

# Balance365 Episode 228 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

Hey everyone, welcome back to Balance365 Life Radio. Today we're chatting with one of our members, Jessica. Jessica is a smart, accomplished, successful mom of three who I'm sure has always had admiration and praise from friends, family, and our community for all that she's achieved. But on the inside, what people may not have realized is Jessica was struggling with a bad case of perfectionism. Ruminating thoughts about food exercise and her weight pushing herself to extremes of healthy eating, exercise, and ultimately injury. Addressing that belief system is ultimately what led Jessica to Balance365. We know many of our listeners are going to be able to relate to Jessica's journey of shifting her desires away from being weight focused towards becoming wellness-focused. As Jessica shared in this interview, you will not regret joining Balance365. Let's explore the messy middle of health, wellness, and weight loss together. The doors to our coaching program open again in September. Get your name on the waitlist for early access to spots at [balance365.com/waitlist](https://balance365.com/waitlist). Enjoy.

ANNIE

Jen, we have a special guest today, are you so stoked?

JEN CAMPBELL

Very excited. Jessica is well known in our community. She posts, shares her insights, her journey, her growth. And I think when she shares those things with everybody, they're very popular posts because she's able to articulate for a lot of members in our program what they're also experiencing.

ANNIE BREES (INTRO)

Yeah, she recently, we're going to talk about you like you're not here, Jessica. [Laughs] She recently had this post that I think was probably really influential in a lot of other members' journey. So we're gonna get into it. I don't want to spoil it. Jessica. Welcome to the podcast. How are you?

JESSICA

Thank you. I'm so happy to be here. I can't tell you. I'm just super, super pumped.

ANNIE BREES (INTRO)

We are so happy to have you. For people listening, tell us a little bit about yourself. What do you want people to know about you?

JESSICA

I am a 45-year-old, married mom of three kids. I am an economist by training. I work full time. And I live in the Bay Area in California. That about sums it up.

ANNIE BREES (INTRO)

I love it. How did you hear about Balance365?

JESSICA

So I came to you through Amanda Thebe. I was sort of on a little perimenopause journey, trying to figure myself out. And I landed in Amanda Thebe's Facebook group "Menopausal So Hard." And I had read her book "Menopocalypse" and you, Annie, were on her podcast at some point. And I listened to that. And I was like, "Oh, I need to follow these folks, like this sounds like this is up my alley." And at that point I had been, I mean, for a few years trying to work on body image and food freedom and getting out of diet culture, but I didn't really know how, and I was struggling a little bit, and so when I heard you on that podcast, I was like, "Okay, I need to, this all sounds great." Then I started binge-listening to your podcast. And my mind was blown by, I mean, I started way at the beginning. I like to go back when I start a podcast and find out what it's all about. And I think I listened to the Minnesota starvation experiment episode and I was like, mind blown. And at a certain point, when I was listening, you guys opened up membership. So I decided to jump in.

ANNIE BREES (INTRO)

Tell me, what did you find so mind-blowing?

JESSICA

Well, I knew some of the things, that like 95% of diets fail and that you know the diet industry is full of snake oil. And I kind of knew those things. And I had also, you know, I'd read "Intuitive Eating" and this, that, and the other. I mean, I'd read enough to know that there, there were serious questions about a lot of the science behind dieting. Right? But the Minnesota starvation episode, I was like, dieting is putting yourself in a state of starvation. And not only that, this, where you explored sort of the responses, the biological responses to starvation, are identical to the biological responses to dieting. And just understanding that, you know, I'm not a unique failure for not being able to sustain some insane diet forever. Like, we're not supposed to live that way. And I think philosophically, I was very ready to hear that message. But the science behind it also really appealed to me to really get into, "Oh, no, this is what your body does. And the diet industry knows it. And they're banking on it." So that just really, it connected a lot of dots for me. And so I was ripe for your message, I was ripe for the message.

ANNIE BREES (INTRO)

Did you have a past of failed dieting attempts? And like, then come to understand that diets don't work. But were on the search for what does, or what was your life like before Balance365?

