges in any way other than referring to weight. I've not heard anyone describe it in terms of muscle mass.

Lauren: OK. It's always something I've wondered.

Dr. Mann: I don't think people have, yeah, at least I've not encountered it.

Jen: Yeah, I'm curious. If you end up putting on this muscle mass and it leads to your total body weight being, you know, a little bit-

Lauren: Are the same as what your mass was with less muscle then is that sort of like a "trick" for your body in that it's like, oh, we're, you know, we're the same weight and so you see people that change their body but your body is like "But I still weigh this much and I still need this amount of calories to sustain me." That might be a future research project for you.

Annie: That would reflect my experience, for sure because I have, like, probably a 6 to 7 I would say pound weight range that I have not budged from for maybe a couple years but my body composition has changed within that. A couple of percent, I mean, to me it's been noticeable but I cannot, like, I have to work really, really hard to get out of that range either above or below it.

Dr. Mann: That's really interesting. So yeah, that might be a good trick, you know, don't worry about the number, just try to replace some more of that fat with more muscle.

Jen: Yeah and I think my husband probably has benefited hugely from his, his body composition is completely different than when he was 18 and I think he's still a very heavy man, right he's still like 240 pounds, he's a heavy man but he's not, he just has way less fat mass and more muscle mass on him, right?

Dr. Mann: That's great. I never thought about that, very interesting.

Jen: Alright.

Annie: We will come be your test subjects.

Jen: Yes.

Lauren: Yes.

Annie: Be happy to take a trip to the eating lab up north or kind of down south.

Jen: Down south for me.

Annie: Yeah, for Jen.

Dr. Mann: You're in Canada.

Jen: Yeah, I'm in British Columbia. Yeah.

Annie: Yeah, I feel like that's kind of a good segue talking about, you know, how much your habits or lack thereof kind of consume you because one of the most common comments we get from members or of our community is that they feel like they just need more willpower, more motivation, more self-discipline and if they have those things then they could, like, just stick to their diet, they could stick to their plan, they could reach their goals, right and I know that as a researcher of self-discipline you've noted that you've heard that echoed as well, that when you share with people that you're researching that they're like "Oh yeah, I want more of that" or "How do I get more of that?" In your experience, is more willpower needed? Is that what people are missing?

Dr. Mann: No, no, people are missing, so every dieter thinks they are uniquely bad at resisting tempting food, you know, I mean, like, something you sort of alluded to it but constantly people come up to me after talks and or like before talks, "Oh God, self-control, I need more of that, you know, that's a good thing that I happen to need, me alone, you know," but everyone is bad at self-control.

Everyone struggles with their willpower, thin people, fat people and everyone in between. It's not the thing that tells us who is going to end up thin and who's not, you know what I mean, everyone struggles with it, in fact, there's these, this group of psychologists called positive psychologists that study, like, human strengths, so things like kindness or creativity, or thoughtfulness and what they find is that like the kinds of things that all range really highly kindness, thoughtfulness, people generally believe that they are kind and generally believe they're thoughtful, the one that comes in dead last every time is self-control. People do not think they have self-control and they've repeated that kind of survey in like 53 countries.

Jen: Wow.

Dr. Mann: It was always at or very, very near the bottom. Nobody thinks they have good self-control, it's not, it's not unique to dieters, it's everyone and it wouldn't matter if everybody had great self-control because of the environment we all live in and there's probably no amount that would be enough to survive the onslaught of temptation every minute of the day.

Jen: Is this what you would say is the obesogenic environment?

Dr. Mann: Yeah, exactly and that is what we're living in and I mean, I shouldn't have to try to resist buying a candy bar when I'm in Office Depot, buying paper for my printer.

Jen: Right and you don't.

Dr. Mann: That should not be a temptation challenge, you know.

Jen: Right.

Dr. Mann: You know, it's everywhere, all the time.

Jen: Right, there's candy, I don't know if you guys have staples down there but we have Staples and it's like an Office Depot and there is candy at the checkout, it's everywhere.

Dr. Mann: A huge selection, I mean and really kind of awesome candy selection.

Jen: Yeah.

Dr. Mann: At office supply stores for some reason.

