

Balance365 Episode 85 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 to Balance365 Life radio. Before we dive into today's juicy topic, I want to share a review that one of our listeners left for us today. She says, "Annie, Jen, and Lauren have an incredible ability to bring you practical advice that is also sustainable and empowering this podcast, weed through all of the nonsense and keep you engaged because it feels like you're having coffee with your BFF." And fun fact, more often than not, I am drinking coffee while recording this podcast, so thank you so much for all of your reviews. It helps us on iTunes, which allows our podcast to be shared with more people so we cannot do this alone and we cannot thank you enough.

Alright, let's talk about today's topic: What to do when someone in your circle starts a diet. If you followed our podcast or our community for a while, you've likely ditched diets. Hello, freedom! But sometimes others in our lives aren't quite in the same spot in their journey and watching and hearing someone dish about their fab diet or new restrictive way of life can be difficult. Food and fitness can create tension between friends and family and when that happens it usually sucks. On today's episode, Lauren and I share our thoughts and ways to navigate diet-filled conversations that keep you and your wellbeing front and center. Enjoy.

Annie: Hey Lauren, how are you? I'm trying to, I'm trying to try a greeting that I don't normally do and that felt so uncomfortable and I feel like everyone is gonna, that didn't go as planned.

Lauren: I wish everyone could have seen your face.

Annie: Did I, like, give you the nervous space, like, "Uhhh"? You know what? I have, other than the 70 some episodes we've recorded, I have zero podcasting experience. I have zero radio experience. And you know what? I'm just, I'm doing my best, okay?

Lauren: You know what? I think you're doing wonderful. I would not want to host the podcast. So you're doing wonderful.

Annie: So, you got this position because Jen and Lauren didn't want to do it.

Lauren: Yeah. You'll be really good at this.

Annie: I'm such a sucker for compliments. I was like, "Okay. You think so? You think I would be the best out of all three? Okay." I see what happened now.

Lauren: Well, for, yeah. First of all, we didn't want to do it and second of all, you really would be the best out of the three of us to do it.

Annie: Thank you. I do enjoy it. I really do enjoy doing it. I just, I don't know how to say hello to you without going "Lauren! Jen and Lauren!"

Lauren: It's like Oprah.

Annie: It's my talk singing. I'm talk singing.

Lauren: Yes.

Annie: Okay. So today's topic, one that comes up so frequently in our community, which if you aren't a member, it's Healthy Habits Happy Moms on Facebook is what to do when someone starts a diet. Because so many women in our community that listen to our podcast, have accepted that like, we're not on the diet train anymore. We're not, we know that they don't work. 95% of diets fail. We're not wasting our time and energy on that, which is great. But then sometimes your bubble, your circle gets infiltrated by someone that starts a diet and it's like, "Oh, what do I do? Like how do I navigate conversations? How do I still maintain a healthy relationship? How do I set boundaries?" Because let's be honest, like food and fitness can draw lines between friends and family. And when that happens, it sucks. It's not you. It's tough. Have you ever had that experience?

Lauren: Yes. And you know, when you, it's great when you find a community, right? That doesn't diet, right, that has your same values, but then you still have to go in the quote unquote real world where diet culture is everywhere and you have to figure out how to navigate that outside of your, like we call it the Balance365 bubble, right? But yeah, I have experienced it, and especially as I'm a nutrition coach myself with friends and family who do diet, like it's tricky and I will be honest and say that for me the best approach has been to just leave it with people that I'm really close to. Right? Like I don't try to push anything on them. I have tried that in the past and I'm going to tell you it doesn't work.

Annie: Yeah. Some people just aren't interested. They're not ready. And I think so often it's really, it's really quite sweet that people come to our community and they're like, "My girlfriend just started this diet" and they're posting it as this very lovingly, like, "It's hard for me to watch her do this thing to herself" or "I cannot, I don't want to see her go through this. I don't want to see her have that experience. I've been there, I've done that. I've come out on the other end and I know that what's on the other end is so much better." So it's not this, like, competition. It's not, it's very like "There's something out there that's better for you." And so it's comes from a very well intentioned place. But sometimes people don't want to hear it no matter what your intentions are.

