Balance365 Episode 80 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 Balance365. Together we coach 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.

Annie: Welcome back to another episode of Balance365 Life radio. It's your host, Annie here and I am so excited about today's topic and incredibly intelligent guest. Do you have a picky eater in the family? I know I have a couple and meal and snack times can be incredibly frustrating. I've even found myself begging and bargaining with my kids just to get them to eat a few bites of veggies or try new food. Believe it or not, it doesn't have to be this way day after day. Today's guest is full of practical strategies to help you and your kids build healthy eating habits that foster a positive relationship with food and side note, I know that this process for me has required me to check my own language and behaviors around food at times. Terri Ney has been working as a registered dietician for 11 years.

Annie: Terri was drawn to pediatrics early as she understood this as an opportunity to foster lasting and healthy relationships and habits with food for the next generation. Becoming a mother to three provided real life experience in nourishing children through infancy to toddlerhood and into school-age. Terri's private practice, Tiny Bites Nutrition was born after witnessing how parents were struggling with feeding their children. Terri excels at providing parents with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to meet their family goals wherever they are at and with whatever barriers they may face. Our relationship to food begins at birth and it should be nourished through our lifetime. And let me tell you, as someone who doesn't particularly enjoy being in the kitchen a whole lot, Terri's advice throughout this entire episode is so reasonable and sensible. Even I can implement some of the ideas she shares today. I think you're gonna love it. Enjoy! Terri from Tiny Bites. How are you?

Terri: I am wonderful. Thank you so much for having me on today.

Annie: I am so happy to have you. Once again, Jen has directed me to another fabulous guest. She was the one that introduced me to you and your work. And I'm so excited because I think the topic that we're discussing today, picky eaters, is something I know as a mom I've dealt with numerous, numerous times. By my third kid I'm just like, "Oh, whatever, just eat. Just eat something."

Terri: Yes. Yes. I do that a lot.

Annie: Yeah. So, and you're a mom too. You have what? Three? You have three kids.

Terri: I do. I have three kids right now. They're eight, six and four.

Annie: Wow. Okay. So they're pretty, they're pretty close to mine. I got almost 10, seven and three. So similar stages. And you are a registered dietician. How did you get interested in children's nutrition?

Terri: I think it was from the beginning. I just was really drawn to it. I was really interested in it and when I started working my primary job it primary care in Ontario, I really noticed that it was the beginning. So being able to foster healthy relationships, foster healthy habits and having a good relationship with food when children were young would have long term health impacts for them. And I thought, you know, I do a lot of work at the end where chronic disease is. So I decided to shift a lot of my interest to earlier on where I was hoping that I could have a big impact on the rest of their life.

Annie: I love that because one of the philosophies we have at Balance365 is, which we cover feeding your family in our program, in our Balance365 program. But essentially the idea is exactly what you just said. Like, if we can set our kids up with some really good foundational skills right off the bat that we can hopefully avoid some of the issues that we work with women as adults and trying to address like hunger, satiety eating a variety of foods, naturally balancing our plates, moderating treats, all that good stuff. Right?

Terri: Exactly. Wouldn't it be great if we didn't have to work so hard to achieve that later in life and we just grew up with it?

Annie: Yes, exactly. But sometimes what can happen is we use the narrative that we have as adults and we use it with our kids.

Terri: Exactly.

Annie: And that's not always the best idea. Right?

Terri: No.

Annie: So often with good intentions to be helpful, to be loving, to help those set them up for success. But sometimes the words, the language, the behaviors that we share with our kids aren't always a positive influence even with good intentions. So today we wanted to discuss, first of all, we want to start off with a quick review of the division of responsibilities with kids and parents, which you follow Ellyn Satter as well as we do too, right?

Terri: Absolutely. I've been using the division of a division of responsibility from Ellyn Satter for over 11 years now with the kids that I work with.

