

Balance365 Episode 244 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

The holidays are upon us, my friends. And for many, this tends to be a sticky stretch of time where eating habits seem to easily run amok, and workouts are replaced with after-hour holiday parties, family get-togethers, and last-minute trips to the store for food or gifts. You might have found yourself wondering, who are these people that get through the holidays just fine? What are they doing? Or maybe a better question, what are they thinking? Well, today, we are going to get into all of that. Balance365 coach Holea joins me to discuss both helpful and unhelpful approaches to the holiday season, and we share some really practical tips on how to navigate social gatherings so you can leave your parties feeling better, not worse. Now before we get into this episode, I want to take a minute to invite you to join our upcoming workshop, Cut the Crap: How to Simplify Weight Loss and Get Out of Your Own Way. My friends, we have done this workshop before, and because it is such a crowd favorite, we are bringing it back. We're going to discuss what works, what doesn't, how to get out of the self-sabotage cycle, and of course, what you can do instead to pursue your goals. Head over to balance365.com/cutthecrap or click the link in our show notes for more details. Enjoy this episode.

ANNIE

Holea, we're chatting holidays with Holea, get it? [Laughs]

HOLEA CHARLES

Very, very witty.

ANNIE

It feels like it should be an SNL skit, actually.

HOLEA

Well, a nickname of mine used to be Holi-dazzle.

ANNIE

Oh, really?

HOLEA

Yeah. So it's, this all feels very, you know, in alignment here.

ANNIE

Because you were so dazzling?

HOLEA

No, I actually don't know -

ANNIE

[Laughs]

HOLEA

- why I got this nickname. They, this person, just really liked to give nicknames.

ANNIE

"It was not because I was dazzling." [Laughs]

HOLEA

I'm not a dazzler.

ANNIE

[Laughs] Oh, I don't know about that. I don't know about that. I think - I find you very dazzling. Okay, but jokes aside, I'm happy to have you because, as a Balance365 coach, I know you have had not only your personal experience with navigating the holidays, but also you have a lot of experience talking through the holidays with our members and diving into what are helpful behaviors and thoughts and approaches and not helpful. And we're going to get into kind of two parts of this podcast. The first is some overall, in general, higher-level strategies or approaches or thoughts that we see people take that are not helpful, and we're going to offer a more helpful approach. And then in the second part, we will get into tangible, more practical, these are the things you can do at holiday parties to help you navigate the holidays smoothly and intentionally in a way that leaves you feeling good come January 2, or whatever it is when your holiday season is over. But how - tell me, before we get into that, Holea, what were the holidays like for you? In years past? Like your dieting days, what were the holidays like for you?

HOLEA

In my dieting days, it was a lot of like getting a workout first thing in the morning, making sure I, you know, would have a bank of calories that I could eat, right? So working out, I would skip meals up until the time that we got together to have this meal so that way I could just eat whatever I wanted and feel okay about it. The other thing is like the emotional eating component of the holidays was something that was very, very much so problematic for me. And instead of like owning it, I just kind of went into the default of like, "Everybody eats this way during the holidays," and like it just being okay and not actually addressing what was going on.

ANNIE

Yeah. So that I think is a great segue into our first not helpful approach that you, what I heard you describing and what I see a lot of people kind of toy with this idea like maybe this is my approach, maybe this is the thing that I should do. And that's essentially just not even try. Just saying screw it to your nutrition habits, your workout routine. Because if you can't be perfect, then why even try? Kinda like, you might have been diligent about your workouts leading up to it. But when it came time to eat, you were just like, "Nah. I'm going all in; I'm not even gonna, like, try to manage my food intake or be intentional about my choices." Is that how you felt?

HOLEA

Absolutely. Absolutely.