Jen: So there's and there's, I don't know if this is same down there, but in Canada there is a push to have, like, basically temptation free aisles, so candy free aisles specifically for parents bringing their children to shop because I just argue with my kids nonstop about not buying candy, so then it becomes this thing that children begin to focus on and then they develop these scarcity issues or because there's just candy and they see it and you're saying no but and so the other thing that they've started offering in grocery stores here is they have apple bins for children so when you are shopping with your kids you take your kids to the apple bin and they can munch on an apple while you're shopping and this kind of stuff is brilliant, I think.

Dr. Mann: Definitely, you know, it all fits the sort of general basic strategy of rearranging things so that you don't keep encountering temptation.

Jen: Right.

Dr. Mann: If you don't encounter it, you're not going to have it.

Annie: And that was kind of like a, I don't want to say a will power hack, but that was one of the things you mentioned in your book that, like, you don't have to rely so much on willpower or self-control or self-discipline or say no all the time if you can curate your environment to reduce those temptations, right ?

Dr. Mann: Yeah, exactly. Ideally you don't want to ever have to say no, you know, ideally you just don't want to come up, you know. Once a food is on your plate, for example, forget it, you're eating it.

Jen: Right.

Dr. Mann: If you want to keep things from getting to that point where there's no hope of resisting it.

Jen: Right and we, like, even small things, we were talking about this with our Balance365 community the other day. Simple things like dishing up dinner at the island or on the stove and taking it to the table rather than having all your dishes on the table to dish up from is just a really small hack that you could use to not have seconds or to not, you know, over dish up kind of thing.

Dr. Mann: Yeah, exactly and that works because, as we talk about a lot in the book, because people are lazy and small obstacles slow us or stop us. That's a small obstacle. I could get up from the table and walk 4 feet. That is shocking how many people that stops. Lauren: And I've heard you talk about it's not even just getting up but just moving it further than your arm can reach.

Dr. Mann: There's actually a study that shows that one of my colleagues in the Netherlands literally straining your arm is enough to slow people down.

Annie: That's like the, there's, I have a salt lamp on the opposite side of my room when I turn it on at night and half the time I get into bed and I'm like "Ugh, that lamp is still on" and I swear more often than not I just sleep with it on because I'm too lazy to get out of bed to turn the lamp on, so like I cannot be inconvenienced.

Dr. Mann: I am going to one up you on that sometimes I'm in bed on my back but I really prefer to sleep on my side and I just can't muster the energy to like just friggin roll half my body over, half!

Annie: That and you actually, you actually cover small inconveniences or small opticals is also covered in your book because you tell a story about is it toilet paper.

Dr. Mann: Yes, I read that online, as, I was so excited when I read that online so it was a budget tip for strapped households was to when you get the roll toilet paper to smush it a little so that it doesn't turn easily.

Jen: Brilliant.

Dr. Mann: You know, so when you go to pull it off it tears off right away, so that leads people to use less toilet paper.

Jen: That, I need that for my children.

Dr. Mann: Actually it's good for if you have kids.

Jen: They plug the toilet. I'm in there with the plunger once a week.

Dr. Mann: It would also help with that but you know, just the fact that it stops a regular adult person from using more toilet paper is another example of how small, miniscule obstacles actually really slow us down.

Jen: And Lauren, Lauren only buys single servings of ice cream so that was another one. Lauren: Well, they have them at Kroger, like the little ones ,they're, like, you know, like, this big instead of the pint or the gallon.

Annie: They're like a little cup or like six ounces or something, 8 ounces.

Lauren: Yeah or I just go out to like Dairy Queen or something instead of buying the whole gallon in my house.

Dr. Mann: Buy the one.

Lauren: Or even just for me is like if we make cookies or something, just putting them in the cabinet and sort of leaving them on the counter, right, we used to just leave it on the counter but if I just put it in the cabinet where I don't see it every time I walk in the kitchen I end up just forgetting about it.

Dr. Mann: Yes, keep temptations out of sights.

Jen: We have a saying in our community. We also have a free Facebook community that has 40000 women in it, so they just participate in our philosophy, they haven't bought our program but one thing we talk about in there is there's this whole veggie tray revolution and so I started it a couple years ago and my aunt gave me a hand me down, an old circular Tupperware veggie tray and I stocked that veggie tray Sundays and Wednesdays because, like, we just eat it all by Wednesdays now, so that has substantially, and having that front and center in my fridge has substantially increased my family's vegetable intake and I even take it out during meals. If we're having grilled cheese sandwiches, the veggie tray will go on the table.

