

Balance365 Episode 60 Transcript

Annie: Welcome to Balance365 Life Radio, a podcast that delivers honest conversations about food, fitness, weight, and wellness. I'm your host, Annie Brees along with Jennifer Campbell and Lauren Koski. We are personal trainers, nutritionists and founders of Balanced365 together we coached thousands of women each day and are on a mission to help them feel healthy, happy, and confident in their bodies on their own terms. Join us here every week as we discuss hot topics pertaining to our physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing with amazing guests. Enjoy.

Welcome back to another episode of Balance365 Life Radio. Before we dive into today's topic, I want to share a super sweet review we got on iTunes last week from Blonde Lauren, which I promise it's not our Blonde Lauren. She says "This podcast is nothing short of life-changing. With all the negative information and images thrown at women in regards to our bodies this podcast is like a ray of sunshine. I listen to this podcast religiously as I walk the neighborhood and it always puts a smile on my face and helps me conquer the day. Jennifer, Annie and Lauren are so relatable and I feel like we were really friends and I just love that."

Thank you so much. To everyone who takes the time to drop us a note in our email inboxes or leaves us a review on iTunes, we read them all and they all mean so much to us. Okay. Let's talk about today's episode. We have been talking about this topic in a roundabout way on previous podcasts, but we wanted to dive a little bit deeper into the topic. Can you control your weight? A lot of fitness professionals think you have all the control while some of them think this is a losing battle, why even try? On today's episode, Lauren and I discussed how much control you really have over your weight and I think you might be surprised. Enjoy! Lauren, how are you?

Lauren: Good. It's us again.

Annie: It's just us again, poor Jen is having some audio difficulties and she wanted to be here, but we are sticklers for sound quality on our podcast and it just wasn't gonna cut it, right?

Lauren: Yes. She likes to compare her sound now to my sound when mine wasn't working because she thinks it was terrible.

Annie: Well, you know, we've had this, I think we've talked about this on the podcast before, but sound quality. And I thought when we started this podcast, like you would just plug in a microphone and hit record and then you just piece it together.

Lauren: I feel like it should not be this hard. It's really fun for us.

Annie: It's really hard and especially because you and I have both moved and, maybe Jen's even moved, but when you move, like then you're changing a different recording location and that can affect the acoustics and so, yeah.

Lauren: And then the technology on top of all that, sometimes it just does not work out.

Annie: Yeah. But we're not complaining

Lauren: It might sound that way.

Annie: We actually, I really enjoy the podcast. I really, really enjoy doing it. But it's just been a little bit more difficult than we anticipated. So, and especially getting the three of us together in three time zones, like, you know.

Lauren: There's always some disaster.

Annie: Always.

Lauren: The morning of recording. School's canceled or sick, a kid is sick or the heat went out, but we always figure it out.

Annie: Yeah. We piece it together.

Lauren: Yeah.

Annie: We're scrappy in a good way. So we're talking about a really interesting topic and it comes up pretty frequently in our community and that is, can you control your weight? And I think it's really interesting because it seems like there's kind of varying answers to that question and it kind of depends on who you ask. But there's this idea that we can control everything, right? And we can

absolutely control our weight. We have total control. On the other side of the spectrum there's this like, "No, you don't."

There's people that say you don't have any control at all. You don't need to bother with trying to control your weight or manage your weight. It's just, it is what it is and you're just stuck with it. Whatever it's at and we wanted to dive into like what the real answer is. Do you have any control of your weight? And it's something that we've kind of, I feel like, talked about in a roundabout way with various guests on the podcast, but we haven't specifically addressed like this.

Lauren: Right. This one question.

Annie: Yeah. And on paper it seems to boil down to simple math, right? Which I think is where we get kind of the, "Yes, you can control everything about your body and your weight." It's "Eat fewer calories than you consume and weight loss will happen," right? And you'll get the desired outcome. And we have-

Lauren: And we talk about that too, right? Like we talk about its weight loss does come down to calories in versus calories out, but that's not the whole story.