ANNIE

Yeah. So I think there's, feel free to weigh in here. I think there are two reasons that people might be tempted to do this is first they catastrophize a bad choice, quote, unquote, bad choice. So for example, maybe they miss a workout because they're super busy, or they overeat because they're at a party and the food is just amazing. They think, "Screw it. I am already off track. I'm just going to like stay off track for the next two months, or whatever. And like, I'm not going to try at this point, because again, it can't be perfect." And also because they undervalue small, everyday efforts. So I think the combination of those two in combination with, like you said, someone that might be dieting, and they're either consciously or unconsciously looking for a permission slip to let themselves off the hook. And like, "I've been so good, quote, unquote, all year round, or been really diligent. I'm just, and I don't know how to like navigate this kind of gray area, this stretch of time, where it's like, delicious food is around every corner, and my routine is a little off track. Because I don't know how to do that. Well, I'm just not going to do it." What do you think?

HOLEA

Yeah, well, I mean, everything that you're saying here, like I keep on getting these flashes of like, all or nothing thinking, either, "I need to be all in, you know, really good behaviors. And I'm following all of the things that I want to be doing, or I am completely off the other way. And like, screw it until New Year's or Monday or tomorrow morning."

ANNIE

Yeah, I mean, we see that pendulum swing, like either in control or swinging out of control. They're controlled or chaotic all the time, even outside of the holiday season. Like you're on the wagon, you're off the wagon, you're in, you're out, you're good, you're bad, you're right, you're wrong. And as it relates to the holiday season, you might feel like your only two options are either, stick to my routine, that I'm super diligent, and I'm like really focused, and I say no to all these foods, or I just totally just kind of lay down and roll over. [Laughs]

HOLEA

Oh, yeah.

ANNIE

And to be clear, either one is fine. If that's what you want, we want you to have the kind of holiday season that you want to have. And if you want a stretch of two months, or whatever it is, saying yes to whatever you want, and how much you want and, and you're like really like going all in on Aunt Jan's cookies, like go for it. Go for it. But we do have other options for you.

HOLEA

Yeah, and the other thing with that, though, is like your intent behind it, if your intent is, "I don't have a choice, everything's just gonna be messed up anyway. So I'm just gonna go all in," versus the intent of, "You know what? I'm going to enjoy myself this holiday season. And if that means I overeat, that means I'm overeating. But I'm making the conscious decision. This is what I'm doing." That's totally different.

ANNIE

Yeah, yeah. And I think something that can be really helpful, as we segue into what is more helpful, is to give some consideration to how you want to feel on January 2, January 3, January 4, whenever your holiday season is over. I would anticipate that if you do go all in and ditch your workouts for two months, you overeat, you eat every cookie you see, or whatever it is, you're probably not going to be feeling so hot in January, regardless of what's happening with your weight or your strength or whatever. Like, I would just be willing to bet that you're just going to be like, "Yeah, maybe that wasn't the move."

BOTH

[Laugh]

ANNIE

So, what would you say is a more helpful counter-approach? If people are like, "Oh, this is overwhelming thinking about having to navigate the holidays outside of my routine." What would you recommend?

HOLEA

Yeah, so I think that this is an opportunity for you to explore how you can meet yourself in the middle, right? If we're talking about the extremes, what could it look like to be in that middle spot? So I mean, part of it is acknowledging like this time of year is totally a time when a lot of people, their regular habits go away. And a lot of it is because there's just more going on. There's more food available. There are more things in the break rooms. There's like, the banks are handing out candy, and like all the things right? Do people still go to banks? I think that's a thing, right?

ANNIE

I don't, but people might. [Laughs]

HOLEA

Wow. But all this to say is that, this isn't some flaw about you. It is just acknowledging like this time of year for a lot of people is just a challenging time. And you know, if you can acknowledge that and then ask yourself, you know, how to meet in the middle. How can you enjoy the special thing around this time of year? Because I would imagine, like, you know, there's certain dishes that this is the only time of year that I have those dishes. And in the past, it was, "I'm going all out on these because I don't, I only get them once a year," right? Scarcity mindset of like, "This is the only time I can have it." Versus considering, "Okay, I don't get this very often. I also don't want to feel super not great on the other side of this, like, how do I meet myself in the middle? How do I want to feel on the other side of the holidays, on the other side of this meal? Like what does that look like?" And just starting to explore that more.