Dr. Mann: And so it's all prepared, like, they're all clean.

Jen: Yes, I have washed them, I chopped them I and I just it's like, if I just need to do the minimum to set us up for success for the week it's just that veggie tray takes me under 10 minutes and so we open the fridge and it's just right there and we've also moved our treats to the cupboard above the fridge so I need to get a stool out to get out chocolate and chips and you know, people, you know, these things are simple and they work, you know, and but people just, you know, you tell them but they just, if they're not, they're still looking there's like this magic pill thing going on. They don't think it can be that simple but it is.

Dr. Mann: And so the veggie tray is a good example of removing the obstacles to do something healthy.

Jen: Exactly, yes, exactly.

Dr. Mann: If you look in the fridge and you want a snack, you're not going to like pull open the veggie bin, you know, get out the beats, break them, clean them, cook them-

Jen: No, I'm not.

Dr. Mann: But if you do that ahead, and you have a little bowl or tupperware of roasted beets, you will eat them.

Jen: Yes, absolutely.

Dr. Mann: Vegetables are hard work.

Jen: They are hard work and so is protein. So the other thing we've tried to bring to people's attention is that carbs and fat are readily available to us in convenience form everywhere, so if you want to be eating a more balanced diet, focus your energy on getting protein and vegetables and fruit prepared and as convenient to you as the nuts and the seeds and the bread and you know all of that kind of thing, because they take a lot of prep work, right.

So the other thing I do is I just throw some chicken breasts in a slow cooker on Sunday night and then I take it out and I shred it and I just have a little container of shredded chicken breast which I can throw in sandwiches or wraps or do you know what I mean? So-

Dr. Mann: Yeah.

Jen: So yeah, it's little, little things like that have made the biggest difference in my life and in our Balance365ers as well.

Dr. Mann: That's great, that's good, that's just making it easier to do the healthy thing. Jen: Just environment.

Dr. Mann: Harder to do the unhealthy thing.

Jen: Yeah, just acknowledging that we're lazy.

Annie: And that's across the board, like, your research has shown that it's across the board, like humans in general are lazy, it's not like these people, like, you know it's not just me, Jen and Lauren that don't want to prep our veggies or whatever, it's like this is human nature and so and I feel like that's kind of refreshing to hear because it's not kind of, it's very refreshing to hear because again, so many people are blaming themselves for why they can't follow the diet, why they can't stick with the program, it's like, look you're just human, like, you're asking yourself to change a lot of things at once, to do a lot of stuff that's really not in your wheelhouse. And it's normal if you struggle with that.

Dr. Mann: And also, can I just add, because sometimes people are like, well, all those strategies you're saying just sound like, you know, dieting tips.

Jen: Yes, they do.

Dr. Mann: I don't really mean them to be dieting tips, I mean them to be, these are just little things that you can just kind of have as habits in your life that will just help you stay in that sort of the lower part of your set point. I'm not saying that by moving the cookies to higher shelf you're going to lose a ton of weight.

Jen: Or that you should never have cookies, right. It's not about, yeah.

Dr. Mann: Right, exactly I'm just saying these are just some things that help you to just kind of stay on an even keel or maybe just aim for that slightly lower part of your set range that you're already within.

Jen: There's, I wanted to address that too, as well because I feel like there is, as far as environment, there is a lot of tips you can use and they can be used as tools or they can be used as weapons against you, right and so in diet culture these things are often used as weapons and it's funny because I used to some of the tools I use today to stay healthy, balanced and at a leaner weight, I used to use when I was dieting trying to live a weight below what was healthy for me and I was going hungry all the time, so what would happen to me was I wouldn't buy the cookies, I wouldn't buy the ice cream.

I didn't want any of that in my house because my cravings were so strong because I was going hungry all the time, so when that stuff was occasionally brought in my house I would eat it all. I would go nuts on a pint of ice cream in a night or a gallon and so it's kind of like talking in a nuanced way, right, to go like, "You can use these as tools or you can use them as weapons, it all depends on where you're at and what's going on inside your head."

Dr. Mann: That's really true and that's a really important point that when you deny yourself something, when you restrict certain categories of foods or certain foods it's going to eventually backfire.

Jen: Right.

