

Balance365 Episode 89 Transcript

Annie Brees

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, nutritionist, 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 well being with amazing guests. Enjoy.

Hi, friends thanks for joining me on Balance365 Life Radio This is your host, Annie Brees. And before I tell you about today's topic, I want to invite you to join if you haven't already our free Facebook group, it's called Weight Loss Without Restriction for Women Only. If you are really enjoying the content we share on our podcast, you are going to love what's inside the Facebook group we will link the group in our show notes. If you just scroll down and take a peek, you should be able to find it and I hope to see you in there.

But let me tell you about today's topic. This is something Jen, Lauren and I have been talking in a roundabout way on the podcast for a while and we really dive in deep today and it's juicy. Professionals working in the health and wellness industry are often seen as experts and we're expected to exemplify quote unquote health. They're often on a mission to help their clients improve their wellbeing as well. But what happens when industry professionals are struggling with their own relationships around food and fitness?

The truth is a high percentage of health professionals are wrestling with their own issues around eating disorders and disordered eating. And if left untreated, these struggles can have the potential to impact their coaching and the behaviors they encourage with our members. On today's episode, Jen, Lauren and I dive into the dark side of the fitness industry and discuss some of the unethical and alarming practices we've witnessed firsthand. We're rolling. Is that how we should start the podcast? We're rolling.

Lauren Koski

Action.

Annie Brees

Instead of my typical "Hi, we're all together again." Okay, we are starting, this will just be a very awkward start to the podcast. I'm here with Jen and Lauren. The three of us today discussing the, I don't know, should I call it the dark side of the fitness and wellness industry? It kind of is. Right?

Jennifer Campbell

Yeah, the dirty little secret-

Annie Brees

That no one's talking about, but we're going to talk about it because that's what we do.

Jennifer Campbell

Yeah.

Annie Brees

Okay. Lauren, how are you today?

Lauren Koski

I am good. How are you?

Annie Brees

I'm a little hungry.

Lauren Koski

Oh, okay. I actually just ate lunch.

Annie Brees

What did you have?

Lauren Koski

I had a turkey sandwich and a salad.

Annie Brees

That sounds nice.

Lauren Koski

Yeah, that's what I've had every day for the last two weeks.

Annie Brees

Consistency.

Jennifer Campbell

I'm on a major sandwich kick. I had two sandwiches yesterday. Just so everybody knows, we recorded four podcasts yesterday. And it started at 8am which is the time I get my kids out the door. So I don't have time to eat before we start. And then we pretty much record back to back. So by the time I'm done, I am hungry. And I don't think it's ethical and if there was a management to report Annie to I would.

Lauren Koski

Yeah, yesterday actually, I didn't have a sandwich. I had some rolled up turkey and cheese on a break.

Annie Brees

I had an obscene amount of coffee.

Jennifer Campbell

I had coffee and between one I ran and got a granola bar. And so when we were finished, I went and had two of the most epic ham sandwiches, ham, cheese, tomato mayo. So good. And I was actually thinking as I was eating it "Oh my gosh, om my dieting days having four pieces of bread at once would have sent me over the edge." Like I would have considered it a binge. But I was just so hungry. And it's exactly what I needed.

Annie Brees

I will be sure to pass on your complaints to the podcast management team.

Jennifer Campbell

Thanks.

Annie Brees

I did try to give a little bit of time in between sessions. But that usually just turned out to be enough time to upload your audio, go to the bathroom, grab a drink and come back. So anyways, okay, so back to the topic at hand. We are discussing, like I said, The Dark Side of the fitness and wellness industry because something that we've run into, and we've even experienced it personally, is that personal trainers, coaches, nutritionists, dietitians, we are often considered the expert, by our clients, by our audience, whoever is listening to us speak or reading our words, and they tend to listen, absorb, replicate the information and behaviors that we exhibit. And that gives us a really powerful position. Right.

But just like any other profession, there are trainers, there are coaches out there that are knowingly and unknowingly working outside their scope of practice, and or sharing extremely harmful information to their clients, and, quite honestly damaging to our culture. And oftentimes what we see this look like in our industry is that fitness professionals are struggling with their own issues around food, fitness and their body.

And like I said, sometimes they know and sometimes they don't know. But their unhealed relationships around food and fitness are being passed off to clients, or members of their class or their audience on social media. And we just wanted to dive into that, because there's actually has been some research, right, Jen, you found you found a substantial amount of research to show that professionals in the industry are struggling.

Jennifer Campbell

Yeah, I've known about the research for a long time. And that's because I used to be a board of directors for a nonprofit that no longer exists called Work of Heart.

And it was a support community for people in our industry who are struggling with disordered eating, but typically an eating disorder. And part of our mission was to educate and bring awareness to, like have the safe space, for sure.

Because it's hard to admit when you're in the profession, right? Because you're supposed to be the pinnacle of health. And then when you realize that you actually have, you're suffering with your mental health in your eating behaviors, it's very hard to admit. So we wanted that safe space. But we also wanted to bring awareness to the industry of how many people are suffering with this in our industry.

Annie Brees

And it's not to cast judgment, because I think Lauren, you've shared in your podcasts and your story, that's what brought you to this industry. You were seeking your own salvation, you were trying to do what you needed to do to heal this relationship, right?