ANNIE

I love that consideration of, how do you want to feel. And I think a lot of people, a lot of our members would say, "I want to feel like I had the enjoyment, and the ability to have a drink with my family on Christmas Eve or really enjoy my mom's, I don't know, roast beef," or whatever people cook, I am not a traditional holiday person. If you can't tell, we like to make pizza on Christmas Eve and - but whatever that is for you, they want to be able to enjoy that. And they also want to feel good at the end. They don't want to be, have disrupted sleep because they have got reflux or hungover the next day or missing so many workouts that they just don't have the energy and stamina to do their life in the way that they would like. People want balance, and the balance can be there. But it starts with being intentional about, "If I have a little bit of forward thinking and consider how do I want to feel and what are the things that are going to let allow me to feel that way in a few months?"

HOLEA

Yeah. And I mean, the other thing to consider here is that I feel like it's safe to say that most of us know exactly how we don't want to feel from past experiences with like, you know, the holidays, and it's really easy to fall into, "I'm just going to avoid doing that, I'm just not going to do that thing," without actually considering how you do want to feel? How do you want things to go? So having a focus on what you want to move toward rather than avoid like...This is a quote from Kung Fu Panda, it is very legit. It is the turtle. But, "The path of avoidance leads you exactly where you don't want to go." So like you know, when you're trying to avoid something all of a sudden, you just end up there. And so, if you're avoiding trying to feel the way that you've always felt, consider how you would rather feel instead. Where are you going? Not just what are you trying to get away from, but where are you going?

ANNIE

Yeah. And again, because Holea and I have both had this experience, many of our members have had this experience where when you just say screw it to the holiday season and say like, "I'm just going to press pause on all of my habits and all of my skills that I've been working on. And I'll pick those up on January 2," come January 2, you are like primed and ready to be like in that point where you are very susceptible to the New Year's diets BS and like, again, if you can think about how you felt in years past when maybe you've taken this approach. I know I've always been like, "Oh my gosh, what have I done? That wasn't the move that I wanted to make.

I really regret that. I'm feeling very sluggish. I'm not feeling very good in my body. I haven't eaten a vegetable in God knows how long." And as a result, my impulse is to like overcorrect. And that's where that temptation to diet, to lose weight fast, to tackle more change than you realistically can sustain. That's the time when it's like, "Yes. Now let's get 'em! They're like really ready, they're vulnerable." And I don't want people to fall into that cycle again. So instead of saying just screw it to the whole holiday season as a whole, as Holea recommended, meet yourself in the middle, and give some consideration to how you want to feel at the end of this stretch of time. And then think about what behaviors set you up for success to feel like that in the end. Another unhelpful approach is kind of the flip side of the coin. So, on one hand, you have people that might be saying, "I cannot execute this well, so I'm not even going to try," you also have people saying, "I'm going to execute this well." [Laughs] And that is the only option, right? When you think about your conversations with people that have been like, "Yeah, I'm going to do this, and I'm going to be perfect." What does it sound like?

HOLEA

Something like, "I'll only have one plate and say no to dessert. And then before I'm gonna go and get in a really good workout, and then I'm just not going to eat until I get to the holiday, you know, get together." And then you're so hungry, you end up eating past what you said you would. So now you feel like a failure, and then you revert to what you just discussed before, or what we just discussed before, where, like, "You know what? Why even try anymore?" So then the rest of the day is ruined. You might as well just keep on going. And then you're gonna start the next day all over again, and offset everything that happened today, therefore, repeating the cycle over and over.