Dr. Mann: It's amazing how fast you start to want those things you restrict. I mean, we did a study like this, I think I talk about it in the book where we forbade people from eating a food that they didn't even love, right, it was sort of in the middle for I can't remember how long-

Jen: 3 weeks I think.

Dr. Mann: Yeah.

Annie: Radishes.

Jen: I feel like I just know your book.

Annie: Radishes and chocolate for 3 weeks?

Dr. Mann: I better know my details well, in any case, the point I was trying to make about that, the main point of that study just was that very quickly they started really wanting those things that they couldn't have. So not worth it to deny yourself certain things and instead try to just eat those things in reasonable portions. So I cannot live without ice cream and there's really no reason to do so but my ice cream trick, when you guys mentioned some of yours, I'll add one more is I make my husband serve me because he will serve a reasonable portion and put it away and our freezer is crazy cold so it's not even going to be easy to take more because it's just, you know, he'll wait and do what you need to do. So let people wait on you, folks.

Annie: That's just good life advice.

Jen: Yes, the other one thing for your freezer-

Lauren: I can get behind that.

Jen: I bake for my kids for their school lunches and I keep it in the freezer so I, if I want banana chocolate chip muffin it's totally fine but I have to think about that, right, I have to take it out and then I have to unthaw it in order for me to eat it where, you know, just talking about those barriers in environment, just putting a little bit of barrier between you and that thing causes you to pause and go "Do I really want this or is this just an impulse?"

Dr. Mann: Exactly, you need that pause. My 14 year old son is obsessed with baking. Well, you know, classic pre-teen boy, you know, scrawny, looks like a paper clip, you know, no body fat at all. But he's killing me there are constantly baking here and the good news is he's obnoxious and doesn't always let me have any because he wants to take it all the school because he brings it to a certain class, you know, there's 24 kids in that class.

Jen: Right.

Dr. Mann: Every recipe makes 24 so he often doesn't let me have any, thank God, but a lot of the time he does and it's like once or twice a week this is going on in my house.

Jen: Yeah.

Dr. Mann: That's a lot of like baking.

Jen: Extra baking.

Dr. Mann: That's a lot of baking.

Jen: Yes.

Annie: So, Dr. Mann, I know we're approaching an hour, I feel like we could do this for the whole time though or a couple hours at least, just to kind of wrap up, all of your research and your experience, personal and professional, inside your book as we've shared so much already, you provide a lot of gold little nuggets as to how people can improve their health, reframe their mindsets, even thinking about food in terms of healthy and unhealthy, how to alter their habits to support sustainable weight loss if that's what they're after but really, you seem to boil it down to just, as Jen said, sensible no-fuss advice, like exercise regularly and create reasonable eating habits and that you believe that that will help you reach your goals with minimal effort, is that really it? Because if so, that super refreshing.

Dr. Mann: That is it. But I will elaborate a little bit because here's where we have to get our heads and our heads are not there yet but where we need to get our heads is if we are exercising the recommended amount, which is 150 minutes per week if we are eating, you know, a reasonable number of servings of vegetables per day and if we're keeping our stress level under control, not smoking, if we're doing those things, whatever we weigh when we're doing those things should be where we want to be.

We need to define that weight as our perfect weight because that is what you weigh when you're behaving in a healthy way. So, I don't know, this comes up all the time with people. Everyone thinks "if I do the exercise I'm supposed to do I'll get thin," but that's not true. Exercise doesn't necessarily make you a lot thinner but it does make you healthier.

What I keep pushing on people is "Behaving in healthy ways makes you healthier, even though it might not make you thinner or as much thinner as you want it to." So whatever we weigh when we're behaving in healthy ways we have got to find a way to be OK with that.

Jen: Right, except you have a whole section on acceptance, right and let your, do what's good for you and let your body be what it's going to be and just accept this, like it's actually so freeing.

Dr. Mann: Yes, just if you keep the focus on health and not weight everything makes so much more sense.

Jen: Yeah, I love that.

Dr. Mann: You do these healthy behaviors, they make you healthier, but then again, maybe not thinner, maybe not as much thinner as you want.

Annie: I wonder how many of our listeners minds are just like blowing right now hearing that. Like, behaving in a healthy way will make you healthier, it might not make you thinner but it will improve your health.

Dr. Mann: Isn't it crazy that that's mind blowing? I said that to some radio guy one time and he's like "I don't know, that's kind of a hard sell."