Lauren Koski

Yes, for sure. And I didn't really realize, it's not something I did consciously right at the time. But looking back, that's exactly what it was.

Annie Brees

Yeah, and I know, personally, just looking back on my, I guess, personal and professional growth since I entered the fitness industry 10 plus years ago, I have matured a lot. And I look back on some of the information and the practices and behaviors I used to encourage my clients to do and I cringe, quite honestly. And back then I thought I was doing, I was just doing the best that I could with what I had

Lauren Koski

Do you ever get those like Facebook memory notifications? And you're like, "Oh my god, delete. Eight years ago, delete?"

Annie Brees

Yeah, you know, I've actually thought about going back and cleaning up my Instagram feed because there are still posts back I haven't touched it, you know,

as I've been on Instagram for, I don't know, seven years, maybe five years, I don't know. But there's post promoting the craziest things. That's like alkaline water. And-

Jennifer Campbell

You?

Annie Brees

I got paid. I got paid \$100 for a blog post when I wanted to, like I was a new blogger. I just, I like, I just thought that's what you did. I just didn't know any better.

Lauren Koski

Well, it's what it's what some people do.

Jennifer Campbell

It's what some people are still doing and that's a really good example of why the influencer industry has gone so crazy and are promoting all this crazy stuff.

Annie Brees

Yeah, we'll get to that don't don't jump ahead on my outline. It's like you don't trust that I'm gonna like touch all the topics.

Jennifer Campbell

No, it's because of my personality.

Annie Brees

Did you see how I made it about me?

Jennifer Campbell

But I love to make everything my idea.

Annie Brees

We will talk about that in a little bit. But I do want to share, I know you have some of the statistics, Jen, in front of you. I also have some of the statistics. There's multiple studies out here, there's just, this is just one of them. This was a study in particular done on group fitness instructors, they showed that 20, and I think this was not done in the US just full disclosure, we can link it in the show notes if you want to read more into it. But 22% of male respondents and 59% of the female respondents were classified with disordered eating behaviors. No males and 4% of females self reported currently having an eating disorder.

And I think what's even more kind of eye opening about this study is that none of the respondents with the self reported eating disorder had informed their manager about it. And I think that that's just really eye opening, as you said, Jen, that we're often expected to be this pinnacle of health. And it's just sad to me that that professionals could believe that if they do express struggles with their mental health, or their relationship with food or fitness, that their profession might be in jeopardy or their expertise might be questioned or their passion might be doubted.

Jennifer Campbell

Or it's you're a woman and 59% of other group fitness instructors around you have the same behaviors, and it feels more normal than not.

Annie Brees

Well, yeah, do you want to? I have some thoughts on that. But do you want to share what your study about was the dietitians?

Jennifer Campbell

Yeah, and there's again, so many, just like we have so many studies around body image and all the stats are a little bit different, but they are all high. But in this study I have I think they have some 636 dieticians that they surveyed, 49 and a half percent were at risk for orthorexia. And for those who don't know, that's a fixation on healthy eating. And, or a fixation on righteous eating is how this study defined it. And it was 49 and a half percent orthorexia. And 13%, were at risk for having an eating disorder. And 8% self disclosed that they were receiving treatment or had received treatment in the past for an eating disorder.

And I just wanted to note that the majority of people who responded or that were participated in this survey, were women, 97%, and 90%, were Caucasian. And they were all had been in the industry various years. And even though some of them tested, or even though some of them came back as being, you know, very high risk for orthorexia, etc. Only 78% or 70% of them had no dietary restrictions, like you know, so no allergies, etc. So, yeah, interesting. But it's unsurprising to us but you know, and that's why it's the I don't know, if we're calling it the dirty little secret of the industry, or it's just that a lot of people who work in health and wellness have eating issues.

Annie Brees

They're also struggling in health and wellness. And, you know, when you think about, if I'm a person who's struggling, and I want to help, and I happen to land in the lap of someone who is also struggling, how that information that they're passing on can be compromised, based off of their own experience, and what their own perspective and their own struggles are. And I think that that's just, that's information that I would want to know, you know, before hiring-

Jennifer Campbell

Before hiring or?

Annie Brees

Before, sorry, before working with someone, you know, like, I would just want to, I would want to know that I can trust their-

Jennifer Campbell

Well, I'm not sure I agree with you. Okay. I think just because you've struggled or are currently struggling with a mental illness doesn't mean you can't work with people. And just because you are struggling with your own eating habits doesn't mean you can't give people really good advice on what is normal eating. That's my feeling. And whether or not somebody is struggling and in recovery, whether or not they should be working in that profession.

You know, if it's triggering for them, that's a whole other question. But the real danger is untreated. Right? And somebody that has these issues, and is just bringing them into the way they practice, which we actually see all the time. So we see, I mean, you just have to scroll Instagram for a couple minutes, and there's disordered eating, eating disorder advice, everywhere.

Annie Brees

Yeah, sorry. That's a good clarification. I guess that that's what I meant that how that, untreated, can impact what they're sharing, or what they're encouraging.