Annie: Yeah. And if you haven't already listened to, we do have a podcast. It feels like we recorded it ages ago cause it was episode 16, Feeding our Families. Lauren really dives into more detail. So if you haven't listened to that one, give, give that a listen as well. But Terri, can you just briefly describe how that balances out between parents and children?

Terri: Absolutely. So I would actually really recommend going and listening to that because I recommend this division of responsibility as the foundation. When you have picky eaters, what we look at is what adults are responsible for and what children are responsible for. So adults are responsible for what food is served. They do the grocery shopping, meal plan, cooking. They get to decide what is served. They also get to decide where meals happen. I always encourage it not to be kind of willy nilly but to have it at a table, a snack spot, a picnic. But parents get to decide where and when. And this is also important to have some of that structured, flexible but structured meal and snack time for the children. That's what the adults get to decide.

The children get to decide, now, this is where I find a lot of parents get a little bit nervous, is if the kids eat what they choose to eat and how much they eat. And this I find, particularly with picky eaters, parents are very concerned because they feel like they can't trust their kids to choose what they think their children should be eating in the volumes that they think their children should be eating. So this is really the foundational pieces.

Annie: This can be a really frustrating process. Like cause I find myself like hovering over my kid's plates like "Eat, eat, you know you need to eat more of this, less of this. Eat." And I'm like, just constantly having to, like, check. Like, "What are you saying? What are you thinking? What's the message you're sending to them? Like just let it be chill out, Annie."

Terri: Absolutely, you're not alone whatsoever. So that's a great lead into why Ellyn Satter's division of responsibility can be so important. And it's because it's based in not having pressure. So children not feeling pressured. So what the research shows us is that children's appetites decrease and their satiety increases when they feel pressure. So this can be negative pressure. And if you don't eat this, you don't get something or positive pressure like, "Oh one more bite. You're doing so good. Come on." They feel that pressure and then they actually end up less hungry. They fill up faster. And so what the parents are wanting is the opposite of what actually happens.

Annie: So it can have adverse effects.

Terri: Absolutely. It can end up having adverse effects.

Annie: Okay.

Terri: And grazing is another thing. So looking at when adults decide the "when", that structured, but flexible meal and snack time. Children can come to meal times and snack times hungry. We want children to come with an appetite and a bit hungry to these meals and snack times because then they're more interested in trying new foods, expanding their palate and eating the food that's there. If children are grazing all day, whether it be on milk, crackers, Goldfish, fruit, we can't expect them to come to any meal hungry and want to eat.

Annie: That was a game changer for our family because my kids, and I'm the same way, if left to my own devices, I would graze just all day, walk to the pantry. Especially when you work at home, you know, or when the kids are at home for summer now they just walk to the pantry. And my, you know, my two oldest especially will just grab stuff and then head out of the kitchen and I don't see them again. I'm like, "Wait, what did you just eat? What, what are you taking? What are you, what's going on here?" But when they come to mealtimes hungry, the effort that it feels like needs to manage their food, although you're saying that's not my job-

Terri: It is not.

Annie: It seems so less, like, just mealtimes are so much more pleasurable when they come hungry.

Terri: Absolutely. And wouldn't that be lovely to have happy, peaceful or more peaceful, easy meal times.

Annie: Yes. Instead of like, "Why don't you like this food? I made this for you!" Cause I'm really good at making it personal, like, you know, "You don't love me. You're so ungrateful." I don't really say that but you're thinking that, like, they didn't eat my mac and cheese and I make it, like, they just have no respect for me. Okay. So no pressure, cut back on grazing. So structured meal times and snack times. And what else, what else do we need to be aware of?

Terri: So linking into that Ellyn Satter's division of responsibility, really focusing on that no good food, no bad food. So when parents aren't looking at the plate as "Well, this is good food and this is bad food," if they just see it as food, they're much less likely to utter "If you don't eat your Broccoli, you don't get dessert," right? So if parents can just look at it as food, it's a lot healthier for everyone in that food relationship.