JESSICA

I mean, so, first of all, like a lot of women, I mean, I've been on a bunch of different diets. And I, probably one of my first diets in middle school, or something like that. And I was a chubby middle schooler, got told by many family members that I was too chubby and needed to do something about it. However, I will say that from the time I was a teenager on, even though I thought that I struggled with my weight, honestly, I was basically thin and athletic my whole adult life. So my problem with my weight, or my body was 100% in my head. And I want to acknowledge also that, like, I had thin privilege that whole time, like I've never been discriminated against because of my weight. I've never had bad health problems because of my weight. I've never had trouble accessing health care because of my weight. So to the world, I did not present as someone with a weight problem. But I had a mental problem, which is that I thought I needed to lose weight, I thought there was something terribly wrong with my body. And I was obsessed with eating healthy and exercising and not putting one toe over the line. And so I was an avid runner, and work outter, cardio junkie. And I mean, I love to cook. So eating healthy kind of dovetailed with cooking. For me personally, I think that as an adult, I, you know, I did a few diets after each of my kids. I was very intentional about losing the baby weight, getting my body back really fast. And really, the last time I did that was very destructive for me. So I had my third baby at 39, which is way different from having my first baby at 30. And I guess I put on like 50 pounds during that pregnancy. And so I was bound and determined to take it off as I had the other times. And I went back hard. I did a triathlon when she was six months old, I ran a half marathon when she was nine months old, I was exercising really hard. I was doing a weight loss program. And I did take off all the baby weight. And I also got a raging case of postpartum anxiety and depression. I also injured myself because I was working out way too much. And I later found out like literally a few years later found out that I had a lingering diastasis and pelvic floor issues and all of that. So I had done that thing where pushing myself as hard as I could led to the opposite of health. It led to thinness but it didn't lead to health.

JEN

I was going to ask you, as you were saying, you know all these pursuits when your child was really young. I wanted to ask you about your pelvic floor, actually. And so you know what's so interesting about this is that was my kind of gateway into this world, because I had to examine, I had three kids in four years, and I had just, you know, diastasis recti, I had pelvic floor issues. And in order to address those issues, I really had to slow down with what I was doing. And then I had to, you know, I'm asking myself, you know, why did this happen? And how did this happen? I got a lot of the answers that I think you may have gotten in that. This is what happens when thinness is more important to you than your health.

JESSICA

That's exactly right. That's exactly right. And I'm also a perfectionist, a recovering perfectionist, and I go hard. That's how I roll. I'm always pushing myself, I'm a striver. And so there's always this idea, or there was I feel like I'm deconstructing that now. But for most of my adult life, I had

to be going hard all the time. Now, I'm lucky because most of the time I had the energy and health to do that, and to do the things that I wanted to do. But after I had my third kid, I mean, there I was, 43, kids, full-time job, I was tired. Very tired. I now know also looking back that I was entering perimenopause. And that had profound effects on me. And it took me a long time to accept the gospel of rest. I really didn't want to hear it. And I just felt like, you know, oh, tired? Go for a run, that'll give you some energy. Oh, tired? Well, have another cup of coffee. You know, I just, my answer to everything was to push myself harder. And then finally, I got to the point where I could not do that anymore. And in terms of my physical health with sort of my running injury, basically, I ran in pain for two years. And I guess you would describe it as chronic pelvic misalignment is what happened, I had a lot of hip pain. Hip pain and sacrum pain. And the only way to rehab that was to stop running. And so I had to stop running for a while. I'm still not really running. But I'm working out again. That was so hard for me. It was so hard. But you're right to examine, why is this hard? Why can't I rest? Why do I feel guilty when I don't run? Why do I feel bad about myself if I miss a workout? And really unpacking that. I didn't realize until that point that I had kind of a toxic relationship with exercise, because I love exercise. I do love it. There's half of me that loves it and finds it a huge relief and I get all the endorphins. And then there's the half of me that becomes obsessive and gets sort of punishing with it.

JEN

So what was your why when you are asking those questions, "Why is this hard for me?" Was it the fear of weight gain that would happen?

JESSICA

Yeah, I mean, I thought, you know, if I put one toe over the line, I am going to gain all this weight, I had so much internalized fatphobia, I mean, so much internalized fatphobia and anti-fat bias, which I've, you know, again, been working on deconstructing in a lot of different ways. But this idea that I need to be as thin as possible at all times. Leanest liveable weight.

JEN

[Laughing] Leannest liveable weight.

JESSICA

I had very dysmorphic thoughts about my body. Like, I, in retrospect, now, I can look at myself and be like, "Oh, honey, like, what was the end game? Like, you looked great. You had a flat stomach, you had visible abs, you had muscular arms, you know, like you were super fit. Why did you think you still needed to lose weight?" At that point.

JEN

So, nothing was really ever good enough.