Annie: Right. And we have professionals in our industry that will say that you just need dedication and self control and commitment and then you can have the body of your dreams, right? Like, whatever, whatever body you want, which I think is where we see a lot of the, I don't know if this is still a thing, I don't actually read these sorts of magazines anymore, but at one time, health and fitness magazines used to have like a celebrity on the cover of their magazine. It was like, here's the Jennifer Aniston Diet, or here's the Jennifer Garner diet or whatever. And I used to think like, "Oh, if I just eat what she eats, if I work out, like she works out, then I will then look like Jennifer Aniston.

Lauren: Right. And, I can't remember her name. Do you remember the actress's name from that movie? Zack and Miri?

Annie: I don't even know that movie.

Lauren: Okay. It's a funny movie. I can't say the whole name of it because it's not appropriate. But she was on the Ellen show and, they were showing a picture of her own magazine and talking about like what she eats or whatever. And she was like, you know, it doesn't matter what I eat, this is genetics. Like, this is what I would look like regardless. I would look pretty similar to this.

Annie:Right.

Lauren: So, you know, people are congratulating her and she's like, "I didn't do anything special. This is just how I'm built."

Annie:Yeah, exactly. But you're jumping ahead of the outline.

Lauren: Oh, I'm sorry.

Annie:Okay. I guess we can sign off now. No, we'll use that as a great segue because it does, it sounds really easy on paper that if you just do what she's doing or, you know, I think, yeah, I get questions, you know, like about my arms. Like what, what arm workouts are you doing?

Lauren: Yeah.

Annie:It's genetics. Like, maybe years of softball has played into this but it's where I carry my fat. It's how easily I build muscle. And, I think, it's known that our genes control or have an effect on our weight, but it's a little bit, we've been a little bit gray on how much control.

Lauren: Right? So we have, like you said, the two camps, the "you have total control" and "you have no control." And surprise surprise, we fall somewhere in the middle.

Annie:Yeah. And if you listen to Traci Mann's podcast, which if you haven't listened to it, we'll link it in the show notes. It is a wonderful podcast. She is just a wonderful woman professionally and personally. She's just a good human. She wrote the book *The Secrets of the Eating Lab* and inside there she compared, she shared a study and it compared the weight of more than 500 adopted children with their biological parents and their adoptive parents.

And so this, the idea behind the study was that if learned eating habits, if you could just willpower and self control and you know, do all the things, if learned eating habits have more of an impact on weight then the children should have a weight that mirrors more like their adoptive parents and if genetics had more of an impact, then it should, their weight should be closer correlated to their biological, their birth parents. But what they found was that the children's weight correlated strongly with the weight of their biological parents and not all with the weight of their adoptive parents, which I think is fascinating.

Lauren: It is fascinating.

Annie: And additionally, a study also she shared in the science, studies, Secrets from the Eating Lab, study from the Secrets of the Eating Lab. They did a study of identical twins that were raised in separate homes, which I think is like interesting enough that there's twins that were raised separately enough to study.

Lauren: Can we get the story behind that please?

Annie: But there is, there were enough studies, as a way to make sure that they didn't share the same eating environment. Right. So it was a way to tease out that environment was a role in this study. The study looked at 93 pairs of identical twins raised apart and then a 154 pairs of twins raised together.

And the results showed that the weights of the twins, whether they were raised together or apart were highly correlated, which again goes to show that our genetics, our biology has a large impact on our weight and those studies and in addition with some other studies what largely contributed, to scientists concluding that our genes account for about 70% of the variation in people's weight.

Lauren: Right. Which is huge.

Annie: Which is, yeah, which is huge and I don't know, some of you may be listening in and think that that's way more than you anticipated and some people will be like, "Oh maybe I have a little bit more control than I thought." Like it kind of depends on where you fell on that spectrum.

If you were like, I can control all the things and, and get whatever body I want if I just have enough self willpower and dedication and self control, this might be shocking news for you. On the flip side, if you were like, I don't have any control, I'm stuck. I come from a long line of people that look like x, y, z. This is just as is what it is. You might have a little bit more wiggle room than you thought.

Lauren: Right. So you have about 30% of your body weight is in your control.

Annie: Yeah.

Lauren: Is what this is basically saying.

Annie: And what I think is interesting about this is, Traci Mann also shares, I mean obviously we're not researchers, we're not scientists. So we're pulling this

information because we are evidenced based. We don't want to just feed you information because it sounds convenient or because it works for our philosophy or our brand. But for reference she also compare us that genes play about an 80% role in height. And I think that's such an interesting study because you don't see anyone being like, "Oh, I just wish I could, if I just had more self control or willpower, I'd be taller."

