

Balance365 Episode 208 Transcript

ANNIE BREES (INTRO)

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 co founder Jennifer Campbell. Together we have a team of personal trainers and nutritionists who coach 1000s of women daily and are on a mission to help women feel happy, healthy, 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.

ANNIE

Hi, friends. Each week, Jen and I go live in our Facebook group Weight Loss Without Restriction to answer your questions. On today's podcast episode, we're sharing one of our recent sessions. And here's what we cover. First of all, is it okay to reward yourself for fitness goals? Then we discuss the question, I'm always making plans to change my habits and never follow through. Why do I do that? And finally, I don't buy in to your philosophy of small changes. That's it. That was the question. Actually, I'm not even sure it was a question but rather a statement. But you've got to hear our answers. If you want to text your own question to us, we would love to chat with you. Give us a shout out via text at 515-517-2715. And if you want to get into our live Q&As, head over to our show notes and you'll find a link to our Facebook group. See you in there.

ANNIE

Happy Thursday.

JEN CAMPBELL

Happy Thursday.

ANNIE

That was said with some gusto.

JEN

I have been working on my energy levels, Annie.

ANNIE

Does it also require you to speak louder?

BOTH

[Laugh]

ANNIE

Because all of a sudden, your volume is up quite a bit.

JEN

Just so everybody knows, whenever Annie and I record podcasts, Facebook lives, it's normally first thing in the morning for me before I've really gotten going. So if that comes across, I am very sorry, but I am just getting going most days. [Laughs] And I'm trying to be better at it, actually, I'm really trying to bring a little more of my like midday energy to the mornings.

ANNIE

Okay, so we got midday energy this morning, kicking off our ask us anything. If you are new here, welcome. Say hi in the comments. Don't let us do this by ourselves. I love Jen, but I'd love to, I'd love to hear where you're tuning in from and what you're up to today. We have three really, really great questions today. And the first one is, is it good to reward yourself for fitness goals or any goals really not with food and not results based goals, but for example, buying yourself a new pair of shoes, if you reach your goal. What do you think?

JEN

I think, first let's talk about how habits form. And that could answer everything here. So every habit that you make has a trigger, a routine, and a reward. So actually, it is very smart to build in a reward to new habits you're trying to form. And the other thing to understand is that all habits have rewards, even bad habits, which is why we keep doing them. And this is something that develops in the deepest part of your brain. I can't think of the word right now. Not a scientist. But it is a very primitive adaptation that you have as a human because your brain loves habits. And it actually saves you energy for your brain to create these habits, right? So it would just, it would, it would take a lot of energy for us to have to make decisions and contemplate different circumstances every single day. So we form habits and actually, human beings, 40% of our daily behaviors are habits. So at the end of the day when you try to think back of all the decisions you made in a day, you can't really remember them all because so many of them, we're on autopilot. I get up in the morning, I go for the coffee. I grab a mug, I go get a spoon. All of that is happening on autopilot. And the only reason it would not happen is if, you know, someone moved the cutlery drawer. And then it would be like, what? [Laughs]

JEN

And how many times would you go to that -

JEN

Yes, I would continue -

ANNIE

First drawer?

JEN

- to go to that same drawer, you know, for weeks, until I learned my new habit of going to the new drawer. And then there's my reward, the spoon. So that's what I want everybody to

understand, that all habits have rewards. And when you're trying to form a new habit, it's totally okay to find a reward for this new habit. But those rewards usually have to be immediate for the habit to stick. And I think what this person is talking about is like giving herself like a consistency reward. And I think that's awesome. And I'll tell you why. Change is hard, forming new habits is hard, especially at the beginning. And if you're at the beginning stages of trying to form a new habit, or create change in your life, use whatever you've got available to you that will actually work as a reward. So I personally find that exercise for me has always kind of been my slipperiest habit, I have the least amount, my intrinsic motivation is not super high when it comes to exercise. My brain throws tons of, you know, reasons at me for why I shouldn't do this today. And when I'm at the beginning stages of forming an exercise habit, I also build in rewards. And actually, a couple years ago, I was trying to get it restarted. And I gave myself a very generous reward. So after one month of consistency to what I had committed to, a new pair of Lululemon leggings, which for me is kind of a splurge. And I just needed it, I needed, you know, I needed to build in whatever - I also built in meeting a friend for the workout. So I had built in a lot of accountability and, you know, rewarding things for myself at that time. Yeah, and guess what? It worked, right?

ANNIE
Yeah.