Lauren: Yeah. And you know, you can't control what other people do. Like you just can't, even, as much as I know, I always want to control other people's thoughts and feelings and actions. But you can't. And one way that I kind of talked to myself about this is, like, think of a time when you were doing something and someone came out of the blue and was like, "You really shouldn't be doing that. Like here's a better way to do it." And you were just like, "Shut up. Like, I want to do this." You know what I mean? So that's what I always think about when I am trying to talk to someone else. I've come to the realization that, you know what, it's something that they need to kind of come to on their own, no matter how much I would want to like push them towards it. But, and that's not saying you can't like give information or share information.

Lauren: But the actual like stopping dieting is, for a lot of people, a big decision.

Annie: And it's a process that they explore. Like it's like this, like, "What does this look like? What does this even mean? I, if I don't diet, what am I doing with my life?"

Lauren: Like, right? Like, it's such a different perspective.

Annie: Yeah. That is, some women don't even know exists. So to like, just throw this on them and think that they're going to accept it right away. You know, it's like, almost like you just have to let, sometimes you have to let it sink in and then revisit if you can.

Lauren: It's more like planting seeds.

Annie: Yes.

Lauren: Right?

Annie: Yes, yes. So I guess that, you know, that's our kind of our first tip is to decide if you want to address it and how, and sometimes it may not be the right time. It may not be the right place, it may not be the right person to address it. In fact, I wish Jen were on this episode because she just shared an experience that she had. I think it was at a birthday party for a friend and a father told a daughter that she was going to be fat if she ate too much ice cream. And obviously Jen, being in our line of work, felt kind of like, "Oh!" You know, like-

Lauren: Like, twitchy.

Annie: Yeah. And ultimately decided not to address it because for so many reasons it wasn't the right place. I don't know if she even knew this guy. There's things that are just out of our control. So, you know, like when you're on this, like, kind of anti-diet revolution, you can be like, "Oh my God, I want to tell everyone" and you know, "I want everyone to have this experience and everyone should join me, and everyone should be on my side of the fence" and that'd be great. But-

Lauren: Yeah, we agree. But-

Annie: But not everyone's there yet. And, and you know, like sometimes the circumstances, the context just, it isn't appropriate or, it might not be a good time or it might not even be well-received to, you know, call out, you know, that guy like, "Hey, wait, like, don't say that." You know, like, he can be become very defensive and argumentative and then quickly become a debate versus a conversation. So being really mindful of that.

But one, one great way to address it, that's hopefully not confrontational is just to set a boundary and this can be uncomfortable. And as Brenay Brown says, you can have discomfort or you can have resentment. But examples could include, like, if you're, if you're out to dinner and you're in a situation where someone's talking about their diets, a lot of diet talk, you could simply say, "Hey, I enjoy our time together, but I don't want to spend it talking about dieting" or I think this is a really, really great is to keep it about you.

Annie: Like make it about what you need and what you want and keep the focus on you versus rather than them. And that could sound like "I'm trying to be less concerned with my food choices. And hearing you discuss yours frequently makes it difficult. Like, would you mind being mindful of that or can we talk about that?" You know, so all you're saying is "This is what I need. This is what I'm trying to do. This is what I'm trying to focus on." And you're not doing like, "Hey, you should do this too, or you need to do this, or have you thought about this?" You're just, you're just being very clear on where you're at. Or you can be a little bit more bold and say, "Would you be open to hearing why I'm concerned about your diet or my experience not dieting. Can we discuss that? Would you be open to hearing that?"

Annie: Like, usually that's not my style. My style is a little bit more indirect and like infused with humor, like someone's talking about like how they're not eating bread or whatever at the table, I'll be like, "Oh, girlfriend, pass it on down here, then. Like, carbs are my friend," you know, like, and like, right, like low key like, slipping that message under the table. Like, "Hey, I eat carbs and I live, it's okay, you know?"

Lauren: Right.

Annie: Or like, "No, I'm not skipping on dessert. I want to see the menu. Yeah. That's where the fun stuff is," you know, just like being a little bit more playful about it. And, and I think we've had podcasts on that topic too. I think it was like a holiday, like receiving comments about your body.

Lauren: Yeah.