Annie: Which sometimes means, again, having to check your own narrative about food when talking to your kids, because this is something we deal with every single day inside our community, Healthy Habits Happy Moms on Facebook, women dealing with morality of food and feeling like, "Oh, I ate brownies and now I'm a bad human," or "I'm going to cheat and have some pizza." You know? That's how we talk about food. So this can require some unpacking of your own food baggage as well.

Terri: It absolutely does. And what I'm always really excited about is I find a lot of parents are much more willing to do this kind of work for their kids. So that always really excites me.

Annie: So it's just food. It's not good food. It's not bad food, it's just food.

Terri: It's just food.

Annie: Simple. I like it. Okay. So picky eaters. Have your kids been picky eaters?

Terri: They've tried to be picky eaters and sometimes they've slipped a few things past me. But I would say all in all, I don't have kids who have huge like sensory issues around food where I would see that come out. Normally it's a testing boundaries kind of thing. When they become picky, to be honest, it doesn't even enter my thought if they're picky or not, I've offered a meal. I know there's something at that meal that they like that's an accepted food for them and whether they eat or not, that's their choice. And we carry on. I've had, when my middle guy was 18 months, two, he didn't eat dinner for months. It was months of not eating dinner. And I could understand where other parents go down that tunnel where picky eating starts, where they would start to cater to this child, you know, "As long as they're eating, I'll find something for them to eat."

Terri: Whereas I was very grateful and thankful I came into feeding my own kids with this knowledge, with this division of responsibility. And I knew if he was hungry he would eat and there was a balance of food available to him and I trusted him to regulate his hunger and satiety, which was hard at times. But he did great. He grew well and he's perfectly healthy and fine. Now my children are all also neuro-typical, they're developing normally. So sometimes children who might not be neurotypical or developing might have some, you know, developmental challenges might need extra help and that's a little bit different.

Annie: Yeah. What I love about the division of responsibilities is it's really kind of, no pun or maybe pun intended, taken responsibility off of my plate. So like you said, I can know that, like, I did my job and like, I don't have to sit there and hover. I mean it's like I said, it's like letting go. The process of letting go of that control is hard or has been hard for me, but I serve the food, it's balanced. And like, that's my job. And what they do with it is like, "Okay, that's not for me to monitor."

Terri: Exactly. You've done your job. Check. Perfect. Now it's on to them.

Annie: Right. And so, so in other words, you don't, you don't have to stress, it's not like, "Oh my gosh, should I do this, should I now make a different meal? Should I offer them another snack? Should I?" You know, this is so frustrating. Like, "Ugh, I made this dinner and no one ate it." Like, yeah, freedom is what it is, is what it sounds like in practice, freedom.

Terri: Exactly.

Annie: Okay. So let's talk about someone listening that does have a picky eater. They maybe haven't, they're new to the division of responsibilities or new to this philosophy or some of these ideas or concepts. hat are some of the ways to kind of move through picky eating?

Terri: Okay. So once they've sort of started working with the division of responsibility, maybe they need a little bit more. I like to remind people that kids eat because food is familiar. They've been exposed to it. They also eat food because it tastes good. We want food to taste good and because it's fun. What we don't find works with children is nutrition knowledge. So you guys have another great podcast about, I think it's teaching health in schools. That is another great one to remember that nutrition knowledge doesn't actually motivate young children to eat differently.

Annie: Right.

Terri: So the first pillar here that I always talk about is exposure. Helping children become familiar with food and there's tons of research. This is one of the biggest predictors of an increased intake in children. So what does this mean? It means keep offering this food your child might not like. So not catering to them, not making them a peanut butter sandwich if you're serving lasagna and salad. What I also recommend here is continue to expose, but serving a small portion of something you know they're not going to be excited about.