Jennifer Campbell

Right. Yeah, yeah. And that's because if you're in the depths of it, that's just, you know, it's your personal philosophy, right. But the other thing is to note, do people go into fitness, or go into nutrition because that issue already exists inside of them? And they're trying to get closer to fitness, closer to eating, try and find the answer if they enter the profession? Or do those issues develop from working in these industries? I'm not sure we have the answer for that. We definitely don't for this podcast. Yeah, but I'm not sure we know if that exists.

Annie Brees

Well, and I think, I think the first problem I see with, before we can even, like, improve on that is that our industry, as a whole, severely struggles to identify what's normal eating. And we've talked about that so many times on this podcast, but I think our industry needs more information. Because we are now a culture that celebrates disordered eating or applauds or promotes it as discipline and willpower and you're just really committed.

And we would say we see a lot of eating practices or practices around food that's kind of like "Is that?" and just just for reference I pulled up this is from, it is about symptoms of disordered eating, and they may include but are not limited to frequent dieting, anxiety associated with specific foods or skipping meals, chronic weight fluctuation, rigid rituals and routines surrounding food and exercise, feelings of guilt and shame associated with eating, preoccupation with food, weight and body image that negatively impacts quality of life, a feeling of loss of control around food, including compulsive eating habits and using exercise food

restriction, fasting or purging to make up for quote unquote bad foods consumed. Which I think if you hear that list, you're probably like, "Yeah, I've seen that."

Jennifer Campbell

I mean, personal trainers-

Lauren Koski

All of it-

Jennifer Campbell

Constantly encourage people to essentially purge, exercise off calories, etc.

Annie Brees

Well, I mean, you can open up a popular women's Fitness magazine around the holidays and see the "you ate it, negate it" calorie charts or it's like, you know, we're approaching Halloween. I wouldn't be surprised if we see the infamous Halloween candy chart that's like "one mini Reese's equals X amount of burpees." And it's like, no, thanks.

Jennifer Campbell

Yeah.

Annie Brees

But it's common. It's like, that's what our that's what we expect in our culture nowadays. And unfortunately, that's not our definition of a healthy relationship with food.

Jennifer Campbell

I'd love to see a study done where it's dieticians entering university where they test them before their first year starts and then test them every single year to see if their eating habits change or disordered eating, if it flares up or if it comes down or that would be really interesting.

Annie Brees

Hey, everyone, Annie here I want to sneak in this episode to tell you where you can find even more information on the Balance365 nutrition and movement philosophy, including the best types of exercise you should do to reach your goals, and how the all or nothing approach to exercise is actually keeping you stuck.

You can learn the exact process we use with all of our clients in our free workshop, the five step process to overcome overeating, getting off the diet roller coaster and restoring a healthy relationship with food that you can pass on to your kids. And you can get all of that for free. It's super simple. Pause the show, open up your browser and type in balance365workshop.com. Or you can click the link in your sentence. Okay, let's get back to this episode.

Lauren Koski

It's really unsurprising, all of the stats just because I would say the stats are probably similar for the population as a whole. Right. And so, like dietitians and personal trainers are people living in our society and like, the whole society is like that.

Jennifer Campbell

Yeah, I mean, I guess the danger being that personal trainers and dietitians are often looked to for the expertise. The other thing that I don't know if this exists, I couldn't find anything is doctors, like family doctors. And so what I want to note is that we hear horrific dietary advice every day that women tell us they got from their doctors. And so sometimes I don't know what is more harmful to our society when a family doctor is giving me advice, or if Auntie Glenda at Thanksgiving is giving it because, I mean, it's bad in our society. It's very, very bad. But when it comes from your doctors mouth, that's someone you trust, right? Yeah, like that's the epitome of trust. And so, but again, doctors are just people.

Lauren Koski

Yeah, it's just really hard. It's a problem. And I don't know, like, where do you start to fix that? You know?

Annie Brees

An extension of that study that I mentioned earlier about the group fitness instructors, I thought this was interesting when we talk about how we can identify normal eating is that that same study revealed that 100% of the participants believe that they would benefit from further education and guidelines for identifying and addressing eating disorders, which I mean, 100%, 100% of them were like, "Yes, I want more information."

And I just, like, I've done multiple certifications through personal training, various Personal Training accreditations and or affiliations. And I know, there's a lot of personal trainers talking about food. And I know what's offered in terms of a personal training certificate nutrition aspect. And it's not much. It's not much, but it comes up so often in the relationship with the client.

Lauren Koski

Yeah.

Annie Brees

The other the other thing that we the other part of the problem that we already talked about a little bit, that we can dive into more is that there's a lot of pressure on fitness professionals to look the part. And sometimes looking the part, maybe not even sometimes, maybe it's more like oftentimes, but the behaviors that are required to look the part are not healthy. And we're applauding people that look a certain way as a picture of health, not knowing the behaviors that they need to engage in to maintain that look. And it just creates this circle of, you know,

Jennifer Campbell

If your gym only has the quote unquote, fit, looking body, working in it, I think there's something wrong. And I just want to say that 10 years ago, I heard out of a gym manager's mouth that he let a woman go once because she had let herself go. And 10 years ago, I just didn't know any better. And I thought "Yeah, of course. It's like, you know, of course you would." And today, I'm just like, "Oh, you know, that is awful that size discrimination is what it is." But-

Annie Brees

I remember walking into my group certification class, like it was a weekend course at the gym. And I remember being so concerned with how I physically

stacked up against other professionals, I just thought, like, there's just I don't have, I don't have abs, I'm not ripped, like, I just, I just knew I was going to be on the bigger end. And I was so worried if they were going to give me the same respect, if they were going to believe that I had the same amount of knowledge or was worthy of being a group fitness instructor.