Annie: Over the holidays. And one of the important points was to find your voice, like to find the tone that works for you, that feels really authentic to you. Because

humor might not work for you. Being bold or really super direct might make you too uncomfortable that you don't say anything at all. And yeah-

Lauren: Right. And if, if you're really uncomfortable with it, planning out what you're going to say ahead of time is also really helpful. That really helps me because I can tend to like not say anything if I don't have something planned. Another one for me is like, it depends on the situation. Like if I'm really close to someone, I might, be more apt to bring it up. Like, if it's a good friend rather than someone I don't know or and the way I tend to share it is I share, like, a resource.

Lauren: I share either a resource that's helped me, like I'm big on podcasts, I love podcasts. So I might share a podcast episode or I might share an article or a book or like, even a youtube video with like a good friend so that it's not me saying it, you know what I mean? Yeah.

Annie: And I think as uncomfortable as it can be to set a boundary or direct address it either more directly or a little less indirectly, it's important to know that like a, can you tolerate being uncomfortable? And I mean, it's uncomfortable, but yeah, we probably can. And if you don't address it in a way that prioritizes your own needs, then you're kind of saying no to yourself. Does that make sense?

Lauren: Yes.

Annie: You know, like, cause what's really important is that these strategies or this mindfulness puts you in a situation to prioritize your wellbeing so you can maintain a healthy relationship with whoever it is we're talking about and whatever healthy looks like, whether that's more contact or less contact.

Lauren: Right. The only really hard boundary I personally have as if my kids are present. That's the only time where I'll be like, hey, I'll either say, "Hey, there's small ears listening. Can we talk about something else?" Or I'll say, "Hey, we don't talk like that about our bodies" or that's kind of my, like, hard-stop line.

Annie: Yup.

Lauren: Otherwise I'm a bit more flexible. Sometimes I just leave it all together like Jen did in that situation. Or if it's someone I don't know, like sometimes we'll overhear something and I'll talk to my kids about it later. That comes up sometimes as well.

Annie: Yeah. Like "Hey, how did you feel when aunt Susan was talking about that?" Did you, you know, or "How did you feel when she said that to you or when she sent it to me?" Or, you know, and again, this is like, you know, age appropriateness comes into play here. Another strategy is just to avoid them and you know, the old saying "Fences make good neighbors"? You can hide them on social media. The mute button on Instagram is glorious. Do you use that all?

Lauren: I don't, I just learned about it actually. I don't even know where it is. Can you give us a tutorial?

Annie: Yeah. I think if you go up to the person's profile and there's, like, maybe three little dots, I don't know, I'll have to pull it out. You can just mute their stories or their posts, whichever one you want. Let me just, yeah, so says "mute."

Lauren: Okay. I see it.

Annie: And then it will mute posts, mute stories, mute posts and stories. And this is coming super handy when, maybe it's someone that I, unfriending them or unfollowing them would cause too much disruption elsewhere for whatever reason. Whether it's a work friend.

Lauren: An in-law.

Annie: Yeah. Yep. And it's just gonna cause, you're going to spend too much effort and energy on unfriending them or explaining or you know, dealing with the aftermath of that, when you can't, when unfriending them isn't an option. Muting is wonderful and you can do the same thing on Facebook. You can, like, snooze, right? Which is great because there are, I do have people like that in my life that I love and I, and I'm friends with. But when it comes to talking about health and fitness or food and fitness, I don't want to talk to them about it. I'm not curious about what their latest diet is. I'm not curious about the macro count of their dinner. I'm just not interested. It's not bringing value to my feed. So I'm just gonna mute you and we can still be cool. We can still be friends. I can still be friendly and respectful and we can still go work out together or whatever. But I don't want to hear about your diet that's, you know, or you know, your cleanse or whatever it is.

And also, uh, I think I've talked about this before and this was totally on me, but I actually left Facebook. It was maybe a touch dramatic, which if you know me, I

can, I can make kind of big rash decisions quickly. But I had a girlfriend, one of my very, very best friends growing up and she's still one of my really good friends. And, and I think I've told her about this. But she lost, we both had babies around the same time. And our first baby, it was my first, her second baby around the same time and she lost a lot of weight quickly doing a popular diet and I did not.