And I'm talking, it can be a tablespoon, whether it's one piece of cheese or a tablespoon of peas, making sure they still get that food on their plate because that's part of the exposure. Sometimes some children do well with having a little side plate or a side bowl that they can move that food off their plate. So it just feels a little bit safer for them if the child needs that. That can be a helpful strategy. Serving meals, family style. So the food is out. They see it, they see other family members taking it. Maybe putting that child in responsible, making that child responsible for serving up the rest of the family. Then they get a lot of pride and support in "Oh, thank you. Can I have a second serving?" That kind of thing.

Annie: That sounds like me. I'm, I'm giggling because I don't like my foods to touch. So especially if there's something I'm not sure if I like yet or not. I don't want it on my plate and I certainly don't want it touching my other food so I can empathize with kids like that. So, okay, so exposure and repeated exposure. And

so I am sure it goes without saying, but exposing your kids or offering it one, two times and then declining it isn't, isn't enough. How many times should we offer foods?

Terri: I would just keep offering it. So the science says somewhere, some of the research says 10, 15, 20. But for some kids it's going to take hundreds of exposures. And that's because normally it's not. That might be for mushrooms, that may be for onions or olives, that might be for one food. Not all foods in general. What, when you keep offering the food, they keep seeing it, smelling it, they might touch it. These are all exposures and they're starting to interact and they might slowly become braver and braver. They might start off with looking at it and then picking it up and touching it and squishing it. Then they might take a bite and they might spit that bite out and that's okay. They were just really, really brave and tried a taste of a new food. So all those things. Sometimes it's a really slow process, but it's all steps that gets them there.

Terri: Or those children that, you know, they really do struggle at meal times and historically mealtimes have been very stressful. There's lots of other great ways that aren't at the table to expose kids to food. Something as simple as books that have the food that they're not keen on eating. Normally we're talking about vegetables. There's lots of really great books about vegetables. My kids' favorite one is Veggies with Wedgies, it's all about vegetables take the farmers' underwear and they don't fit. It is hilarious. It is nothing about eating. It's just funny. And then you can springboard conversations maybe into other books that talk about this. Another one I really like, Where Does Broccoli Come From? And it talks about how it's grown, where in the world, what nutrients it has. It just talks about it in general.

Terri: Then maybe you can plant some broccoli in your garden or lettuce or that kind of thing. These are continued exposures. I actually did a workshop about a month or so ago with a bunch of local kids and we planted little pot garden, so they got to pick a plant, some lettuce. I actually got feedback from a mom that her children are obsessed with their lettuce. They're eating salad every night. They want to take their lettuce to daycare. They won't eat lettuce from the grocery store, but they love their lettuce, their lettuce. That's the power that gardening can have for some kids because they've owned it. They're responsible for it. Now, getting kids involved in the kitchen is another great way, getting them to play games and just interact with their food in general. So if it feels like you're

not, don't think they're eating it, but you want to continue making a positive relationship with this food, getting them in the kitchen, gardening, reading books, playing games, talking about it. These are all steps that parents can take. It doesn't have to be, if they're not eating it, it doesn't count.

Annie: And when you say exposure and and putting it on their plate or putting it in front of them, you don't necessarily mean tasting, like that's not, again, that's not one of our responsibilities as parents. So we're not, like, shoving food in their mouth. We're just continuing to offer it. What do you do? Like how do you handle conversations when you put, you know, some, let's say, fish on their plate and they're like, "I don't like fish." Like what do you say?

Terri: I say, "Oh, you haven't learned to like it yet. That's okay. There's lots of food here you do like."

Annie: Okay. And that is another one of your, when you're building their plates, make sure that something is on their plate that they like, right?

Terri: Yeah.

Annie: So it's not just a full, a plate full of stuff that they don't know, they don't like, like there's something familiar on there.