JESSICA

Nothing was good enough. And then, you know, the more I worked on it, I started working on body positivity and reading resources and starting to curate my Instagram feed, That started a couple years ago, way before I got to Balance365. And every once in a while, I would have

glimpses, I would have moments where I would see myself as I really am. And I was like, "Oh, is this what it's like not to think you're fat all the time?" But then it would kind of go away. It was like a match in a dark closet, then it would blow out. But those moments became more frequent. And I started realizing, "Oh, I have a really dysmorphic thought pattern with how I look at my body and what I think I'm supposed to look like and that is all part of this perfectionist mindset, where I have to be functioning at this super high standard in every area of my life, you know, my work, my parenting, my body, my athleticism, everything." And, again, you know, I just got to that point where you ask yourself, why am I doing this? What am I actually afraid of? What is going on here? And starting to unpack all of these values that you're trying to meet. That aren't really your own. I started realizing and that actually, again, with Balance365, one of the first things I did the first month I was in was the values and vision workshop, and started working on that. And I started to realize, you know, the things that I value are not the things that I'm spending a lot of my time and mental energy on.

JEN

Prior to, had you ever done any values and vision work?

JESSICA

Some, I mean, my employer, we do a lot of sort of emotional intelligence, personality assessment, leadership training, and we talk a lot about our values at my work. So I've thought about those things, certainly. And I've definitely thought about big picture values for myself and my family and, you know, had those conversations with my husbands - husband and my - not husbands. I only have one.

JEN

[Laughs]

JESSICA

My husband and my kids. But I didn't connect that with all the diet stuff, and all the body stuff and all the internal stuff in my head as much. It was more, again, it was more striving. It was more aspirational. You know, what do I...All the things that I want to be that was sort of where, where my values mindset was, instead of really doing the internal work of what actually matters to me, really.

JEN

What's important here?

JESSICA

Yeah.

ANNIE

So, Jessica, I love that you had already, it sounds like, started on this journey to unpack some of this. Somewhere in that journey, you found Balance365. Do you remember what the thing was

that said that switch from like, "Yes, I have to join that, I have to be a part of that," like, and what did, what were you hoping to gain from it?

JESSICA

Well, twofold. I mean, of course, when I joined, I still thought like, well, maybe I can lose 10 pounds. And I mean, I have put on a little bit of weight in my early 40s with perimenopause that's really hormonally driven also, because I haven't been running like I used to. So I thought, well, maybe I can take off those 10 pounds, get back down to my, you know, my lowest weight. And what really made me join though, is that I thought, if I can't do that, I hope I can accept myself, I hope that I can find this sort of food freedom, this body acceptance that you guys are always talking about in the podcast. And that has been, you know, something that I've aspired to for years, but I didn't know how to get there. And I was hoping that there would be a pathway in the program. And it turns out there was.

JEN

What was food freedom? I mean, as far as how your concept of food freedom, I don't know if it's changed, but prior to joining, did you have an idea of what food freedom meant? Or did you feel confused about it?

JESSICA

Well, I mean, I've read the Intuitive Eating book. You know, I've listened to intuitive eating podcasts. I've done mindfulness meditation for eating, like all these things. But still, it was like, what? How? The, okay, "eat when you're hungry, stop when you're full, or stop when you're satisfied." Okay, but how, how do you do that? I mean, must be nice for people who can do that, like, I didn't understand, like, how you actually do that? Or, you know, body neutrality and self-love. That sounds great. I want that. But how, how do you? How do you actually get there? How do you build that? You know, and the other piece that I was looking for, honestly, was understanding what moderation is. Because as I said before, I'm this person that goes hard. And so I'm always 110% or 120% until I crash, and then I'm like laying on the couch at 30%. And my dream was to figure out how do you function at 80%?

JEN

Yeah, find a middle.

JESSICA

How can I just become a person who aims for B plus, instead of having to be extra all the time, in everything?

JEN

When you say go hard, so, would you go hard dieting? And did you have a pendulum swing on the other end? A go-hard, like an on-the-wagon, off-the-wagon persona?