ANNIE

Yeah, so in the quest to be perfect, you might find yourself saying no to things that you actually truly do want to partake in. And that doesn't feel good either. Right? So it's like this, the flip side of the coin that we just talked about, on one hand, saying yes to absolutely everything and overindulging doesn't feel good. But also like saying no to things that you really want also doesn't feel good. So you've got two sides of the spectrum here. And neither one, in my opinion, are the type of ideal experience for most of our members, right? And I certainly wouldn't want you thinking that a successful way to navigate the holiday season is to just say no to all these yummy foods and to not have some overindulgences, or some more sweet treats or more alcoholic drinks than you typically would have, like, part of what I consider a successful holiday experience is having, again, the type of experience that I want to have. And that might include, as I said, my Aunt Jan, like it's legit. She is, she really, she really is. That's not just a made-up example, my Aunt Jan, always, for as long as I can remember, makes these plates of cookies. And they are a variety of cookies. And she's an amazing, amazing baker. And they're all good. They're all amazing cookies. And when I was a kid, and even in my dieting years, I would overeat the crap out of those to the point where it's like, "I don't want to see another one of Aunt Jan's cookies ever again."

BOTH

[Laugh]

ANNIE

And now I can, we'll get into the practical strategies. But now I can be pretty selective and feel satisfied, psychologically, like I got to enjoy the thing that really brings me a lot of joy and has some amazing holiday memories. And also not feel crappy because I overate too many of those amazing holiday memories.

HOLEA

Yeah, absolutely. My mom's cut-out cookies were the same thing for me.

ANNIE

Cut-out cookies?

HOLEA

Oh, yeah.

ANNIE

What are cut-out cookies?

HOLEA

Like the sugar cookies with the frosting, like the, you know, like homemade, roll them out, and you do the fun little cookie cutters. And then you frost them with like the powdered sugar like all that stuff.

ANNIE

Mm-hmm. Okay, that's I've never heard that term. But yeah, I know exactly what you're talking about. Those are good.

HOLEA

It's so good.

ANNIE

Yeah. Okay. So just like we said, throwing in the towel completely, not even giving any effort at all, isn't helpful. Also, having unrealistic expectations that you are going to be perfect. And you're going to say no to every desire and craving and temptation that comes your way. And you're going to like hit all of your workouts perfectly, or whatever it is, is also not helpful. What would be more helpful?

HOLEA

Having some more flexible and realistic expectations, like something that I really enjoy talking with our members about is like this idea of flexible structure, like we don't have to have like set it and forget it, we don't have to be like, "This is what I'm doing. And I can't go anywhere outside of that." Where having some flexible structure is allowing you to kind of marry the: here's how I honor my goals. But here's also how I have a fulfilling holiday experience. And just bringing

those things together. So when we set expectations, it's really easy to shortcut to the strategies. Okay? Think logic systems. This is what I'm going to do. This is how I'm going to do it. And I mean, it kind of dismisses also the feelings aspect of this time of year.

ANNIE

Yeah. I love that you include feelings in this kind of filter, because something that we talk about with members a lot, even outside of holiday times, is almost like this filter or framework for how they know when they want to say yes and when they want to say no. And one of the questions that a lot of our members are filtering their decisions through is like, "Is this a valuable eating experience for me?" And when you are approaching the holiday season, you might not know what's been served well, or you might not have your routine, like, these are my meal times. You might be a little off schedule, you might be traveling, and feel a little bit out of control. But again, for most of our members, when they apply their considerations, the things that matter to them, that are valuable to them, to their food and movement choices, regardless of how much control they have over what's been served, and when it's been served, they can still make a really values-driven decision and ultimately feel good about it. So it might not be this, like, "Oh, these are the numbers. And this is like, I always do this. And I never do that." Like you said, this logic, it might be like thinking about literally, "How will I feel if I say yes to this? How would I feel if I say no to this? If I say yes to this, like, maybe I really want to like sit down and savor it. I don't want to just shove it in my mouth as I'm walking by the kitchen island on my way to the living room." And all of that should be included, or could be included in your flexible structure or your realistic expectations, right?