Terri: Absolutely. It's not liver, onions and mushrooms. Haha. You have to eat or you starve. Not at all. You want something that's accepted. So I be careful that it's not something that they like right now or want right now. Because you could end up chasing like, "Well, today they would like a peanut butter sandwich." Well, it means they want that. So now you're starting to trade the "what", you're giving them responsibility for the what, but when you're planning your meals, you've got one kid that likes potatoes. One kid that likes cheese, one kid that likes raw veggies. Put a veggie platter on, grate some cheese on the side and serve mashed potatoes, whatever the other vegetables and meats are, no big deal. You know, there's something accepted offered.

Annie: Perfect. Okay. I think that's so important because like I said, if I had a dollar for every time, my oldest, especially just her appetite just isn't, it's just not very large and that's okay. But she's just not much of an eater and I feel like I spent so many years and since learning more about Ellyn Satter's philosophy I've done so, so much better, but I'm like, "Just one more bite. Just one more bite.

Please just try it, please, please." I'm like, I'm begging, like, "Please just try. I think you're gonna like it. I put some cheese on it. I'll put some dressing on it. Like what do you want? Like just like it." But you're saying to just say, "Oh, you haven't learned to like it." You don't have to force it. Just keep offering it or keep serving it.

Terri: Absolutely. Because that's pressure.

Annie: Yes.

Terri: And pressure right away will decrease their appetite, increase their satiety. And if there's someone who likes to be right, I've got one of those, if I encourage them to try something directly, no way, Jose. Whereas if I'm just modeling that I'm eating it, I'm enjoying it. Their siblings are enjoying it, they're much more likely to eat it.

Annie: Yeah. I think that's part of the problem. We both like to be right. So we're just butting heads at meal times. So yeah, letting go. Deep breath, letting go. Okay, so exposure. What else can help picky eaters?

Terri: Taste. So this one, particularly if parents are coming from a diet mindset or they were calorie aware and they have that history, sometimes they've cut out fat, they've cut out foods that just taste good and we want our food to taste good. So now this is where I might fall into the messy middle. But-

Annie: Welcome to the messy middle. It's a fun place to be.

Terri: I'm okay with adding sugar to foods to help them taste good when you're trying to help a child learn to like something. So my example is one of my eight year olds favorite foods is my Brussels sprouts. Why? Because I roast them with olive oil, balsamic vinegar and maple syrup.

Annie: Oh, that sounds amazing.

Terri: They're amazing. And they're one of his favorite foods. Steamed plain Brussel sprouts, probably he would try them, say he doesn't like them or hasn't learned to like them and move on with life, but this way he loves them. So he associates Brussels sprouts with tasting delicious. And you can use this. Now I'm not suggesting we have a bowl of brown sugar on the table and we sprinkle that on everything because we do want to be aware that we're not overdoing it and

not giving our children too much sugar. But if you use this as a tool, one tool to help them learn to like something, then you can also pare this down. So say maybe you start, carrots. You're trying to encourage them or you know, they haven't learned to like carrots, put butter and brown sugar and make or honey make a little sauce with that. It tastes good. Then you start weaning back on the sugar and now you've got butter on carrots and now that's a typical everyday food you might have with your family.

Annie: Yeah, I love this because, just with adults, we hear a lot of women talking about how they feel guilty or bad or as if their vegetables don't count because they eat them with dip. And I'm like, "Look, if eating vegetables with dip means you ate vegetables, that's in my opinion, that's better than no vegetables at all. So take your vegetables and your dip and eat it". And I think kids are the same way. Sometimes I do that with fruit, too. I'll, I'll offer a little whipped cream or vanilla yogurt or something because sometimes, and honestly sometimes the fruit's not ripe. Like I don't like it either. Like it's like, "Oh, you need to be a little bit sweeter for me to enjoy." So I love that, that that's a good tool to offer to use as needed when you're getting kids to learn to like a new taste.