Lauren: I could get taller.

Annie: Yeah. But so often we see people talking about their weights like that. Like, "Ah, I just, I need to quit being lazy or I just need to get my butt to the gym. And then I, you know, I'd get rid of this, you know, fat on my hips or whatever," you know, but you don't hear people talking about their weight or their height, like they do their weight, but it's pretty comparable in how much control we have.

Lauren: Right, right. A little less in height. But still really close.

Annie: Like you're not over there trying to be taller.

Lauren: No-

Annie: I mean, maybe heels.

Lauren: It's interesting that both of my parents are relatively tall and both of my sisters are, well, they're all like more average size and I am smaller. Don't know where that came from, but it did come from somewhere.

Annie: Yeah. Well, and you know, we kind of talked about this, how genetics in the two sisters podcasts where we had Janelle and Jen, cofounder Jen, had her sister on and they have very different body types and they were just, they had a really beautiful story about how Jenelle looked like all the women on one side of the family. And Jen looks more like all the women on the other side of the family.

And I just, I think there's a lot of beauty in looking at your family tree and like seeing that. It's not just like body parts, it's like seeing your grandmother, your aunt, your sister, like elements of them. And I think that's just beautiful.

Lauren: Not to throw a wrench into this discussion either, but now there is, sort of, more relatively new study called epigenetics, which is like how your environment can turn on or off certain genes, which is also really interesting and

I'd love to, I haven't looked into this yet, but I'd love to kind of look into that too that aspect and that might be the 30% that you can control, right. I'm just making that up, but it's something to consider.

Annie: Yeah. Yeah, for sure. That is, I've never, I don't even think I've heard of that term, to be honest. So I'm curious to learn more about that.

Lauren: You know, it's relatively new. I think it's, they're learning more and more about it but there is some studies out there.

Annie: Fascinating.

Lauren: Yeah. Cause we have, we have a lot of genes and different things determine which genes get turned on and which genes don't.

Annie: Yeah.

Lauren: Just a little side note.

Annie: Interesting. And I feel like I'm now distracted by that.

Lauren: I'm sorry.

Annie: Refocus. So our genes, just to recap that first point there, our genes have accounted for about 70% of the variation in people's weight. So, again, that's just saying that our biology, our genetics make up a lot of, determine a lot of how we weigh or what we weigh. But that doesn't mean that you're totally out of control. But additionally, our genes can even control how much weight we gain.

And this was another study from the Secrets From the Eating Lab that there was even studies where participants were fed the same amount of calories, and the twins gained varying amounts of weight for it. So for example, pairs of twins that were overfed by a thousand calories.

Again, if this boiled down to just math, if it worked out on paper, you know, a thousand calories equals this percentage of pounds of body mass gain a week, they should have all gained the same amount of weight. But what happened, pairs of twins that were overfed by a thousand calories a day gain to anywhere from nine to 29 pounds. So in other words, we aren't in conscious control of how our bodies use calories or energy, which I think is fascinating.

And you know, if you're listening to this and you feel like I hear this a lot, women comparing like what they eat to their girlfriends or what they eat to the men in their lives and it's like, "Oh, I feel like I look at a Snickers and I gain weight" or you know, "My husband has trouble." I just met with a personal training client yesterday and she actually is having trouble putting on weight and I'm sitting here on the opposite end of the spectrum. Like, I have no problem putting on weight, it seems.

Lauren: Right.

Annie: And so I just think that that's again to show that our genes can even control how easily we gain weight, lose weight, put on muscle mass, don't gain muscle mass.

Lauren: It's super interesting too because we are still learning about how all of this works. Like even now, researchers are still asking questions and they still don't know everything about how all these genes play into weight and metabolism and metabolic rates do differ between people. I think it's, it's not as significant as maybe some people have been led to believe, like if someone has a fast metabolism but it can differ a little bit.

Annie: Right.

Lauren: Which is what's happening probably with, you know, your client who can't gain weight.