Jennifer Campbell

Right?

Annie Brees

That was 10 years ago. And now the funny thing is now I feel like my size is actually an asset. There's a lot of people that are actually drawn to me, because I'm not what I would consider small. I don't identify as a small human.

Jennifer Campbell

Yeah, it's a real testament to what the beliefs we have our society has around body sizes, right? So because you know that a lot of people wouldn't work with a larger bodied personal trainer, they wouldn't want to. And it's all these beliefs you have about larger bodies, and all the beliefs you have about small bodies. A lot of people think people with living in small bodies have a secret to how they stay that way they're more diligent and motivated. And yeah, it's-

Annie Brees

Or just a general belief of what health looks like, like health is synonymous with six pack abs, or, you know, visible muscles or eating apples at every meal, you know, whatever the Google search image, it's always it's always a woman in a sports bra laughing at an apple. Yeah. Yeah, the other issue that Jen was starting to get into, and I cut her off as to why this problem could potentially exist, is that there's the rise of the influencer.

And, as I just shared, I did some shady stuff back in the day, that truthfully compromise my values, but I just didn't, I wasn't at a point in my profession yet that I realized how important that integrity piece was. I was just doing the thing that I saw everyone else do to get paid. I thought this was going to put me in good standing with brands. And you certainly, in fact now I would, but back then I

wouldn't have accepted free product and payment and then shared an unfavorable review about that product. And I'm proud of myself.

But I just recently had a restaurant here reached out and asked for some support on social media. And I flat out said like, "I don't support some of the programs that you're pushing. I wouldn't push them on my social media. I just don't think this is a good partnership." And what they were offering was quite lucrative. But-

Jennifer Campbell

It was a what kind of business was it?

Annie Brees

It was a restaurant and they were promoting-

Jennifer Campbell

What programs were they?

Annie Brees

A keto diet.

Jennifer Campbell

Why are you doing the diet culture thing? Like, why do you want to go there?

Annie Brees

Yeah. Yeah, and the funny thing is, is the restaurants quite nice. Like it's like this Chipotle style bar where you can pick your meat, your carb, your fat, your veggies, you're toppings-

Jennifer Campbell

I would go there

Annie Brees

I know. I know.

Jennifer Campbell

Rebrand to Balance365.

Annie Brees

I know, that's exactly what I was thinking. I was like, the bones of what you have here is really, really great. But you don't need to dress it up as this like, this thing. But so anyways, but it's just a testament to how like, I now have very clear values, and a mission and a vision that I believe in. And I'm not willing to compromise that for some money, for some free product, for fame, for more followers. And unfortunately, some people are. Quite a few people are, actually.

Jennifer Campbell

We started working with influencers this year. And while we've only, we're talking to a few, and we've done, we've had two influencers share Balance365. And I remember when I started looking, so influencer marketing, just so everybody knows who's listening along, is a thing in 2019 that can be really great for a business.

Lauren Koski

It's a huge, huge, huge thing.

Jennifer Campbell

Right. I mean, we all know that we see people doing it. So we're just basically, we haven't done anything aggressive with it but we've been testing it out this year. And the two influencers we work with so far are amazing. But for us, it's been really hard to find. So again, along the lines of what Annie was just saying, we can't find, it's very difficult to find influence sensors that aren't willing to sell just whatever. So you scroll their feeds. And because they were shucking skinny tea four months ago, I'm not going to work with them. Because we don't want our product showing up on their feed and we don't want, we're looking for relationships with influencers. We're not looking for one offs. So we're going in four months from now, if you get an offer from Ketocompany.com or you know what I mean? And then you're doing that after like, it's just, it just doesn't sit right with us. So if you guys know anybody-

Lauren Koski

It's been really difficult to-

Jennifer Campbell

Needle in a haystack kind of search. Yeah, but so many influencers have just, like taken a dive off that diving board into-

Lauren Koski

And i think i think there's some right, that maybe are malicious and just in it for the money or the quick win or whatever. And then there's some who don't, who maybe don't know any better yet, or don't realize they're doing harm, right?

Jennifer Campbell

I don't want to judge anybody, because a lot of people are just trying to feed their families, you know.

Annie Brees

You do you do see a lot of people that don't have any experience or knowledge about food or fitness sharing a product because that brand happens to think their audience would like it. And I think that's where it gets quite messy because they're offering information about a product that they don't, you know, that's just not their area of expertise. You know, it's Kim Kardashian sharing protein shakes sort of stuff like-

Lauren Koski

If I see one more influencer, talking about celery juice I'm going to lose it.

Jennifer Campbell

What is up with that? So it's there is getting paid, having a sponsored ad and then on the other thing that influencers do is they get on board every trend going because they are trying to stay relevant.