JESSICA

A little bit. I mean, I will say that binge eating has never been a huge problem for me. Although certainly there was a little bit of rebound. I mean, for example. I mean, what happens is, I would only lose like five pounds, and then I would gain the five pounds back. So there was like, minor weight cycling, I guess, like lose five pounds, gain five pounds. But I mean, that's almost within the range of normal weight fluctuation. But because I mean, I couldn't, you know, I'm a super active busy mom, I couldn't really restrict that much, you know. So, I did do some restrictive diets, you know, for example, like diets where you cut out carbs. But I also intuitively, because I love food, and I love cooking, I intuitively knew like, this is bananas. I can't live like this. I can't live without bread the rest of my life, no. And a few years ago, I also, there was some doctor who was like doing a hormone diet or something, like, what you need to like, even out your hormones. And it was basically like, chicken and vegetables and nothing else. And I'm like, "Yeah, but what about the bread?" [Laughs] You know? So I would do these things. And I would, you know, lose five pounds or eight pounds or something. And then, of course, I would just go back to my normal eating. But the normal eating for me is pretty healthy. I do eat veggies, I do eat protein, I do, I eat a fairly healthy diet. Anyway, just naturally, I do think that I did classically restrict certain foods that like I couldn't have in the house. Like I can't have tortilla chips in the house, or I'm going to eat the whole bag. And I've definitely eaten a lot of tortilla chips in the last seven months, and made peace with tortilla chips. And now I can have a bag of tortilla chips in the house. And it's fine.

JEN

Funny how that works, hey? When you allow.

JESSICA

Yeah. So there were some things like that. But I was just so clamped down all the time. I mean, when I say, and the thing is, is I didn't even, this is gonna sound ridiculous. I didn't even realize what a perfectionist I was. I remember somebody saying to me a few years ago, about something related to my kitchen, and she was renovating her kitchen. And she was like, "Oh, but you know, Jessica, you're a perfectionist. And so you have to, you have to do things a certain way. But me, I can do it -" and I remember, and she just said it casually in the course of conversation. And I thought to myself, I'm not a perfectionist, there's so many things I do wrong and that aren't perfect and that are like messed up and da-da-da-da. But my friends are like, "Are you kidding? Like, you were such a perfectionist." And it wasn't until I started seeing that and acknowledging. That's another thing that again, Balance365 is so good with unpacking that perfectionist mindset. I was totally in an all-or-nothing mindset most of my life. And all-or-something has been a real lifesaver.

ANNIE

It can also be very perfectionist response to say, "No, I'm not a perfectionist."

JEN

[Laughs]

ANNIE

"I mean, look at all these mistakes that I made. Look how this isn't perfect." [Laughs]

JESSICA

Yeah. Yeah.

JEN

I want to circle back to how you said, you actually are naturally quite a balanced, nutritious eater. And so I think when, and correct me if I'm wrong, but what I'm hearing there is existing in a diet culture, so you were a very health, like nutritious, balanced eater, but existing in this diet culture, you were getting constant messages that you maybe weren't doing good enough or you weren't a balanced, nutritious eater. And so you would then change your diet, which was fine, to try and follow these different methods of eating that promised, you know, whatever they were promising, but returning to balanced, nutritious eating was, I guess, I don't know if I want to say easy, but it was a natural return for you.

JESSICA

Yeah.

JEN

And so essentially, it was always fine. [Laughs]

JESSICA

Yeah.

JEN

Until you were convinced otherwise.

JESSICA

Yeah. Well, and I had this idea, I mean, I definitely fell into, again, I was never diagnosed with an eating disorder, but I certainly skirted some disordered behaviors. And certainly, there was orthorexic thinking there, like everything, everything that passes my lips must be healthy. So I would get into these phases, where, you know, I couldn't enjoy whatever, chips, with my kids, or, you know, I couldn't let, you know, processed food into my lips or something like that, you know, I would get very rigid about everything having to be perfectly healthy. And one thing I really regret looking back on is that I really imposed that on my kids when they were younger. My oldest who's now 15, he didn't have any sugar the first two years of his life. I was a psycho. [Laughs] I look back on that now, and I'm like -

JEN

Sounds familiar. Honestly.

JESSICA

I'm like, "Oh, Jesus, well, poor, poor kid." Of course, with my third, I mean, she had two older siblings, she got, I mean, they were feeding her popsicles when she was six months old. So that

was out the window. But, you know, I was just obsessed with everything, being healthy, everything being from scratch, everything being quote, unquote, natural. And sometimes the certain diets, I would get into thinking like, refined carbs are bad, you shouldn't eat any white foods, things like that. But honestly, like, my regular diet, and again, this is something that Balance365 has helped me see, my regular default way of eating is healthy, like, I've collected the data, now I've tracked it, I've tracked my balanced meals for months and months and months, and I eat vegetables, lean protein, it's fine. It's fine. So this, you know, kind of getting outside of this thinking that 100% of what you have to eat has to be perfect. And 80% is fine. And you can have a cookie, and you can have some ice cream. And that has been not only much healthier for me, but it's made me less rigid with my kids. I was already, I mean, you know, once you have three of them, they kind of wear you down, so I was already less rigid with them, but truly not even worrying about it. Now, I'm just like, "Fine, have some Cheetos, whatever, it'll be okay." Like they eat plenty of vegetables, too. It's fine.