HOLEA

Oh, for sure. I think that, again, like when we go to the expectations piece, it's really easy to just go through the tangible and kind of dismiss the intangible of what actually would make it a fulfilling experience when we are making choices that feel more fulfilling to us, like feeling connected over a cup of like hot cocoa and Tim Tams even though you're not hungry, is going to feel way more satisfying, in that you're not going to find yourself in the cupboard later because you were like, "Oh, I really wanted to say yes to that thing. But I said no. And now we're gonna have to have more things." And so just considering also like, the intangible things that you know, those expectations of like, "I really want to be able to connect with, you know, whatever," then what's important to you beyond just the food because, I mean, let's be real, the food is great. But there's also more to this time of year than food, right?

ANNIE

I would just like to circle back to the fact that you just referenced Tim Tams.

HOLEA

So good. You gotta bite the opposite corners. And then it turns into a straw, and you use it as a straw to take up the hot chocolate, and it just melts from the inside - ugh.

ANNIE

[Laughs]

HOLEA

So good.

ANNIE

If there was ever any doubt as to like how the Balance365 coaching team like really lives like trust us, like we are very much human. We enjoy Tim Tams and Aunt Jan's cookies. We are not, we are not your unrealistic "Fitness and food is life" and so serious that we don't enjoy fun. I love it. Okay, let's move on to our third and our last unhelpful overall, like thought or temptation or approach. And that is feeling powerless by the stress that this time of year can bring on. Say more about that, Holea?

HOLEA

Yeah, so for a lot of people, this time of year brings a lot of emotions. Okay? Keep in mind, some are helpful, some are unhelpful, like stress is, you know, can be both good and bad stress, right? Like we can be super excited anticipating. But it also can feel like a lot, right? So maybe you've been super busy, like you're preparing this wonderful event, you know, and all of a sudden, you recognize that you're not getting help, or you didn't get a thank you. And maybe it's the anticipation of seeing family and friends. And, "Oh, gosh, is that conversation going to come up? Well, I don't know." And, you know, "Are they going to comment about this?" And, or maybe this time of year is just really hard because maybe you've lost a loved one and there's an absence there. There are lots of different things that can come into this time of year. Whatever that stress may be, it can be really, really simple and easy to turn towards food because, number one, it's everywhere. Number two, it doesn't require a lot of energy during a time that isn't pointlessly depleting of people's energy, meaning you don't have to think about it. It's there. It's reliable, you know, it's not going to do you wrong. You're just going to grab it, and you're going to feel better.

ANNIE

Yeah, and you can do it like in the middle of a party or in the middle of your day without like having to step outside or excuse yourself for a moment or you know, go take a walk or whatever, which all can be really helpful where - we're going to talk about that, but it's okay to acknowledge like how convenient food is as a way to help you manage your emotions.

HOLEA

Absolutely. Yeah.

ANNIE

So what you're saying, Holea, is that we do often see a rise in emotional eating around this time of year for so many reasons, like for joy and celebration, but also like sadness frustration, anger, loneliness, everything in between?

HOLEA

Absolutely. Yeah. Emotional eating can be both a positive and negative experience. It's not just one.

ANNIE

Yes, yeah. And if you're new here, just a friendly reminder that emotional eating, we define it as any eating that's occurring in the absence of physical hunger. It's something that a lot of our members wrestle with, we are pretty darn good at coaching through it. So with that said, what would be a more helpful strategy than just feeling powerless? Like, "Oh, it's so stressful, I just can't, I'm just going to, I'm going to eat," what would you recommend?

HOLEA

Yeah. So I mean, yes, you can absolutely use food as a strategy to cope with stress. That's absolutely an option on the table for you. But considering some other strategies can support you in making more life choices for yourself, for example, in a lot of those anticipation ones, I think this is a big one for a lot of our members, is anticipating like the actual meal or the actual get together, that anticipation can lead to emotional eating prior to, simply just because of the what-ifs and yeah -

ANNIE

But before it even is a thing that actually happens, our members are like, "I was just, even just thinking about it. And I was noticing an increased desire to eat."