Annie: Yeah. And there's so many factors to be considered like environment and like what they do for their, what their, like, habits are, and how their relationship with food and their relationship with exercise. So it's like oftentimes multifactorial. But in the studies of these two are really interesting, especially because we've talked about, we have another podcast, The Minnesota Starvation Experiment, you know, studies like that just aren't even allowed anymore because they're considered unethical. Like, and it can be hard to study people's eating habits. And Traci Mann talks about this in her book because the minute people think that their eating habits are being studied, they change their eating habits.

They like get all self conscious and they start doing different things that they wouldn't normally do if they didn't think that they were being watched for eating. I mean, I do that when, like, when I'm out and I feel like, you know, all of a sudden

I'm at this nice restaurant or whatever and I think people are looking at me, I'm like, "Oh, I better put my napkin on my lap and not spill and use the right fork and put my fork down between every bite. Breathe. Not just inhale all my food.

Annie: Anyways, getting back to our genes. Lauren, this is something you've talked about a lot in our workshops and our podcasts and our program, but that your body has a pretty kick butt weight regulation system and that can often override conscious efforts to change your weight.

So for example, you cut calories, your body may in response slow your metabolism, resulting in fewer calories burned or you ramp up exercise and your body secretes hormones to increase hunger, which happens to me all the time. Like I exercise, I actually get hungrier. And so I often eat more and you've talked about that before, that your body's like pretty smart like that.

Lauren: Yeah. Well your body, its main goal is to keep you alive, right? And so when you cut calories or you're not eating as much, or cut calories drastically, I should say, because that's what most fad diets do, your body thinks that you're starving. It doesn't know that you are doing that on purpose and that you're going on a diet. And so it does everything in its power to help conserve what energy you have and get you to eat more calorie dense foods. So that's another big reason why you crave high energy foods when you cut calories, you know, because your body wants that energy.

Annie: Exactly. And many dieters, I know I've experienced this, I'm sure you have too, have maybe experienced a feeling like your body doesn't want you to lose weight. Like you're fighting against your body and it usually looks like something like this. You cut calories, you experience some excitement and exhilaration of initial weight loss and that's followed by an increased drive to eat and/or not move as intensely as you have been, which leads to weight regain because you go back to eating the food you were eating or not moving as much.

And then that's followed by guilt and maybe even this sense of hopelessness. And that's something that Linda Bacon talks about in *Body Respect*, which is another wonderful book if you haven't read that and she just notes that that's because you can only cheat biology so long. Like as you were talking about, your body is trying to, it cares about you a lot. It wants to keep you alive.

Lauren: And that's like the unconscious part of ourselves. I think it's the reptilian, it might be the reptilian part of the brain, right, that controls that. And so you literally don't have control over those things.

Annie: Right. And Linda Bacon has this, I think it's really kind of refreshing, it feels like it just takes the pressure off of me personally. But she has the quote in her book, again, *Body Respect* that "Diet failure is no more a sign of gluttony or lack of character than breathing deeply after exertion indicates lung failure or shivering in the cold weather evidences weakness."

Like that's, this is the desire to eat, the desire to not move as intensely, the weight regain, that is all what exactly what we would expect from someone that's dieting, that's trying to cut calories. This is what your body is made to do and it's trying to do this because it's what it thinks is best for you. And it's a normal and expected response. So, I guess what we're just kind of boiling this all down to say is that you might not have as much control as you, some people lead you to believe.

And what we talked about in the Traci Mann podcasts was that you have a little room, a little wiggle room, and one of the things that she suggests, because I know some of you might be listening and thinking like, "Crap, I wish I had more control over my weight" and we don't want you to feel discouraged from making changes if that's what you decide. But Traci Mann really encourages people to have a weight range versus a specific weight.

And, I think that that's a really great idea because so often we hear women that they have this like ideal weight and that ideal weight is pulled out of thin air. It might be their pre-pregnancy weight, the weight when they got married, the weight they graduated high school. It might not even be realistic. And to think that your body can sit at one stable weight throughout the day, the week, the month, the year is just not attainable.

That your weight ebbs and flows throughout again, the day, the week, I mean, if I weighed myself in the morning versus night versus Monday versus Friday versus the first of the month versus the end of the month, I would probably get six different body weights. Right.

And it could range, you know, and you know, fluctuate five, six, seven pounds. And that this is normal and especially seasons of life, you know, if you're, you've

got to, you've just given birth or you know, maybe it's winter and you're not as active, you're not outside as much.