ANNIE

Jessica, we ask a question to all of our members on our spotlight, like how have your habits changed since joining Balance365. And I'm wondering, maybe some habits have changed. But I'm wondering in your situation, if that's even like a fair or the right question to be asking, because it sounds like maybe what's changed the most is your acceptance that your natural state, quote-unquote, or your natural intuition to eat was always good enough.

JESSICA

I do think that for me, the biggest shift through Balance365 has been my mindset, no question. I will say I have actually built some important skills. And the biggest skill would be hunger and satiety, instead of eating on the clock, or instead of eating, you know, a measured portion or something like that. So, again, this whole idea of eat when you're hungry, stop when you're satisfied. How do you do that? You guys have the answer. You practice doing that. And you have your hunger and satiety chart and you sit with it and you ask yourself, am I at a six? Am I at a seven? Hmmm. Few bites extra? Oh, I'm at an eight. I don't want to be at an eight. And you practice, and I was very disconnected from my hunger and satiety cues, extremely disconnected. And for me a lot of times I didn't even know I was hungry. I don't know what happened with my hormones, or just a lifetime of restriction. I don't know. But I would get to about four in the afternoon and feel despair. And I didn't know why I just felt despair and everything was terrible. And it took a long time to realize, you are hungry. You need to eat something.

JEN

A human being with a human body that needs to be fed.

JESSICA

Yes, yeah, no, it's like, duh. So realizing that I needed to actually eat a bigger lunch, and I needed to eat a snack. And my whole day would go better when I ate a bigger lunch and a snack. And then I wasn't, I didn't get hangry in the afternoon and I was so much more relaxed and happy in the evening while I was making dinner for the kids and hanging out with the family,

because I had been in this mode for so many years, and you guys talk about this. Eating as minimally as possible during the day, and then having a big dinner, that was kind of my pattern, you know, little, whatever breakfast, I always ate breakfast, you know, a bowl of muesli or some peanut butter toast, a good breakfast, not a lot of protein, but whatever. And then basically a salad for lunch is what I had almost every day. And then I tried not to snack at all, until dinner. And by the time dinner rolled around, I was insane. I was sad, angry, not feeling good, impatient. And so I definitely feel like balancing out my lunch, adding a snack, and paying attention and understanding when I'm hungry and when I'm satisfied, and also when I'm satisfied, that matters, too. Because, you know, I was eating huge dinners, because I hadn't been eating. I mean, they were balanced. They were healthy. It was like, you know, veggies and chicken or beans and rice or whatever good stuff. But I was always having seconds because I had not eaten enough during the day, I had this idea in my head that I, you know, I needed to eat less than 1000 calories before dinner.

JEN

Oh, my goodness. Which, so then dinner becomes 1000 calories.

JESSICA

Dinner becomes - yeah.

JEN

You know, you're going into dinner with a 1000-calorie deficit like, right? Your body, your brain, everything is going to be trying to close that calorie gap as fast as possible.

JESSICA

So I definitely, some of those eating behaviors have definitely shifted. And I definitely am more balanced in my day. So it's more about, the spread of the energy intake is more balanced. And it makes me feel better. And -

JEN

Yeah, I bet it does.

JESSICA

Paying attention to how I feel, again, the practice of doing that, and I was primed for it. I mean, I'd had a physical therapist who was working with me on my hip who was like, you know, I have never thought of myself as a person who had particularly many sports injuries, but then she was going through my history. And she was like, "Hmm. Hmm. So what I'm hearing is, you had your first baby, and then you ran a couple of marathons, and then you hurt your knee. And then you had your second baby. And then you did a triathlon when she was nine months old, and then you ran a couple more half marathons. And then you hurt your back. And then -" She's going through my history. And she's like, "You know what Olympic athletes are really, really good at? What they're better at than anyone else? Rest. They're really good at resting, they're really good at recovery." She's like, "You don't recover, you don't ever let yourself recover." So I didn't want to hear that from her at that point. But that was an example of sort of ways that the message

had been trickling in over time. And so when I got to you guys, I was very primed to hear it, and to listen to it and to start listening to my body and to really start checking in with myself. And what I love about Balance365 is you break down the how. How do you do it? It sounds easy, but it's not easy. Or as you say, Jen, it's simple, but it's not easy.