Lauren Koski

And it brings new followers

Jennifer Campbell

It brings new followers, they get to use the hashtags that are trending. So celery juice, hashtag celery juice is trending, they see that, they quickly go out and get themselves a glass of green beverage, it might not even be celery juice, and they pose and take a picture of it and talk, "Hey, is anyone else doing this? I feel so amazing." And, you know, let's fast forward three weeks, and you never hear about celery juice again. And so I think that's something that consumers need to understand that, like, that stuff goes on. Like it's very strategic when you're building an influencer brand.

Annie Brees

Well, and now I think, you know, Instagram is trying to look out for their audience and give them a little bit of protection by requiring the influencers put, what is it hashtag ad? If they're, if they're paid, if they're getting paid for that post?

Jennifer Campbell

Yeah.

Annie Brees

That they have to disclose that they're getting paid. So you can, as a viewer, you can see right away that like, okay, maybe they're, what they're saying is a little salesy, because they're getting paid. It might not because they just love the product.

Jennifer Campbell

That's why we've pursued partnerships. And it's because we want, we've brought our influencers into the program. We are like an open book, no obligations, you go through our program with a fine tooth comb, you do it, you join our communities, you get a feel for what we're doing here. And if you believe in us, and you believe in our greater mission for the world, then let's do this. And if they don't, they can walk away and there's no hard feelings. And, yeah, so for us, you know, it's sort of a two way street. It's like, you know, we're not just throwing

things out, you know, we're not just hiring a company to drop a bunch of sponsored posts into the influencer sphere. We're, like, we're looking to share values with somebody and build this together. Right.

Annie Brees

Right. And as this relates back to the dark side of the fitness industry, I guess the point that I really wanted to drive home about the rise of the influencer is, like I said, a few moments ago, it's just we have people promoting health and wellness products that have no experience or expertise or knowledge in health or wellness. And so it's just kind of like, you just need to consider the source. Like, I'm not getting my nutrition advice from Kim Kardashian. Like, I'm just, like, that's not a trusted source.

Lauren Koski

And it goes back to the fact that we think anyone with a certain type of body knows what they're talking about in regards to health and fitness. And that's just not true.

Annie Brees

Or number of followers, like, Oh, hey, they have 150,000 followers, or they have a million followers, like they must be a reliable, trusted source someone that I can believe, right?

Jennifer Campbell

I think it's also important to note that everybody has biases, even us, right, so and so it's really hard to be 100% truly objective. But for me, what I would look out for is anybody promoting anything, that's all or nothing or something that's very restrictive or wild promises, like this one food or cut out this one food, then those are huge red flags.

Annie Brees

Do you want to talk about your run in with that, was it a personal trainer?

Jennifer Campbell

Okay, so this happened when I don't think we had founded this company yet.

Annie Brees

Yeah, we had.

Jennifer Campbell

We, okay, I was still doing my work with Work of Heart when we first founded this company, and a woman who kept coming up in our communities was Brittany Dawn fitness. And because she was essentially targeting people with eating

disorder hashtags, and essentially saying that she could help them recover from their eating disorder.

And she came up enough times that one of our other board of directors had basically really started digging into what this woman was doing. And she had this whole file on her of screenshots, and some of her clients she was taking on, like kids, like teenage girls, as clients. And anyways, it was awful, it was so unethical. And there's nothing you can do.

That's another thing a lot of people don't know, that we didn't touch on is, there are no regulations for personal trainers. It is, like in most areas, it's like wild west out there of what's happening. So I tried reporting her to her certifying body. And they came back to me and said they didn't have her in their database, which is when we learned she was lying about her credentials.

And then and we, my board of director partner, have reached out to her privately several times to try and engage with her and educate her like, really, you know, from a good hearted place, like, let's do this together, like you may not know, that what you're doing is very wrong and it's hurting people, because we are now working with them.

And then I just got mad. And I said, This is crazy. She's ignoring you. And I sent her an email and said, it was just a little more direct, like, "This has got to stop, like, we have our eye on you. This needs to stop," and nothing. And so I published a blog post about her. And it went, and I just laid out exactly what she was up to. And it went totally viral. And then she emailed me back. And they threatened legal action at first. But instead, they decided they never did take legal action against me.

They ended up send me an email that was assured me that they were changing their practices. And she would stop using hashtags that would target people with eating disorders. So she was using hashtags that were, you know, hashtag eating disorder, hashtag eating disorder recovery, that kind of thing. And she stopped claiming that she could help people recover from eating disorders, whether she continued with that behavior, I don't know. But anyways, it felt like a win.

But she did continue on and she did continue to get better, bigger and bigger, bigger because she was your typical fitness influencer, right, six pack abs, you know, pictures and huge, you know, bowls of ice cream that she can eat like this and still have this and you know, and maybe she could, but you kind of question somebody's own, you know, what's going on in their own heads. And if that was just another case of somebody who was suffering from something, projecting it onto her enormous audience.

And if you google her, Google her, she was just in the news recently, as she has ripped off hundreds and thousands of people of money. And she was in the news over it, like national news. But she again, she has continued, like, she just, that was just a hiccup for her. And she continued and it's crazy what she's getting away with.

Annie Brees

It is and, you know, while you were talking, just when we're talking about unethical practices of people in the industry, the other one came to mind was the woman from my town, who was using your before and after photo. And the funny thing is, so I'm sitting here scrolling Instagram one night, and I'm like, that's Jen in this woman's client, supposed client-

Jennifer Campbell

I forgot about that.