Your schedule is really busy because you're an accountant and it's tax season and you're working more and not hitting the gym as much. It's normal. And for this reason, a range seems to be a lot more realistic versus maintaining a single number throughout the year.

Lauren: Yeah. So if you just kind of are aware but also going with the flow, like if your weight is up five pounds or down five pounds and just being okay with it instead of again pulling back that pendulum cause that's going to start that extreme pendulum swing over again. If you can just, like Jen says in our workshop that we do, in her Mario Kart example, if you can just move the wheel slightly to the right or to the left instead of extremely turning right or left, you'll be much better off.

And also, Traci Mann also talks about this weight range. So there's a certain weight or there seems to be for people a certain weight that is dependent, like we said on many different things that if you go below that, that's when all of those biological changes start happening. Like your appetite increases and your metabolism starts to slow down to conserve some energy. So instead of, she says there's a weight range that your body is comfortable at and you can make changes to get to the lower end of that weight range. And so that's where you have, that's where you can control. So you can't control exactly what rate, but you can control where in that range you say.

Annie: And the beautiful thing about that weight range is when you find it, you'll often find that it feels effortless to maintain or that you don't have to work near-

Lauren: or close to

Annie: -as hard. You have the perfect analogy in our workshop, that we share every now and then about riding an escalator. And when you're dieting hard, when you're trying really hard to maintain a weight that's below that range, it often feels like you're riding, trying to go up a down escalator and like, you're working, working, working, working, working. And the minute you want to take a break or rest or hit pause, it's like you're right back to where you started.

And the idea is that when you find that range, you can move it around, give or take a little bit, but it's not like exerting all of your effort, all of your brain power, all of your energy to achieve this weight, either above or below that range. Because she also found in that book, she also found that the opposite was true to that getting people to gain weight out of their range was also equally as difficult as trying to get them to live below the range.

Lauren: Yeah.

Annie: Yeah. So with that being said, another suggestion we have in addition to the weight range versus a specific weight is to focus on your health behaviors versus weight. And, we've said this for a while, that your weight is not a behavior and for so many reasons we can't always control our weight and trying to do so is really, really difficult. And one of the things Jen talks about too is a lot of this can boil down to are you valuing your weight or are you valuing thinness or are you valuing health? And, you know, and again, no judgment

Annie: There's been, I spent a lot of my life valuing thinness. I wanted, I didn't care if I was healthy, I wasn't even thinking if I was healthy or what I was doing, the behaviors I was utilizing, the tools I was utilizing to get to a certain weight was healthy if it was sustainable. I wasn't really even concerned with that. I just was so focused on getting that weight or getting that look, my body to look a certain way that I kind of forgot about health unfortunately.

And again, I could just, I have a girl crush on Traci Mann, I could just talk about her all day but at the end of that podcast, she encourages that if you're eating balanced meals most of the time, not getting too full, you're not under eating, you're exercising a little bit throughout the week, you're managing your stress that whatever weight you find yourself at doing those things is good enough.

And I think that, like, gives me like a, almost, I can almost breathe like a big deep breath, like a sigh of relief. Like I don't have to do all of these things and then I'm validated by reaching that goal weight that like, "Okay, I did enough." It's like, well, let's focus on what, like, actually our behaviors are and if those encourage health, then we're on the right track regardless of what we weigh.

Lauren: Right. When I was at my thinnest, my behaviors were not healthy.

Annie: Right.

Lauren: And when I was at my heaviest, my behaviors were not healthy.

Annie: Right.

Lauren: So, you know, focusing on those healthy behaviors, I have settled in the middle.

Annie: Yeah. And, you know, one of the ways, we've talked about this before, one of the ways, I think the easiest ways to kind of what we're talking about almost is process versus outcome goals. And a lot of times women have outcome goals. They want to be the size eight. They want to be the size four, they want to be 130 pounds, 150 pounds, whatever it is.

And those are all outcome based goals, which are fine. But I think what's really, really a key is to, if that's a goal of yours, to also think about how you're going to get there and write goals around the how. So okay, you want to run a marathon? Like how am I going to get there? You want to drop 10 pounds, how am I going to get there? The how is the behaviors.