JEN
Yeah. And I don't need those ongoing anymore. I don't need to build in consistency rewards. Once I've established the habit, it's just like, it's getting momentum, that's the most difficult part of building a habit. Right? It is, you know, it's like, you know, trying to push a boulder, like, what's in motion will stay in motion, but getting it going is going to probably require the most effort. Yeah, what are your thoughts Annie?

ANNIE
I think we've, I've seen a shift as a professional in the fitness industry and wellness industry to champion or encouraging celebrating more intrinsic motivation, and almost kind of crapping on extrinsic motivation, which, when we talk about intrinsic, that would mean, this just innately feels good to you, it's in alignment with your values, it's part of your identity, you would do this regardless of the external rewards or the benefits are there or not there. External motivation might mean, you are doing something in pursuit of some sort of reward, in this case, maybe a new pair of shoes, or a new pair of Lululemon leggings, or maybe even an avoidance of an outcome you didn't want. And I would totally agree with what you said, Jen, if this is the thing, that carrot that's going to get you started on a habit that you want to cultivate consistency and become automated in your life, absolutely take full advantage, like, use it. The downsides are of something like this, though would be - it can be expensive.

JEN
Yeah.

ANNIE

That might not be an option to you. And also, I would encourage you if you don't want to indefinitely rely on a reward of this nature, as you were building this habit or any habit, pay attention to maybe some of the more internal rewards that you're noticing. So how you feel after the workout, how good you feel gaining strength or endurance or running faster or running longer, or whatever it is. Some of those more internal rewards versus external, and I wouldn't be surprised if like Jen said over time, those become the reason you do it.

JEN

Yeah, I think that that is such a smart point to bring into the conversation because there are a lot of people out there failing to sustain their change because they never make that shift from extrinsic, you know, rewards or motivation to intrinsic. So we kind of see this in the kind of like, you know, summer bikini body realm, it's like, you know, if you're always just pursuing weight loss so that you, you know, your belief system, you believe you will look better in a bathing suit when you're leaner. And then, you know, the rest of the year, you are not actually sticking to a consistent schedule of working out, then we kind of have a problem here, right? We have a disconnect in, you know, motivation, I guess. So that gets you to a certain point, but then what? So that is a really important point. So if this particular person has the reward, she gets to that point, and then it all falls apart. Well, that's a different conversation. So you know, I had the awareness to know that I needed things in the beginning to get on that journey. And because, you know, I've been a regular exerciser most of my adult life. So I knew that that would come for me, I knew I would hit that cruise control coasting spot. But not everybody will find themselves there as naturally as maybe I did with the exercise. And so that's worth some self reflection on, "Hey, why am I doing this?" And it doesn't mean you shouldn't do it. It might mean, it might mean that particular change isn't the right change for you. But it could also mean you just need to dig deeper. Connect the change with your core values, connect the change to the kind of future vision you have of yourself. It just might take a little more digging.

ANNIE

Yeah, yep. Okay, next question. I love this question. I feel like this is a question I would have maybe asked a decade ago, I always tell myself, I'm going to change my habits and make the plans, set the goal, a start date, and the date comes and goes. Why do I do this?

JEN

Why don't you, why don't you take the lead here, Annie?

ANNIE

Well, okay, so I think there's actually a really common reason. This, I see this come up over and over and over again. And women, I would say, okay, maybe two. First is, they are making commitments that they don't actually want to do. They're just on autopilot. They're doing it because their friend's doing it. They're doing it because their workplace started a challenge. They're doing it because they saw a book at the bookstore and thought, like, "Oh, I'm going to do this." And they temporarily feel this like spark of motivation. But in the grand scheme of things they haven't really sat down to consider, do I really want to commit to this? They're just like, I mean this with nothing but love, but they're kind of sloppy and reckless with their

commitments. They're just committing to everything. So step one might be to consider, is this commitment that you keep making and then passing on something that you even truly want?

JEN

Yeah, I'm thinking of Rachel McAdams and Ryan Gosling right now in "The Notebook." Like, "What do you want?"

ANNIE

"I don't know."

JEN

"What do you want?"

BOTH

[Laugh]

ANNIE

Yeah, so instead of, the next time you find yourself wanting to commit to a change, just pause for a hot second and be like, tell yourself the truth. Do you really want to do this? Or not?