Annie: And watching her process her journey on Facebook was too much for me to handle. And this was, you know, 10 years ago. I don't know if any of these features were available on Facebook or if I just didn't think to look them up, but it put me in such a crummy place mentally that I just was like, "I've got to get off Facebook" cause I'm sitting there comparing and contrasting. I'm angry and resentful and jealous. I'm thinking poor thoughts about myself. I, you know, I'm struggling to separate her choices and her behaviors and her experience with mine. And so I just left Facebook for like a year and a half. I eventually came back, but, but I had to do that to protect my own wellbeing, my own mental and emotional health.

Lauren: Right. And I think it's important to note that everyone's on a different journey and everyone's timelines are going to be different and it doesn't make someone bad or good if they're on a diet. You know what I mean? Like we have to always remember that too. Like if someone takes a different path and it's someone you care about, like, that's okay. You can wish them luck and not want it for your life.

Annie: Yeah, yeah, exactly. The other option would be to redirect or dodge, which I think is kind of my default.

Lauren: I do that too. I'll, like, just change the subject.

Annie: Yeah. Like when someone brings up the diet talk, you just swerve it by changing the conversation. That's, I'm using it right, right? Like swerve. Like-

Lauren: I don't think swerve it is a thing, I don't know, maybe swerve around it.

Annie: I'm gonna look it up on urban dictionary when we're done.

Lauren: Okay. And present it to me.

Annie: Anyways, you Dodge the conversation by redirecting it, or you could just not acknowledge it altogether. That's also an option, you know, like, which it can, it can be kind of awkward. But as my husband says, "you can let silence do the heavy lifting." You know, if they're talking about like, you know, they can't eat this or they can't eat that, you can just be like, "Wow, the weather's, it's such a beautiful day out today. What are you doing this weekend?" You know, it doesn't have to be this big like epic, "Hey, we need to talk about your life choices." You can just keep it moving forward, redirect the conversation and hopefully, you know, they'll get the hint and then if not, if it persists, then maybe you can be more direct and say, like, "I just actually don't want to talk about that."

Lauren: Right.

Annie: And, and that's that. What else, what other strategies would you add? Lauren, do you have anything else?

Lauren: Um, no. Like, I think-

Annie: You had a point, I'm sorry, about your grandma in the podcast that, yeah, you just let her go.

Lauren: I just, yeah, I mean there's a point where it's like, "Okay, it's my grandma." She's, you know, she's in her eighties, like she's been in this diet culture for a long time. Like, I'm just going to shield my kids from it and let her be.

Annie: Yeah.

Lauren: But I think these strategies are all ones that I would gravitate towards. I'm not, in real life, I'm not super confrontational. So I tend to either change the subject or a redirect to a resource if it's someone I'm close to-

Annie: Like our podcast.

Lauren: Like our podcast episodes, great resource.

Annie: Yes.

Lauren: If you want to send them, just don't send them to this one cause then they'll know what you did. But just kidding. Yeah. If they ask me, like, I do have some people ask cause they know what I do and then I'm more open if someone asks about it than me just preaching, you know.

Annie: You know, and the last thing that I think is really important and it's not a strategy to use in conversation, it's more just like some food for thought is that if you have someone in your life that starting a diet, regardless of how restrictive it is or whatever, and it's a process or a system that you don't agree with, you don't think is healthy, whatever the reason is, I think it's important to take some time to think about, like, "What does this mean to me?" Like, because, because a lot of times I still struggle with this sometimes when a girlfriend jumps on a diet there's almost this like, "Ooh, should I be doing that?"

Annie: Like, wait, you know, like it's almost like this innate, like, reaction probably because I've been in diet culture for decades and it's like removing that impulse is a process and a journey. But, like, does it trigger something in you and is this like a "you" situation? Like maybe you don't even need to address it with them. You need to address it with yourself and get real clear on like, "What thoughts and feelings do I have when I hear them talk about this or doing that or eating this and, and what does that mean for me and how does it affect how I feel about myself or, or the choices that I make.? Then thankfully, excuse me, and I think you're probably the same, is I feel pretty comfortable in the choices that I'm making with my lifestyle, that I can have all these, you know, incoming messages about diets and it's like, I'm just not interested. They don't make me wanna like do anything differently. I'm not envious. I'm not really, I'm just, I'm not even affected.