Lauren: Right? And if you're in our Balance365 program, you'll notice that that's how we set up our program, right? So when you're checking off your habits, that is a process based goal. So you're checking off whether you had that, you know, half plate of vegetables or quarter plate of vegetables or whatever your goal is, you're going to check off if you did whatever your movement goal is. And those are process goals and not outcome goals.

Annie: Yeah. And those are things that we can control more often than not.

Lauren: Right.

Annie: Versus our weight. Like I can do all the right things and for whatever reason, still not hit that goal weight. And I see that happen a lot. We see that happen a lot where women are exercising, they're eating some more fruits and vegetables, they're getting more sleep and they step on the scale and their weight hasn't budged and they feel like deflated.

They're like, "Ugh, this was worthless. I didn't do anything. I'm not any further along towards my goal." And it's like, "Wait a minute, you're exercising, you're eating fruits and vegetables, you're sleeping more, you're doing all these really

great things for your health and your body. Like, don't throw the baby out with the bathwater just because you didn't lose a pound."

Lauren: Right.

Annie: The last point I want to make when it comes to, can you control your weight? And I just, this has been absolute ultimate freedom for me is to accept the body type you have and work with it, not against this. And we oftentimes make the comparison between Jen's body and my body because Jen and I are pretty close in age. We've both had three babies.

We're both personal trainers. We're about the same height, but there is probably, I don't know what she weighs now, but, there's probably about 50 pounds, 40, 50 pound difference between the two of us and for Jen to look like me or for me to look like Jen is just, like, ridiculous to think that that could happen. That's kind of what, going back to what we were talking about it at the beginning of the podcast about, you know, to think that I could just diet like Jennifer Aniston and therefore look like Jennifer Aniston is just absurd. Right?

Lauren: Right. Yes.

Annie: But honestly, this has given me, accepting my body type has given me so much peace of mind and like, I can just own my big thighs and my broad shoulders and I don't feel like I have to, like, whittle them down because I'm not, like, I'm not going to, I can, again, like Traci Mann says, I can maybe be a little bit heavier, a little bit lighter within that range. I'm still going to have thick thighs.

Like it just, you know, and for a girl that her first diet and exercise book was Thin Thighs. Like, that's all I've ever wanted was the long lean legs. My mom had long, beautiful lean legs and I was like, "Why didn't I? Why did I get my dad's legs?" But now that I'm like, "Okay, I'm going to have thick thighs and that's just the way it is and this is what works for my body and Oh, guess what? They can actually be a really powerful asset in the gym. And these are some aspects that I like about them." I don't love everything about them. That's okay. But again, like I don't love everything about my kids all the time. I still love them.

Lauren: Right.

Annie: It's like, it doesn't have to, like, you don't have to love every single aspect of your body to love it as a whole, which is something we've also talked about.

But, making peace with like, "Okay, I've got a big nose or I've got small hands or big trap," I don't know, whatever it is that you feel like you've been working to fight, like, making peace with that has been really, really impactful in my body acceptance journey.

Lauren: Yeah. And one thing I want to circle back to because, I was going to mention this too and you mentioned it and I think it can be really powerful for people, is taking your body type, right? Cause like we have mentioned multiple times in this podcast, you can change a range of your body, your body fat, your weight, but you're not going to change your body type, like that is not going to change.

So looking at your body type and think you can think about like, okay, so what is with this body type? Like what am I going to be good at? What does my body type give me an advantage in? And like for Annie, that's like weightlifting and powerlifting and being strong and so you can look at what is that for you. And it might help with this acceptance piece and this body love piece because it's not all about what you look like, but at the same time being, having your body help you be good at something can be really empowering too.

Annie: Yeah. That's, we say when you look at your body like an instrument instead of an ornament.

Lauren: Yeah.

Annie: You know, what? Like, okay, what does, you know and being grateful for what my body does allow me to do or can help me do, can also be really, really special. But, I think that that's, you know, there's a lot of ways you can work on self love and body acceptance, but, that has been really, really powerful for me to just say like, "This is my body and it's, you know, maybe not what I've spent a lot of my years working towards. But like it's, it's still pretty great. It's not better or worse than any other type of, than your body, then Jen's body, than Jennifer Aniston's body, like this is my body and I'm going to take care of it the best way I can, like, thick thighs and all.