Lauren: You know, well, it's only a hard sell because you have, you know, diet companies telling you the opposite everywhere all day, every day.

Dr. Mann: Seriously, you know, And because people don't actually value their health the way they all say they do.

Jen: Yeah, they value thinness.

Dr. Mann: Yeah, if people truly valued health, that wouldn't be a remarkable thing to say at all.

Jen: We had a psychologist post in our group the other day she had read your book preparing for this podcast and she said "I'm a psychologist and I'm reading this book and I feel my resistance towards it, like, I feel it" and she, but you know, she's acknowledging, like, "This is programming. This is diet culture," so she was trying to tell everybody, like, "I am a professional and I am resisting this, like, I have a mental block there that I don't want to hear it. I still want to believe there's

a magic pill out there" and so of course, the general population that isn't even educated with psychology, you know, of course, there's a massive block there, massive.

Dr. Mann: And I see that and I see that in anonymous comments out there, the people who come up to me are like, "This is freeing, this changes everything, hallelujah" and the people who are like, "I can't, no, I must believe that I can lose a ton of weight and keep it off." Yeah, I don't hear from those people I just hear mean comments.

Jen: Right, but they just pursue people who that, whose ideas support their, you know, how they want to see the world right and you know what, honestly, when I embraced these ideals, it was, I went through a pretty big slump of emotion, like, it was like grief. I had to grieve and because it was, yeah, it was, it was an idea that I had based a lot of my life around and spent a lot of time energy and money and the more invested you're into something, the more you resist that it doesn't work and trying to convince different gurus or fitness professionals that have built their whole careers and social followings on selling thinness, trying to convince them of that will be even harder because they are so deeply invested in it.

Dr. Mann: Oh yeah, they're the worst.

Jen: And so I think a grieving process is like pretty normal when you, like, you have the freedom but then it's like, you know, you go through these different stages of, like, "Oh, well that sucks" or you feel somebody shame come up and your trigger, that's kind of your trigger that typically will take you into dieting behaviors to feel like you're actually in control of that but you're not and you're just realizing, "I am not in control" and that can be very depressing, right but but also very freeing on the other side once you fully accept that/

Dr. Mann: Yeah, again, we just have to remember the one thing that truly, truly matters is our health.

Jen: Yes. Absolutely.

Dr. Mann: You know, have someone close to you die too young and suddenly it becomes very, very real, you know, you have nothing without your health.

Jen: Right.

Dr. Mann: So keep that in mind as the goal. The goal is health. Not some number on the scale and they don't measure health with that number on the scale.

Jen: Right and including psychological health in that because I have had people around me succumb to eating disorders and that's a very real thing in our society and it has very, anorexia has very high mortality rates and so-

Dr. Mann: The highest of any mental illness.

Jen: Yes and so and it's just a horrible life, right even if you don't, even if it doesn't lead to you passing away and dying, it's a horrible place to be and it is not healthy and it's, you know, this is very real as far as, you know, a lot of people think of unhealthy as, you know, very large and morbidly obese and eating and eating but there is the other end where there's a lot of people succumbing to eating disorders as well.

Dr. Mann: Yeah, it's true.

Annie: Dr. Mann, I cannot thank you enough. This is so much fun. Is there a place that people can connect with you? Do you hang out on, I already stalked you on Instagram it doesn't look like you're-

Dr. Mann: I never post, I'm basically on Instagram to spy on my 14 year old. I don't expect he'll see this.

Annie: Excellent. Are you on Facebook or your website? Where can people catch up with you or stay on top of what you're working on?

Dr. Mann: I guess I'm on Facebook or Twitter more but again, on Facebook I post but mostly political stuff, on Twitter I only lurk, I'm there, if you want to find me, if you want to talk to me, tweet at me.

Annie: OK.

Jen: OK.

Dr. Mann: Or do the same on Facebook.

Annie: Awesome we'll put that in the show notes so people can connect with you if they want to follow up with you but this was so fun. It was just like talking to a friend that knows a lot about nutrition.

Dr. Mann: It sounds like you're doing awesome stuff so I'm so glad you're out there doing it.

Annie: Yeah, we're trying.

Jen: Thank you.

Lauren: Thank you.

Annie: OK, we'll talk soon ladies, thanks for joining us.

Jen: Bye.

Lauren: Alright, bye!