Annie Brees

She was sharing clients, her clients, quote, unquote, her clients before and afters like, look at the success of her clients. And I'm scrolling through and I'm like, "Actually, that's Jen. She lives in Canada. She's not, she's not an Iowa. I know she's not their client. And I messaged her, and I was like, "This is not okay, like,

you can't, you don't just steal people's photos off the internet and claim them as your own client." I immediately screenshot of everything before I commented, because I'm a smart cookie. That's what you do on the internet, sent it to you. And, you know, I think she eventually-

Jennifer Campbell

I contacted her. Yeah, my lawyer contacted her. And she broke it down immediately and apologized and had some excuse, it was crazy. And that photo has been used other places too.

Lauren Koski

Jen, was that the one that was actually like five minutes apart?

Annie Brees

Yeah, it wasn't even a real-

Jennifer Campbell

Yeah it was five minutes apart, and it showed my body, and I did it in like 2013. And it showed my body just straight on standing there. And it showed me posing with a filter to make my skin look tanned, you know, hip popped, and a different size of bathing suit on. And it was taken, there was five minutes between the two photos.

And so I mean, the joke is, you know, for people who are have stolen that in the past to try and use it as a success story for their own brand. It's just very ironic to me, like, it speaks to the desperation as well to succeed in this industry, and how some, I find that some health and wellness professionals treat their career like some people treat diets, like they're trying to get as successful as possible, as fast as possible. And there's some, they've tried to be basically become a celebrity trainer. And they'll do whatever to obtain that.

Annie Brees

Well, and there's clearly some people feel like it's not okay to just be like, "Hey, I'm just starting out, I don't have a lot of clients, but I would like to work with you."

Instead, I'm going to steal a bunch of photos that aren't my clients and call them my clients. So it appears like I have a large client base than I do. Because I have shame around saying I only have two clients.

Jennifer Campbell

Yeah, I remember when we started Balance365. So first of all, anyone listening, we don't use before and after photos ever. And I remember starting out and as you know, the three of us being really honest with each other, that we're not a quick fix company so it was going to take some time to build out testimonials. And what super exciting is that we're four and a half years in and we have so many testimonials, that it's just great. But I remember that first year was really hard because we weren't a 21 Day Fix. So we couldn't open up shop and 21 days later have all these before and after photos and lost this many pounds. And-

Annie Brees

We were running giveaways-

Jennifer Campbell

To get people to come in please work with us-

Annie Brees

To encourage people to come in so we could ensure that we had like a large enough test group to make sure what we thought was going to work worked. It worked, and it worked beautifully. But we were like, can you please share this with your, like, we need any people.

Lauren Koski

We all brought friends.

Annie Brees

Yeah, we all we all gave ourselves one or two friends to-

Jennifer Campbell

Really our testimonials are from people who have spent a year with us or spent you know, there's, I mean, we've interviewed people on the podcast that have

been in Balance365 for years. And I mean, that's the reality of change, it really is the reality. So it's very hard to get a company going that's about long term change, because you just don't, you don't have that, you know, those sexy photos that are 14 days apart. And you know-

Annie Brees

Because it takes a year or two years to get the-

Jennifer Campbell

To get the results that you actually are looking for that you can keep.

Annie Brees

Yeah, I had, I had forgotten about some of that stuff.

Jennifer Campbell

The startup years were-

Annie Brees

From humble beginnings, when everything was shared from a Google Drive.

Jennifer Campbell

Facebook Messenger is the way we communicated with each other.

Annie Brees

And our logo was made in Canva, by us.

Jennifer Campbell

I still have all of our old logos and stuff in a file and someday I want to share them. And just to go, "This is evolution. This is where us from day one. To day, you know 1600" or wherever we're at. And that's what a human being should expect as well, right? Like, this isn't the 21 Day Fix build a business, it's like, this is what the long haul looks like that you will evolve and evolve again and evolve again. And we've had many evolutions as a brand.

Annie Brees

And we you know, we just had this talk, we have a project that I won't say anything about but we have a project that we're exploring, and Lauren said yesterday, how can we bootstrap this to make it work? And then we can level up from there?

Jennifer Campbell

Yeah, and if people respond well to it, then we will level it up.

Annie Brees

Yeah, we don't get to goal for like this, like as much as we would like to like, go fly out to California, rent a studio, get X, Y, Z to finish this project and have it be this beautiful in product, like in six weeks. That's just not the process for us, the process is-

Lauren Koski

And we learned that through experience from doing that before.

Jennifer Campbell

Amateur mistake. We're having a business podcast.

Annie Brees

Well, and but I think it does speak to some of the extent that professionals will go to to make it look, to create this facade, that they have this business, they have this expertise.

Lauren Koski

Yeah. Because it is hard.

Jennifer Campbell

And it was and we put a lot of money in places we shouldn't have so we could look more successful than we were in those first few years. We're now, you know, now we have achieved a level of success and sustainability that's thrilling. And the content we're creating is, you know, often lesser quality than what we did out

of the gates. Like there's just a lot of, I think what people don't realize in the fitness, health and wellness industry is all the smoke and mirrors that exists when a new company starts up. And I mean, we definitely were kind of caught up in that too in our first couple years of business. And we were had no business spending the amount of money we had on some of the things we did. But live and learn.