Terri: Absolutely. Thinking about we want our foods to taste good. Kids tend to have more refined tastes. They pick up on nuance of food more than we do, which is part of the reason they tend to be more pickier. They taste it more. So if food tastes good, that's just helpful for them.

Annie: Yeah. Cheese, cheese on vegetables is another one. Like I'll get the same thing. My seven year old thinks I'm a really good broccoli steamer when I just buy the steamed Broccoli in the bag. Frozen ones. But I put a little parmesan cheese and just a little sprinkle of salt on there and he just gobbles that up and I'm like, "I'm okay with that. I think that's a win in my book."

Terri: Absolutely. Because he now he has this positive association with broccoli, a positive association with vegetables, which that's going to serve him well in the future.

Annie: Okay. So exposure, taste, what else can help picky eaters.

Terri: Fun. Making food fun. And this can be keeping it really simple or going all out. So parents can get to decide how much time and effort they want to put into this. Some kids, if they're really, really restrictive, parents are going to put a bit

more work into this, but it can be as simple as calling food a different name, dino trees for broccoli or you know, talking about using your dino teeth and your big crunch or a hulk smoothie that would have spinach or Kale in it. So it's green and calling it a hulk smoothie if they tend to be an Avengers fan. As well, there's something about food on a stick. I don't know why. We like food on a stick and so do kids. So making skewers out of a lunch, cut up the sandwich into quarters, put fruit, cheese and veggies and put lunch on a skewer or using toothpicks.

Terri: Put a couple of different, and my favorite trick is put something they love, something they're learning to eat and something that's maybe accepted on the same skewer and then that encourages them. It's fun to eat, but you've got a lot of different love it, like it and learning to like it on the same skewer.

Annie: I love that. That's such a good idea.

Terri: And that can be as simple as a every day toothpick you can get the fancy ones from the leather like swords or have little tassels on the end depending on how much your kid needs to make this fun. You can also get little food, you can get food pics. So if you've ever seen those Bento boxes, I do not Bento box my kids' lunches before anyone thinks I do that. But I have some of these food pics and they can come in smiley faces, animals, you name it, but I put a couple of these in and suddenly the meal's, this extra fancy thing because I have a pink elephant and a black cat in their food.

Annie: Like, I'm laughing, again, because I would totally fall for that. I'd be like, "Oh, okay, this looks fun."

Terri: Looks fun, right? Now it's fun to eat.

Annie: Yes.

Terri: Shapes are another one. My son thought, he just told me I was the best dietician in the whole wide world because I used a cookie and made his carrot stars and he just thought I was amazing because they were stars. So it can be, you can get these food punch it, like food cookie cutters meant for this online as well, but you can use your knife and you know, chop this up. Again, looking at how much time and effort you want to put into this. These are different tools in the toolbox. By no means do you have to use food picks and stars if you have a picky eater. These are just some of the tools.

Annie: And hopefully the idea is that maybe you spend a little bit more time and energy on the front end, but as they learn to like these foods you and grow older, you don't have to forever cut their carrots into stars when they're 18.

Terri: That's the goal right there. And the other way I really enjoy incorporating food sometimes isn't even so much making the food they're eating fun, but just playing games with food, particularly if they're a much more hesitant or reserved eater, it could be having a corn on the cob husking contest, you know, particularly if you have a competitive child or Brussel sprouts, taking the leaves off the Brussel sprouts and making it a bit of a contest. I've got one very competitive child and if I make it a contest, she'll do anything. Beets using, like if you cut a beet, you know, if you get it wet, it'll like, you get a lot of the color out of it. So you can do like beet tattoos, whether it be paper or on yourself. It's summertime. You can do this stuff outside if it's messy.

Terri: There's actually a book, Adventures in Veggie Land that has tons of amazing ideas that I use with my clients. And it comes up with a lot of different ideas. A cherry tomato squirting contest. I can't take credit for all of these. She came up with a lot of them playing tic tac toe with green beans and different vegetables where they're the pieces. So these can be just games that you play with food and depending on what it is, some of these you can turn around and then just use the food for a meal.