JEN

Simple, not easy, yeah. I love that you brought up mood. And, it's, I don't even know if we've ever talked about this in the history of this podcast before but because we're so often talking about, like the pendulum swing of eating, but I love that you brought up mood. And the point I just want to pause on here for everybody listening is how eating is a basic human need. And you can see what happens to people when they don't eat by just looking at like a toddler, a hungry toddler melting down, screaming on the floor. And there is no way that you are going to get through to that toddler until you've met those basic needs. They need to be met. You cannot reason with a hungry toddler. You can't reason with a tired toddler. You need to get those needs met and then we can carry on with life. And so I also, you know, similar experiences to you, is that I was just like angry and ragey all the time. But really, I was just really hungry. And probably tired, too, with having little kids and not even meeting my basic needs. And of course I was just incredibly dysregulated by the time late afternoon evening was coming.

JESSICA

Absolutely. Absolutely.

ANNIE

I think there has been research about dieters and their disposition, like they generally are, as you said, Jessica, impatient, a little, like on edge, irritable. Isn't, have you heard that Jen?

JEN

In the Minnesota starvation experiment, they had very high levels of depression and anxiety in these starving men. So, I mean, it all makes perfect sense. But I think I would love for our listeners to just, like connect with that a little bit, that if you consistently find yourself in a really sh\*\*\*y mood every evening, and you're going into your evening having eaten 600 calories, that there may be a connection there. And I'm not saying that there's not things about life that can make us a little grumpy. But you are way better able to deal with what life throws at you during a day, a week, a year when you're fed.

ANNIE

It's that Snickers commercial, you're not you when you're hungry, isn't that their slogan? Or something like that. And they're like all like angry, angry, angry, and then they have a Snickers. And then they're like, "Oh, life is great."

JESSICA

I mean, just think about millions and millions and millions of women doing this to themselves. So they can be a little bit skinnier. It's just, it's bonkers. It's really bonkers. Connecting with my rage towards the diet industry has been a huge motivator. [Laughs]

JEN

For us, too.

JESSICA

I mean, you know, this idea - and when I look at my kids, I would never want them to deny themselves food. I mean, it's terrible when they don't eat, as you said, it's terrible. When they don't eat, it's bad for all of us if they miss a meal or a snack. So this idea that we do this to ourselves. And also, again, another thing I love about Balance365, the self-love workbook, so great for me, so great for me, because again, this is one of those things where I thought that self-acceptance and self-love is like a destination that you get to, you know, but I saw this great visual on Instagram the other day that said, people think that self-love is this sort of linear trajectory, and then suddenly, you're there. And really, it's like, you're kind of like a going up and down all the time. And like maybe you're moving up slowly. But I really appreciate that. You guys have tools to make it a practice. So again, it's not just, you know, "Love yourself. Be proud of your body." It's "No, here are some exercises, here's some tools. Let's think about this. Maybe you track it, maybe you do a little something every day." The practice has been really powerful for me. And it's it's opened up a lot of things, not just with food and exercise, but just thinking about, what do I want to do with my life? And what matters to me? And how can I, you know, be the person that I want to be and live the life that I want to live? Because I deserve it. Which is a radical thought for me.

JEN

You don't have to earn it. You just -

JESSICA

Yeah.

JEN

You are just worthy. Don't have to earn it by running 10 marathons and being a certain size and you just you're allowed to just have it.

JESSICA

Yeah. I mean, I'm still on the journey. I, you know, I definitely catch myself hustling for my worthiness more than I would like to, you know, somebody's coming over and I start frantically cleaning the house, cleaning my clean house. And I'm like, "Okay, Jessica, it's fine, it's fine. What are you doing?" But, you know, now, I have more often than not, I interrupt that, I interrupt that thought pattern.

JEN

Yeah. And that's all we can do really, like it's, you know, I think people out there might think that whether we're interviewing a member or me or Annie or any of our coaches, they may think we must have it all figured out. We must never have negative thoughts or bad body image days.

And that's just not the truth. The truth is, we all still have those thoughts. It's how we, what we do with those thoughts is very different today than what it once was.