Annie Brees

Well, and our mantra is you pay for an education.

Lauren Koski

You pay for an education. Thanks, Greg.

Jennifer Campbell

Thank Dad for that one.

Annie Brees

Quote Jen's dad. Oh, bless. Okay, so okay, let's I don't want to leave listeners, like thinking that okay, well, everyone, and fitness and wellness industry and profession is-

Jennifer Campbell

Messed up.

Annie Brees

Messed up

Jennifer Campbell

And they're all projecting their issues.

Annie Brees

Right.

Jennifer Campbell

We just need to get honest about the red flags.

Annie Brees

Yeah. So, you know, obviously some of the things we talked about, you know, I think I think first and foremost, one of the things that really rubs me the wrong way about trainers in particular because I am a trainer is when they're projecting their goals on to you, or when they're trying to talk about diet and you're like I came here for strength training. I think that's a big, like, that deserves a deeper conversation for me.

Jennifer Campbell

Or like when they're not actually looking out for your health and wellness. They're looking out for their own business, and they're trying to push you into becoming a success story for their brand. I mean, you can feel that-

Annie Brees

Which is, if you listen to the member spotlight with Megan Prince, she said that exact thing. She said she had worked with a lot of companies that she felt like just wanted her before and after. They just it's like they're salivating at this opportunity to like, "Oh, my gosh, what I could do with you, you know, you just listened to everything I said. And followed my advice, like-

Jennifer Campbell

I could make so much money off of your before and after photo.

Annie Brees

Yeah, that's really alarming to me when you come. And that's why we always say in Balance365 that we don't have goals for you or goals for your body, like you come to us with the goals and then we help you figure out the roadmap to get there but we're not prescribing any goals for anyone. That's client lead. That's member lead, for sure.

Some of the other red flags would be, you know, just to review that disordered eating list, if they're, like, encouraging you to compulsively check ingredient list and nutritional labels or asking you to cut out like all food groups or not all food groups, but just don't eat, just celery juice. Or if they are, I mean, gosh, if they are saying, like, don't eat or eat very little.

Jennifer Campbell

You guys remember that trainer I shared with you. It was a couple years ago and he was running a two week fast with his clients. Like it's out there, everybody listening, it is out there.

Lauren Koski

Another red flag is when someone says, like, "Oh, it's just this easy. Like, you just follow this and it's that's all you need to do. And it's just that easy to get what I have." Right? That's a big red flag

Annie Brees

Yeah, and just, you know, as Jen was describing orthorexia, orthorexia, like just this obsession with health, all the time, healthy eating all the time, and then showing distress if you're not able to eat healthfully in a certain situation.

Jennifer Campbell

Another red flag for me and this is personal, I am not going to project this belief on everybody is when I come across a health and wellness professional who rants and raves about obesity constantly. That is a red flag for me.

Annie Brees

You mean their-

Jennifer Campbell

Weight stigma, like, you know, like-

Lauren Koski

Shaming.

Jennifer Campbell

Shaming, you know, it's the approach where I'm like, I'm not gonna be comfortable working with you, if this is all you can talk about.

Annie Brees

Another red flag for me is using punitive language around food and exercise, you know, so and I hear this, I just, I cringe, it's oftentimes comes up in group fitness for me is, you know, the like, come on, you've got to earn that wine later, you've got a burn off that Halloween candy-

Lauren Koski

Earn your weekend.

Annie Brees

And a lot of it is, it may not be that they're struggling with their relationship with food or whatever, it could just be a matter of they're just simply parroting what they've heard in other classes. But I think that that's, like, our job as a fitness professional to stop and discern, like, is this information I want to continue to spread and share? And what is the bigger message of this, that food needs to be earned, that I need to use exercise to burn off the food that I eat? Like, that's not a message I want to promote. And so there's like, you just have to stop and pause as a professional and be like, is this the message I want to continue?

Jennifer Campbell

The other thing is to question messages that I think are overly aesthetic. I don't mind and I personally don't feel triggered by the odd like aesthetic focus. You know, I like, you know, I like the way I look type post. But if somebody is selling trying to sell you something or work with you, or their page is just a constant stream of their body or their abs, look how lean I am. That's another red flag for me, because health and wellness is, you know, it's not always hand in hand with weight loss, or being that level of leanness, period. Like, let's be honest here.

Annie Brees

Yeah, we're just a professional that can't acknowledge and respect and help you meet other goals that aren't their goals, right? You know, like that's fine, if that's

like, I like strength training, I like big, juicy biceps, you know, but I would hope that I could also train clients that don't share that same goal, that happens to be a lot of my clients.

Jennifer Campbell

Come on, let's just work on those biceps.

Annie Brees

Let's just do all the curl. But I would hope if a woman was like, actually, I really don't like that, I would prefer to train more towards this or for this reason, or whatever that I could be like, "Okay, great. We can do that, too." Like, this is my goal and that's separate of your goal. But if someone's like, "This is my goal, this is all I know. And this is all I know how to train." And that's not that that doesn't jive with what you're after, then they're not your trainer. And I think it's okay to, like, if you're kind of surfing for a trainer or coach, nutritionist or dietician to interview them, to vet them so to speak, ask them questions like "What is your philosophy? What are your values? What's-

Jennifer Campbell

Yeah, I mean, not everyone can be for everyone, not even us, right? So we aren't anti weight loss. And if that's part of your values to be anti weight loss, then you're not going to jive with Balance365.