JEN

There's also you know, and on that note, there's opportunities to jump on board different, you know, bandwagons everywhere. Life is busy, distracting, can even feel chaotic. And there's a saying, I can't remember who said it, but it's always stuck with me. When you have more than one focus, you have no focus. And so when you figure out what you want, you can really own that, and get very clear on what you're saying no to. So if my focus right now was to be, you know, dialing up this specific exercise habit, because I have goals of getting stronger, you know, getting back in shape, improving my endurance, like whatever it is for each individual, I make a plan. I know what program I'm using. I know what I'm building in for support and accountability and all that when my friend says, "Hey, let's start Zumba." - "Hey, do you want to run this - Do you want to start this running program with me?" - "Hey, this, that," right? Then it's like, no, this is my like, this is where my focus is right now. That's just a distraction from what my current goal is.

ANNIE

And to be clear, when you consider what I heard you say there, Jen, and I think it's so important. When you are getting clear on what you want, it's not just about getting clear on wanting the result, it's getting clear on wanting to endure the process that it will take to get that result. So even in your experience you're genuinely like, I know what I want, I've got the program, like you had the method, right? And you had an understanding and consideration of, this is what it will take to get that thing that I want, which we've talked about before. You know, it's a big difference of saying like, do you want kids versus, do you want to spend 18 years raising kids.

JEN

[Laughs] With little humans. Yeah.

ANNIE
Big difference.

JEN
Yeah. Do you want the, it's, yeah, definitely a lot of people, there are a great number of results that I would love to have in my life.

ANNIE
Absolutely.

JEN
Yeah, but how I want to spend my day today does not you know, take me towards that result. That's not realistic. So would I love to be jacked and tan? Yes. That result sounds good. Do I love the day to day of someone who is jacked and tan? Not particularly. Therefore, I admire the jacked and tan species. And own for myself that I am going to be less jacked and not tan.

ANNIE
I mean, we've seen what happens when you try self tanner. [Laughs]

JEN
Yes. [Laughs] And if you don't...

ANNIE
It might not be in the cards for you. [Laughs]

JEN
I exfoliated in the shower last night, I'm gearing up for another attempt. [Laughs]

ANNIE
If you don't know the reference, a while back, Jen came on a Facebook live and was waving her hands as she does. She talks with her hands from time to time. And the, her palms were just totally orange. And she's like, "I forgot to wash my hands after I put on self tanner." But back on topic, I also want to touch on...Okay, so why do you do this? Why do you make these commitments and then fail to keep them to yourself? The second reason is, it's probably habitual.

JEN
Yeah.

ANNIE
You have lied to yourself, you have dipped out on yourself, you have BSed yourself so many stinking times you don't even believe yourself when you say you're going to do these things.

And the answer to that would be to start rebuilding self trust. Why do you not believe yourself? It's probably because you're lying. Right? Like, be honest, you're not going to start on this date.

JEN

In behavior change world, this is called self efficacy. And it is the trust, when you say you're going to do something, that you will follow through. And a lot of people have very low self efficacy, that means when they think or say they're going to do something, they actually don't truly believe they're going to do it. I personally believe in the health and wellness spectrum of people's lives. Part of the reason so many people have such low self efficacy is because the health and wellness industry is constantly glorifying huge changes and fast transformations. And do this program where you work out six days a week, do this weight loss program where you dramatically cut your calories or carbs or whatever. And they're such big huge changes that really are not sustainable. They don't work in real life, they don't work in an average person's busy, stressful life, they cannot be integrated, you basically have to pause your life to focus on them. And so you fail at that over and over and over. And all of a sudden, you know, some time passes, yours might pass and you start you develop this inner narrative of, "I'm just going to fail." And so you have super low self efficacy when it comes to making any health and wellness commitments at all. But if you've listened to us for any amount of time, you'll know that we honestly and truly believe that that is by design, and that we've all been participating, including Annie and I at one point, in an industry that sets us up to fail in order to create repeat customers. And so I think it's just great awareness to say, "Oh, I've been failing, and I feel like a failure because I've been failing, but it was a rigged system that was designed for me to fail." Oh, my goodness. And anyways, so that's a bit of a tangent. But the goal here, and if you have low self efficacy, if you have low trust in yourself, the goal here, I think that the initial goal is okay, well, if that's the problem, it doesn't matter what I commit to, I just need to build up my self efficacy, I just need to follow through on that commitment. And over time, be able to look back and say, "Look at all the things I said I was gonna do, and I did it." And instead of that being, you know, these big sweeping changes, like are pushed at us all the time, what we promote is small changes.