So say you're using broccoli, playing with dinosaurs and the dinosaurs are eating the broccoli. Well you can, you know, keep everything clean. You can go serve the Broccoli with lunch and then you're like, remember those dinosaur trees? You call them dinosaur trees. You sprinkle a bit of Parmesan cheese on it, call it snow. Bob's your uncle, your kids eating broccoli.

Annie: I love it. Um, you know, these are such great ideas, Terri. So exposure, taste, keeping it fun. Playing games. I do have a question for you that kind of popped up when you were talking. It wasn't on the outline, so I'm gonna throw you a curve ball. I, you know, I think it was, Jerry Seinfeld's wife maybe made the cookbook about like pureeing vegetables and hiding vegetables in your kids' food and it was super popular because, again, parents have the best intentions. They want our kids to be healthy, they want to make sure they're eating balanced diets and they know that vegetables seems to be a sticking problem. How do you feel about hiding any type of foods or sneaking them in your kids' foods? What are your thoughts on that?

Terri: Great question. This comes up all the time. First thing, yes and no. So it depends. Adding these foods into meals, absolutely. I mash cauliflower with my mashed potatoes sometimes. However, it's never sneaking and never hiding. I would never recommend, particularly with a picky eater hiding or sneaking food in because if they find you out, you've lost all credibility, all trust, and they will become more restrictive. However, using different foods in a variety of ways, no big deal.

I throw spinach in my smoothies. They're not eating spinach, like looking at it, eating it, but it's in the smoothie. I don't consider that a bad choice because my kids are helping me put it in. They know it's there or if they asked, I would tell them, relying on that method of sneaking and hiding food, the only, I shouldn't say sneaking, adding it in such as the cauliflower in the, if parents really cannot, they need to feel okay about their children not eating the vegetables at the meal.

Terri: It's for the parents, not the kids, but I wouldn't hide it if they ask. I'd be truthful because we need kids to, this goes back to exposure. Eating broccoli hidden in a muffin doesn't help kids learn to like broccoli. It just makes the parent feel good that their child ate broccoli, but long term that's not building a relationship with food. They don't know it's broccoli. They don't know what broccoli smells like, looks like, tastes like because it was hidden. So I've no problem with mixing these foods and however it shouldn't be hidden and there should also be the food offered in other ways, the whole foods so that they can see it and learn about it.

Annie: I think those are, that's such a great takeaway. And thanks for taking that question on the fly because I do hear that a lot. And again, I know it's with good intentions, but like you said, the harm is losing trust from your kiddo that they're like, "Oh mom lied to me about this." Or you know, like this, "I can't believe she would do this to me" it can feel very dramatic and B, like you said, it doesn't actually help them learn to like the food if they don't even know that they're eating it.

And I imagine the conversation going something like, this is how it would happen in my house, at least I'd be like, "Ha, you just ate a carrot!" Like, I tricked ya. I pulled one over you and then they're, like, mad at me about it and you know, and, and like you said, to circle back to I think about my daughter Sloan, she would've been like, I didn't really like that anyways. Like, you know, and like almost

resentful towards me. So what's more important to me is that they have a healthy relationship with me and food. Not that they're getting that carrot in that one time.

Terri: Exactly. Nope. Absolutely.

Annie: And I also wanted to circle back to about treats. This also wasn't on the outline, but I know just listeners are going to be thinking, they're going to be like, "Oh, what about this? What about this? What about this?" Treats. I know Ellyn Satter champions serving them with food, or excuse me, like, I'm talking about like sweet treats, you know, desserts, not treats as in like these are foods are off limits or whatever, but candies, cookies, pies, ice cream. She encourages to serve them with a meal. Is that what you abide by as well?