Lauren: And you know, it's, it's funny because there are a lot of women out there who idolize your body type.

Annie:I know. Yeah. That's been, so people, the funny thing is, is this happens to me a lot, which I love, I'm appreciative, but women will comment on the things that like I feel the most self conscious about. You know, like, oh, I, you know, or the funny thing is about my arms. I'll get a lot of comments about my arms.

And it's like, well, if you look at the back of my arms, they're covered in stretch marks and it's, which I'm fine with. I again, I've made peace with, it's like I had stretch marks way before pregnancy. I had stretch marks on my arms and my hips when I hit puberty, I just, you know, just genetics and growing and-

Lauren: I do too, I have them on my legs.

Annie:Yeah. And I think it's just so interesting. And I do this to other women. Women can see beauty in my body or find appreciation in my body or aspects of my body. And then the same elements on their body, they hate on, they berate themselves, they have shame about, and it's like, "Hey, you know what? We all have a lot more in common than we probably think we do stretch marks and cellulite and pimples and gray hairs and wrinkles. And should I keep going?"

Lauren: All of it. It's all normal.

Annie:It is all normal. If you have a body, you probably have a lot of that or all of it. Some of it. If you have none of it, then that's cool too.

Lauren: That's fine too. We love all bodies.

Annie:We do. We are pretty inclusive here. So anyways, so I just want to recap. You know, it boils down to what Secrets from the Eating Lab Traci Mann showed, that Linda Bacon and Body Respect has done some extensive research on is that our genes and biology play a pretty big role in our weight. And it's not as simple as you can control it all and you can have the body you want.

It's not as simple as you don't have any control at all. It's somewhere in the middle. And what we would encourage you to do is find the weight range that you can live your best life at, your healthiest life at, where you aren't working tirelessly to, you know, maintain a certain weight that's above or below that weight range that allows you to do the things, the activities, the behaviors that you want to do and feel good about yourself.

Lauren: Can I add one more little thing?

Annie: Absolutely.

Lauren: Can we talk for just a second about body composition changes? Because this is a hunch I have because I don't think any studies have been done. I asked Doctor Traci Mann on that podcast, and I don't, I don't know of any studies that have been done, but this weight range seems to be not totally, like it's weight, right? It's not just like a fat percentage range, right? Like we have seen people change their body composition and their weight stays the same.

And, so I was talking with someone in our Balance365 program last week, who was worried about working to, she wanted to lose weight for many reasons and different reasons, health reasons, and just not feeling comfortable in her body, right. And, but she was put off by this whole weight range topic. Like "Should I even bother?" Was like the kind of talk we were having.

And one thing is acceptance, doing your healthy habits, your behavior-based goals. And then also I think for a lot of people, something really important is building muscle, is keeping your muscle. And I know Annie you have experienced with that, even more than I do if you want to just talk about that.

Annie: Yeah. Well, my weight range, has, I guess since since I've quit dieting, which has been six, seven years, it's been a process of over the course of six, seven years, has stayed probably within 10 pounds. But I think, I've also had, you know, some babies in there, my body composition within that 10 pounds has changed pretty dramatically. And, you know, I attribute, so when Dr Traci Mann is talking about a weight range, I feel like that is absolutely me.

For me to drop below my, that 10 pound weight range, it takes a lot, a lot of effort and I cannot sustain, I've tried it many times, just more just as an experiment. I've had some performance goals that I've had a hunch that maybe if I were a little bit lighter doing things like Crossfit, gymnastics would come more easily. I just can't do it.

Like, and I shouldn't say I can't, I'm not willing to, to make the sacrifices and the changes that would go along with achieving that weight loss, at least not in this point in time. And I say that very objectively, I'm not, I'm not emotionally tied to my weight anymore. But my body composition has changed quite a bit. And I would say, although my weight is in the same range, my body looks different. I have considerably more muscle and less fat.

Lauren: And I would echo that too. I'm about almost a year and a half postpartum and I am sort of getting to the lower end of my weight range. Like I can just tell based on my past experiences and you know, and, but my composition is different because I have not been working out as much as before I got pregnant. Right.

Because I had a baby and a lot of things have changed and I've been doing the minimum exercise that, you know, I've just been doing what I can and that's good enough for me. But I know that if I want those body composition changes, it's not going to be me losing more weight. It's going to be me adding more muscle, pretty much.