ANNIE

Yeah. And that's a great segue into our third and final question. But I also just want to circle back to, when you consider how you build trust with a friend, a partner, a family member, you would probably be able to identify some elements like, it takes time, they're not necessarily perfect, but they're consistent. They follow through on their word, they have integrity with their words, they do what they say they're going to do, again, most of the time, they're accountable to their decisions and their actions. Like you can do all of that with yourself.

JEN

Absolutely. So just a great piece of advice to leave people with, I think is when you are first committing to new changes, create a goal around something you are 90% certain you will follow through with. And I don't care if that is, I don't care if you've been a high level crossfitter in your life at one point, or you know, or used to run marathons, that may not be where you are now. And so if that is, "I'm going to do 10 bodyweight squats a day, Monday to Friday," let it be that

small, so that you can look back and say, "Hey, I did the thing." And build from there. It doesn't have to be where you stop. But again, back to that building momentum. Let yourself build some momentum, just build the habit of showing up for yourself.

ANNIE

Like, and honestly I could talk about keeping commitments, and being what I describe as a woman of integrity with myself all day. But for me, that was an absolute game changer to know that, when I say I'm going to do something for myself, like I don't need to share it on Instagram, on Facebook live with you, with my friends. I know when I commit to something for myself, with myself, it will get done. And that is beyond powerful for me. That's been an absolute pivotal experience to know that like, "Wow, I am good for myself. I can trust myself. I take care of myself."

JEN

"I've got my own back."

ANNIE

Yeah. But speaking of small changes, our third and final question is, or really a statement. "I'm really struggling to get behind your philosophy of small changes." [Laughs]

JEN

Did we just answer that? [Laughs]

ANNIE

Listen, I think this is, the large majority of, if they were being honest, I think people nod their head when they hear us talk about the importance of small changes and how beneficial it can be and how like, oh, yeah, that makes sense conceptually. But to actually embody that and practice it and embrace it is a different thing.

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

Because I think most people are just like, it's not good enough. It's not enough.

JEN

Yeah. And I would even say that some individuals will need to examine their relationship with instant gratification as far as like, in my experience, coaching and even in my own personal experience. One of the reasons that you sort of look down on small changes is because of your like, this desire to see like fast results. And that's why I was in such a, that's why I was in such a toxic cycle at one point in my life with carbohydrates. Because when you cut carbs, you get like an instant water loss. Like it'll show up on the scale the next day. And when I was kind of unpacking my dieting history and thinking about why it was so hard for me to walk away from this low carb keto lifestyle, the honest truth was, you know, many different factors, but it was that

I was very attached to the instant gratification I got from weighing myself like the next day, the next few days after cutting carbs. And it was very difficult for me to let that go and very difficult for me to accept that weight loss or just change in general is a long game situation. It's a marathon, not a sprint. And as soon as I was able to drop that baggage, that instant gratification, even just identifying it was like profound for me, like that's what you're doing. And you know, we mentioned in the start here, all habits have rewards, even bad ones. I had a very bad habit of cutting carbs to get fast weight loss, but that was my reward, right?

ANNIE

Yeah. Listen. [Laughs] I'm feeling, apparently, like kind of spicy today.

JEN

I like it. Listen.

ANNIE

[Laughs]

JEN

Listen up, everyone.

ANNIE

Is this on? You don't have to fully buy into this, but if you want enough proof to even just test the waters of small changes, ask yourself, how many times have you tried the opposite? Have you tried big sweeping changes? And it still not work?

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

Because yes, big sweeping changes can lead to big, drastic results, but they're also very likely unsustainable, as Jen was talking about. And I can give you woman after woman after woman as proof in Balance365 that weight loss and improvements to your health, improvements to your strength and endurance is 99.9% of the time small decisions stacked on top of one another, on top of one another day after day after day, and all of it adds up. So you don't have to like totally believe me on that front. But if you want enough proof to at least buy into like, "Okay, I'll give it a try." But take a look back and think how many times have I tried the big change? And I'm still right back where I started or even maybe a few steps behind?

JEN

Yeah, absolutely.

ANNIE

I'm done now.

JEN
Okay.

BOTH
[Laugh]

JEN
And I think that's all for today.

ANNIE
Okay, thank you my friends for joining us today on our Thursday live Q&A.

JEN
Bye, everyone.

ANNIE (OUTRO)
Hey, everyone, if your mind has been blown while listening to this podcast, just wait until you work with us. Let us help you level up your health and wellness habits and your life inside Balance365 coaching. Head on over to balance365.co to join coaching.