JESSICA

Yeah. And are you going to let them drive you?

JEN

Exactly.

JESSICA

Drive you to running five miles in pain or drive you to pushing through the whole afternoon when you're starving and you really need to eat something but you don't want to because snacking is bad, or whatever it is. In the past, I definitely let those thoughts drive me and make me do things. And now, you know, sure. Sometimes I'm like, "I'm not feeling so great today. I don't like the way I look in the mirror." But then I can have a moment, I can check in with myself and say, "Wait a minute. Let's think about that."

ANNIE

Well, that might be a good segue into how you feel now. Like, what would you say your biggest results have been?

JESSICA

I definitely think the mindset shift. I mean, physically, I definitely feel better. Just because I'm more relaxed, about all of my habits, I'm still, you know, I exercise, I eat well, and I get enough sleep, all those things. But I'm more balanced with what I do, as I said earlier, and so during the day, I feel better, and I feel more relaxed. But I would think that the biggest result is more about just feeling more satisfied with where I'm at in life, more accepting. You know, I mean, accepting, for example, and I posted about this in the group, coming to the realization, which is, this is, I'm almost embarrassed to say this, but realizing I don't need to lose weight. I don't actually need to lose weight. This is not necessary and realistic for me. It's like, "Oh, great, skinny, white lady realizes she does not need to lose weight. Hurrah."

JEN

[Laughs]

JESSICA

"The world is a better place now." No, I mean -

JEN

Front page news.

JESSICA

Yes.

JEN

[Laughs]

JESSICA

It's like, you know, whatever. But for me, that constant thing in my head of like, you know, oh, you know, your, your jeans are bigger than they were three years ago, you need to get to it. You need to, you need to lose some weight, you need to lose five pounds. What if you could, maybe you should train for a half marathon again, that constant background is not there anymore. And when those thoughts do arise, I can respond to them. And so just accepting that, like, "Hey, I'm 45, I've had three kids. I work out, I eat healthy, I look pretty good. I don't have to look, like it's okay. It is okay. It's fine that my stomach is squishier than it was when I was 25. It's fine." And not just saying that, but actually, being able to internalize that is huge for me, because I want it to be at that place where I actually believed that for so long, and now I actually believe it. And that's very relaxing. It's very relaxing, to accept where you're at. And be fine with yourself.

JEN

What I'm hearing here is you learned in Balance365 that the weight you are at right now is probably where, exactly where you should be.

JESSICA

Yes. I am living the healthiest life I can enjoy. And my weight is a byproduct of that. And it is fine. Which, you know, I love that there is a quote-unquote, weight loss program, where one positive outcome is realizing you're actually fine. You know?

JEN

Yeah, I would say like, I mean, ultimately, that what I desire for women is peace and wellness. And it doesn't matter to me what that looks like for women. For some, it includes body composition changes, and for some it doesn't. But I also think that we need spaces where we can figure that out for ourselves. Because that can be a really big step in the journey.

JESSICA

I feel like you guys are sneaky. You get people in because they think they want to lose weight, or they need to lose weight, and maybe some people do. And that's a valid goal and whatever. But really, you're actually providing something so much bigger than that. And I feel like there are so many companies right now saying, "Oh, we're, it's lifestyle, it's not a diet," or, "We're a wellness company," but you guys are actually doing that for real. And, you know, I mean, it's hard out there, because now everybody knows that diet is kind of a bad word. And people want to say they're not a diet, but they're totally diets. And you guys are definitely more focused on actual true health, which it shouldn't be rare, but it's rare.

ANNIE

Well, I think, to your point, I think you're a beautiful example. It sounds like you came to that realization on your own but also to be in a community where you could potentially have coaches or other community members challenge your goal of wanting weight loss, like, "Is this realistic

and healthy for you? Because if it's not, I don't want to encourage it." And, there have been conversations like that with members where they've come to us in the pursuit of weight loss. And through questioning and coaching conversations, I've come to realize, like, I don't think this is the move for this member, like, this is like we're at, we're gonna have to get out a ladder to get these results that she's not willing or able to get out at this point, or whatever, you know, like this is going to compromise other aspects of her health. This goal, the pursuit of this goal. And I don't think that - I know that doesn't exist in other companies where they just blanketly say, "Okay, this person wants to lose 10 pounds, we're going to do whatever it takes to lose 10 pounds, and we're not quitting until we lose 10 pounds, and we're not going to accept any other goal than losing 10 pounds."