Annie Brees

Yeah. Or if you we've said this before, if you are a person that's looking to get competition lean-

Jennifer Campbell

We're probably not your program.

Annie Brees

Yeah, like that's not. And that's cool. We wish you the best and hope you find someone that suits your needs. And no hard feelings.

Jennifer Campbell

Totally.

Annie Brees

Any other red flags that you-

Jennifer Campbell

No, I think we've covered them.

Annie Brees

Lauren you got anything to add?

Lauren Koski

No, I think you guys have covered it.

Annie Brees

Okay, great.

Jennifer Campbell

I know what Lauren wants to say. "If they're a Beachbody Coach."

Annie Brees

I think that's, you know, we shared in your story that you used to be a Beachbody coach.

Lauren Koski

Yeah. I mean, let's be real, a Beachbody coach is not coach. They're a salesperson. So I guess yeah, that would be a red flag. We've actually got a lot of former Beachbody coaches in Balance365.

Jennifer Campbell

You guys should start your own spin off group. We do have a lot of former Beachbody coaches. It's interesting.

Lauren Koski

PS, I did not know anything when I was a Beachbody coach.

Jennifer Campbell

Right?

Lauren Koski

Did not know what I was doing.

Annie Brees

Yeah, the education provided is leaves a lot to be desired. I would imagine, I haven't seen it firsthand. But I would imagine. But now that you said that, that would be maybe another red flag for me is like what they're expecting you to buy from a supplement perspective. If they're hawking-

Lauren Koski Yeah.

Jennifer Campbell

And if you're buying from them, that's in the US if this is a saying but in Canada, doctors and dietitians cannot sell, they cannot financially benefit from the things they recommend.

Lauren Koski

That's not a thing here.

Jennifer Campbell

And so it keeps it from, it keeps a clear line around ethics.

Annie Brees

That's nice.

Lauren Koski

Yeah, I had a doctor's office that used to sell Isagenix. So-

Jennifer Campbell

Speaking of disordered eating amongst doctors.

Lauren Koski

Another red flag.

Jennifer Campbell

Totally. That's crazy.

Annie Brees

Yeah, okay, great. This was good. I feel like we-

Jennifer Campbell

We just really got stuff out.

Annie Brees

Yeah.

Lauren Koski

Thanks for the vent session.

Annie Brees

There are a lot of great humans in this industry, there are a lot and what's good for you might not be good for someone else. And it's just, it's really just creating awareness about what you need and want in working with someone and if they value what you value, or if they can at least respect what you value. But just give them some side eye, you know, just like-

Jennifer Campbell

But also like, consider the like small people that aren't as flashy and out there and have 100,000 followers on Instagram, like, there's some, we know some people, some women doing some incredible work in our industry that are aligned with our values. And they're just not, they don't have hundreds of thousands of followers. They're not posting pictures in bikinis every day.

Lauren Koski

Do you want to know why?

Annie Brees

Because they're busy working.

Lauren Koski

Because their message is not lose 30 pounds in 30 days.

Jennifer Campbell

Yeah. And I just, like, give those people a shot. Because the best experience I ever had in a fitness facility was just like a small facility, it was run by two guys. And I got so strong, and they just were so knowledgeable. They weren't out there on social media, they were just doing their best, serving their clients the best way they knew how and yeah, like, just give those give those guys a shot. give someone a shot that isn't in a body that you have come to expect should be the kind of body a fitness professional has, or a dietitian should have. There's just some incredible people out there doing some really good work.

Annie Brees

I just have to tell this really quick story yesterday. This, this personal trainer in my gym came up to me, he's like, "So what do you do for a living?" He follows me, like we're friends. He just maybe had no clue. And it's like, "Well, actually, I I have a health and wellness coaching company called Balance365." And he's like, "Oh, great. Like, how does that run?" I was like, "Well, we have almost 3000 members worldwide." And he's like, "Oh, okay." Like, no clue, no clue. And I was like, "Well, maybe I need to be a little bit more. I don't know if boastful is the right word, but we're doing pretty good." And I think that's a testament to what women, the message that women are ready for and want.

Jennifer Campbell

Absolutely.

Annie Brees

But yeah, he just he had no idea that I was in it. It's like, you know, we're so busy caught up in some of the day to day operations still that I don't share a lot on my personal Instagram about the happenings of Balance365 but that doesn't mean it's not happening.

Jennifer Campbell

We've grown an enormous amount this past year.

Annie Brees

Yeah, if you aren't following me on instagram, Balance365life and then we also have a new private Facebook group Weight Loss Without Restriction. That's, I just love that group. It's so good. It's a lot of good information. So find us there. If you want to give someone a shot. You can also put us on the list to consider. We think we're pretty fun to hang out with. Or you can just join us every Wednesday for this wonderful podcast. Okay, this is good. This is a great topic. Good job, ladies. We killed it.

Lauren Koski

Thank you. Okay, bye.

Jennifer Campbell

Bye.

Annie Brees

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