Terri: Well, I wouldn't be, it has to be this way, but so, last night's a perfect example. We had our meal and there was a protein ball I put as the quote unquote treat of the meal and my son ate it absolutely first. I didn't bat an eye, it was no big deal. And then my daughter saved it a little bit. Around Halloween time, I will put Halloween candy with their dinner. The reason I love serving it with a meal, a couple of reasons. One, parents won't have that knee jerk eat your dinner or you don't get dessert. It helps the kids. You're modeling that no good food, no bad food. And then children, they see what's offered and they get to make decisions about what they eat and when out of what's offered. So how much they're eating. And if they eat their dessert first, that's fine.

Terri: I have no issue with that whatsoever. Even if they don't eat anything else, I'm still okay with that. Then looking at the meal, they might realize, wait, they check in with their hunger. "I'm still hungry. I'd like to eat some more. My dessert's gone. This is the other food I have." Sometimes I'll see kids who eat less, they'll purposely restrict themselves and how much they're eating because they don't know if desert's coming, they don't know how much dessert's going to be and they want to make sure they save room for dessert or they just so preoccupied about what dessert will be that they don't focus on their meal and eat. So I love also, I love watching the dynamic with my kids who chooses what first, my youngest had a really good strategy for a while. She would eat her dessert first, eat some of her meal and then give her older brother's puppy eyes and then they would give her some their dessert. So she had it figured out at two.

Annie: Smart, smart cookie. I think that, you know what, as a parent sometimes what I hear women say about themselves and I think they project it onto their

kids is we've been kind of conditioned by diet culture to think that if we're left to our own devices, we'll just only eat dessert. And if we offer dessert with a meal, that they're just going to eat the dessert and they won't be hungry for the other foods on their plate. But that's not been your experience. That kids are actually really good at like being like, "Hey, I had my dessert and I'm still hungry for this other stuff."

Terri: Absolutely. Kids are born with that ability to listen to their hunger and satiety. The posts on my Facebook page or my Instagram that get the most comments, the most likes, the most shares are the ones where my kids walk away from dessert foods where they'll eat half a piece of pie or they'll eat half a cookie, something like that. Those ones, adults lose their mind because we have been conditioned and trained not to eat that way, not to eat intuitively and listen to our hunger and satiety, but when they know, you know, "I can have ice cream another time or I can have pie another time, this isn't a one shot deal for me," they're okay to walk away from it because they have this healthy relationship with food.

Annie: Yeah. And that's, and that again goes back to that trust that the parents are going to provide these foods, a variety of foods and that foods aren't good or bad. It's just food. And that's it. That's been my experience, especially, with my third, now that she's three, she'll walk away from a cupcake, a half eaten cupcake, and it's like no big deal because she knows like it's probably gonna be offered again, you know, or "I know that there's some sweet treats." I mean, she doesn't talk like this, but in my head, this is how she does that, you know, "I know that there's other cookies in the house and if I want some later, I'm sure I can probably have some at another meal."

And it's like, not this like, "Oh my gosh, I got to eat it while it's here and take advantage of it and I don't know when it's gonna come back sort of thing." So, yeah, Terri, this was so good. I feel like I could talk to you quite a bit on a variety of topics, so we'll have to have you back. But I think this is such good information for our parents listening that want to help build some really healthy foundational habits with foods with their kids. So thank you so much for your time today.

Terri: Thank you so much for having me. I'm so grateful that I got to talk to a lot larger audience than I'm used to. So thank you very much.

Annie: And Terri, before you go, where can, where can they find you?

Terri: So I've got a Facebook page and an Instagram account, Tiny Bites Nutrition by Terry Ney and that's where you can find me. And I try and post real life, relatable, evidence-based nutrition, whether it be recipes, strategies, tips, polls, that kind of stuff.

Annie: Awesome. We will be sure to link that in our show notes so people can go right to it. So thank you so much, Terri. This was awesome. We'll talk to you soon, okay?

Terri: Thank you. Bye.

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