Lauren: I used to get, I'm that way now too, it doesn't, it doesn't bother me. It doesn't really affect me. I used to get like, offended, right? Like I used to be like, "Why are you doing?" Like it would offend me if my friend would go on a diet. Right. And that took some processing, like you said, for myself, to get to the point where now I'm like, "Okay, good for her, not for me."

Annie: Yes. I just ran into that and I wonder if she'll listen, and this is, this is the hard part about having a podcast is when you talk about-

Lauren: And telling everybody-

Annie: Your personal experiences and then everyone feels like they know you and then everyone's listening and it's like, "Oh, is she talking about me?" But I had a girlfriend just call me and she like went to confess. She was like, "I just want you to know that I just started doing this thing and I know it's not probably what you would agree with and I know you aren't gonna like it, but I just, I feel

really bad and I just, I needed to do something and, you know, it just exploded on me" and I'm like, "Hey, it's okay." Like, I know that obviously you and me, Jen, other people in our community have taken a very kind of loud, like, stance on, we're not dieting. This is, we're done with that crap. Sometimes people around us can feel ashamed, like, and, you know, there was part of me that was like, "Why didn't she, like, she knows what I do? Like she knows what I'm about. She knows my values, like how could she not pick what I offer, you know?"

And that goes to the point like not everyone is at the same space in the journey and, and all I can do is ultimately keep my door open for when whatever she's doing doesn't work, which most likely won't work to keep my arms open and my door open, say like, "Hey, you're welcome here anytime." Cause we always say, we always say that we're like the last house on the block. Like women that come to us have tried a lot of things before they come to us and sometimes you've got to go through them all before you're ready to commit to us, which is cool. Like we get it, we've been there. That's been our experience as well. So, you know, we can still be friends while you're doing that thing. I just don't want to hear about it.

Lauren: Right. Yeah.

Annie: We still cool. We're still good.

Lauren: I still love ya.

Annie: Yeah, absolutely. She's still one of my great friends, but, I'm not gonna like drive you to the meeting sort of thing. Anyways, okay, Lauren, this is good. And I hope this helps our community, you know, so just to review, you can avoid, you can redirect or dodge, ultimately decide if you want to address it and then how you want to address it. Do you want to set a boundary? Do you want to be really direct, and ultimately keep doing your thing because there are people that are watching you do what you do that don't acknowledge it.

Lauren: That's what I was going to add. I was thinking about that earlier and it slipped my mind is sometimes some of the, one of the best things you can just do is be an example.

Lauren: Yeah. Right. Like you were saying, Annie, about the restaurant, like someone watches you that you feel like you can have that piece of bread and it's not a big deal. And you do it without any shame or guilt and you're still, you know,

living your best life, you're still healthy, you're still strong, you're still doing all these great things even though you had the bread. Right.

Annie: Yes.

Lauren: And like sometimes being the example is the best thing you can even do without saying anything.

Annie: Absolutely. And again, you know, reflecting on, like, what does this mean to you? What's your relationship with, you know, dieting and, and how does that trigger you? What emotions come up when you read posts from your friend or your sister or your mom or whatever? And then ultimately doing what you need to do to prioritize your own health and wellbeing is the most important thing. So whatever that is, if it's avoiding, if it's dodging, if it's addressing, if it's not addressing, if it's, you know, spending less time with them in person, even, whatever that looks like is going to be different depending on the context of their relationship and the needs of the person. But just being really mindful of that and know that, we hear your posts when you post them. It's like, I mean, cause they happen all the time, don't they? It's like "My girlfriend just started this diet. My sister just diet, what do I do?" And it's like, you may not need to do anything. You can just be your, keep doing your own non diet thing. Keep sharing your message, keep setting the example like Lauren said, and hopefully eventually it will catch on.

Lauren: Yeah.

Annie: Alright, good talk.

Lauren: Alright.

Annie: Okay. Go team. We'll talk to you later, Lauren.

Lauren: Okay, bye.

Annie: Bye. This episode is brought to you by the Balance365 program. If you're ready to say goodbye to quick fixes and false promises and yes to building healthy habits and a life you're 100% in love with, then check out Balance365.co to learn more.