JESSICA

Yeah, well, and they let you say, "Well, I want to lose two pounds a week," and they're like, "Great, 1200 calories a day."

JEN

[Laughs]

JESSICA

"Eat 1200 calories a day. Sure, do it. Good idea." And it's just insane. But of course, they know what they're doing. Because they know that person will lose a little bit of weight, and then it'll come back, and then they'll come back to the program. So it's a, you know, it's a trap that is designed and built for us. And I think that for a long time, I felt conflicted or guilty about the fact that, "Why have I wasted so much money on these stupid diets? Why did I waste my time, my energy?" And it is, it was a trap that was designed and built for me, of course, I fell into it. You know, I'm just glad that there's an alternative. And, I honestly wish, I mean, the other thing, too, that I appreciate about Balance365 is that in showing, you know, in walking through the how, I think there's a lot of, you know, like I said, I had explored intuitive eating and body positivity and all these things before, but a lot of those spaces are so anti-diet, they're like, "No, just eat whatever you want. Don't practice healthism, don't, you know, just let go of all of that stuff." And for me, I couldn't quite get there. I couldn't quite accept that in order to eat intuitively, or in order to accept my body, I had to completely let go of any health goals, or I had to completely stop worrying about the healthfulness of food altogether. Or that, you know, I had to basically walk away from a lifestyle and practices that actually did make me feel good in a lot of ways. And like, what I wanted was something in the middle, right? And I appreciate that Balance365 offers this middle path, like it's okay to care about your health, it's okay to want to eat healthier, it's okay, even, to want to change your body composition, that's fine. And we're going to do it in a healthful way. And a non-extreme way, and in a way that works with your body, and is based in self-love instead of a punishing way. And I feel like that is a really unique message.

ANNIE

I'm picturing, I love that you point that out, because I'm picturing telling someone to just go deadlift. Who cares? Just go deadlift.

JEN

Easy for Annie. [Laughs]

ANNIE

Really unhelpful advice. Like, you'd probably look at me and be like, "What? How do I deadlift? Like, what? I just pick it up? How do I just pick it up? Like, where do I put my hands? Where do I put my feet?" You know, there's some sub-skills in there that are really important, that structure that you're talking about that's like, can you maybe understand, in theory, the end result, or what you're supposed to be doing, but how do I actually do that consistently?

JESSICA

Yeah.

ANNIE

Yeah. So good. Okay, Jessica, what would you tell someone who is listening and thinking about joining Balanced365?

JESSICA

Do it of course, whether your goal is changing your health habits, or working on your mindset, or working on, you know, body composition changes that you want to do, there are many paths in Balance365. And it is worth it. There are so many resources and you build actual skills that you can walk away with. So I don't want to quit tomorrow. But even if I did quit tomorrow, I would still have all these skills in my pocket to take with me. And that's the key. So I think it's very worth it to join because you're actually getting some value for your investment. You're getting skills that don't go away over time.

ANNIE

It's like going to school.

JESSICA

Yep.

JEN

[Laughs]

ANNIE

Food school. [Laughs]

JESSICA

That's right.

JEN

We're not gonna teach you to cook though. Just fine print. [Laughs]

ANNIE

No, definitely not. God. Do you think I'd run a company that taught people [laughs] how to cook?

JEN

Annie will teach you how to not cook.

ANNIE

I made, before we started recording this podcast, I was bragging to Jen. I made a sandwich for heaven's sake.

ALL

[Laugh]

ANNIE

Oh, Jessica, this has been so wonderful. Is there anything else that you want to share? Or want our listeners to know?

JESSICA

I just want to say thank you. It's been so helpful, this, the curriculum has been so helpful. Your podcast has been helpful, the coaching has been helpful, the community has been helpful. And I'm really grateful that you guys created this and put all these pieces together. Because it's so needed. It's so needed, and I just wish that more people knew about it.

ANNIE

Thank you, thank you for being a part of it. And thank you for your contributions to our community. Like I said at the beginning of the show, I know that your realization that "I'm okay not losing the 10 pounds like I'm, my habits are good. I'm good. I'm gonna let that go" was I'm sure immensely helpful to a lot of women. So thank you and thank you for your time today on the podcast. This was so fun to chat with you.

JESSICA

Same. Have a great rest of your day.

ANNIE

You too.

JESSICA

Bye.

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](https://balance365.co) to join coaching.