Annie: Yeah, absolutely. Which, you know, just in my experience when a lot of women come to me and they say they want to lose weight or they want to look more muscular or they want to look like they lift, that's something I hear common. You know, I just, I want to look like I lift, I want to have more muscle.

What they mean is they want more muscle, less fat, not even necessarily weight loss. They and that's, you know, to each their own. But that's me, that's, you know, I really don't care what the scale weight says. I want to be able to do the things that I want to do in the gym and do the activities that allow me to play with my kids and go skiing and, you know, have the stamina and the energy and do fun tricks to with the kettlebell.

Lauren: Yes, that's the best part.

Annie: One arm push ups maybe eventually. But yeah. So, but I think that's just getting clear on what you really mean, you know, when you're talking about like, if the scale said x amount of weight, would that really change anything if you look the same or, you know?

Lauren: No.

Annie: Yeah, it wouldn't. Yeah, that's a good point.

Lauren: Yeah. So I just wanted to add that little caveat because I've heard people in the interwebs, I've read conversations about this being a negative thing, right? This set weight range and it doesn't have to be, it doesn't have to be a negative thing. One, It gives you a lot of freedom, right? When you realize, like you had said, it's not all on you, like you can try as hard as you can try, but you're not

going to change your body type. But also you can, even though if you may not be able to change your weight any further, you can change your body composition if that's a goal of yours.

Annie: Absolutely. And yeah, I really side on the, like, if you feel like you've been dieting and your body is really, like, fighting you because it's, you feel like you're hungry all the time or you don't have a desire to get up and move or exercise because you don't have any energy or your sleep is crap. Like these are things that we would expect and that's normal. And to me that's like, "Oh good. It's not me. It's everyone. It's, like, I'm not just lazy. I'm not just weak. I don't need more self self discipline or willpower."

Like, that's, you know, I think that's honestly, I think that that's as a fitness professional, I think that's a lazy excuse to tell a client like, "Oh, this is your fault. You know, you did this, you just need to be more dedicated. You just need more willpower." It's like, if that's the only solution or the only answer I have for someone that's coming to me with some goals, that's like, I'm not a good coach.

Lauren: Right. And this is where, you know, education comes in, right? Because for that specific, you know, for that personal trainer, it may be easy for them, right? Because that's their genetics and that's their weight range that they can easily maintain. But that doesn't mean that that's true for everyone else.

Annie: Or fitness and food are their profession. And-

Lauren: and they work tirelessly.

Annie: They work tirelessly to be in the gym and they get a lot of movement because they're, you know, in the gym, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM working and helping people exercise and their environment is curated to support those goals. You know, that's, I would try to be really cautious about how I talk about my exercise because, you know, I find myself just with my job in the gym multiple times a week. So it's easy for me to show up 30 minutes early and get a quick workout. It's not like that for everyone. You know, I have a little bit of a leg up just because of my profession.

Lauren: Right?

Annie: Yeah. All right, good talk. This was good.

Lauren: Good talk.

Annie: Good chat.

Lauren: We got a little off track, but-

Annie: Well, let's, no, you know, sometimes it goes sideways but I think-

Lauren: Hopefully they enjoy the conversation.

Annie: Yeah. Well yeah, I mean if they made it this far.

Lauren: Congratulations to you!

Annie: You win! If you want to continue the discussion, if you want to, you know, revisit the podcast with Traci Mann, we did ask her like, "Okay, how do you find this weight range that's right for you?" And really what she's offered was trial and error. It was like, it's really person specific. There's no, like we can't offer a flow chart, you know, like, is this, you know, is this yes or no? That would be really cool if we could, but if you want help navigating and exploring like "Am I in a weight range that's comfortable for me?"

Maybe it's a little bit higher than you thought or you want to move to the lower end of that weight range and you need some help with your habits and your behaviors. Please join us in our free Facebook group Healthy Habits Happy Moms, we'd love to help you. There's a lot of really great women in there, we're in there. Lauren, Jen and I are in there often answering questions and we'd love to see you in there to continue with the discussion. Yeah?

Lauren: Yes, please.

Annie: Yeah. Alright. Thanks, Lauren. We'll talk to you later.

Lauren: Alright, bye.