HOLEA

Yeah. And so it's like taking that as information, right? Of like, "Okay, what am I actually, you know, like, what is actually feeling really concerning to me," like, you know, kind of allowing yourself to identify maybe some of these underlying things that you do need, like, maybe you need clarification, maybe you need to delegate and ask for help. Maybe you know, you're tired, you need a break, you know, and actually just exploring what those underlying things are underneath, you know, kind of these unhelpful feelings that you're having. And even brainstorming beforehand, like, let's say, even, like, from my personal experience, I have the same experiences, you know, around the holidays, and I know what things drive me to emotionally eat. So it's using that information being like, "Okay, I know when I feel such and such a way, what I really need is just to just step outside and just get some fresh air." My babies won't be nursing anymore, otherwise, I would step away, and I'd go nurse the baby, aka play with him in a separate room.

ANNIE

Yeah, I love the idea of anticipating, "I might find myself feeling this way. And if I do, here are some things that I can do to help me truly address that emotion instead of avoiding that emotion through food." I also think, boundaries, this can be a really good time to lean into some boundaries, set and enforce boundaries as needed, whether that be with a self-loving boundary with yourself, where you say, "Okay, we're not going to stay up and watch the Family Stone and cry into a pint of ice cream for the fifth time, we're not going to do - that's like, not what you need right now. You need to go to sleep." My friend does that a lot.

BOTH
[Laugh]

ANNIE

I have to, at least once I have to give it to myself at least once in the holiday season. But it might also sound like just preparing yourself for, say, you've got a family of food pushers, or, you know, your mom really gets on you about "Why didn't you finish the casserole? Did you not like it? Gosh, it's just I've worked so hard," you know, and having some tools in your back pocket. "Mom, I love you. I'm just full right now. Let's talk about something different." Some ways to like redirect the conversation or set a boundary as needed, anticipating those, but also, now could be a good time to practice those. Even like when you're not in that intense, like pressure cooker situation. That's something else that we talk about with members a lot. They want to know, "How do I do that thing? How do I make that healthier quote-unquote behavior my go-to instead of food when I'm in the moment?" And step one might be practicing that behavior outside of that moment. Because really, like when you are in an emotionally heightened situation, that's like the Super Bowl of emotional eating. And I'm like, "You gotta go to practice first. You gotta get some reps in outside of the Super Bowl. And then, and then eventually the Super Bowl will come, and then we can like really put our skills to test, right?"

HOLEA
Absolutely.

ANNIE

But it's not like, the first time you do that might not be in that intense situation. So getting some practice as you're leading up to a stressful event or situation could be really helpful.

HOLEA
Yeah.

ANNIE

Yeah. Anything else to add about those three unhelpful approaches or thoughts? Before we move into more practical?

HOLEA
I don't think so, no.

ANNIE

Okay. All right. So I think this is important, too, because I do think practical tips can be really helpful. And I also want to just acknowledge that if you came to this podcast and you're like, "Okay, she was just telling me what to do at the party. Like, I don't want to, I don't want to do all this thought work and like, change my mindset." Because truly, if you're new here, some of the stuff that we're talking about isn't going to change overnight, it's not going to change in a week, you might chew on it as you move through this holiday season, and then practice it outside of

the holiday season. And it might just be a little bit of a longer game of evolution, right? But if you came in here, like, "I need to know what to do at the party," I'm happy to share some of the things that have been really helpful for me when I go to social gatherings. These are so applicable outside of the holiday season to just even like summer barbecues, or, you know, weddings or birthday parties or whatnot. The first thing that I do is I scan the food that is available. And I like to get a whole picture like this is the smorgasbord of options available to me. What is a hell yes? And so, to me, that feels like I get to be really intentional. I'm not just like moving down the buffet and just taking one of everything if I don't really enjoy it, you know, that was really pivotal for me to realize that just because, for example, turkey is commonly served at American Thanksgiving dinners. I don't really enjoy turkey prepared that way. I don't have to take it. I am 39 years old. I can not take the turkey, right? [Laughs]

HOLEA

"You don't have to take the turkey" needs to be a meme for Thanksgiving.

ANNIE

[Laughs]

HOLEA

I'm just saying, like...

ANNIE

Don't have to take the turkey. But you know, we get so caught up in like, this is just what we're supposed to do. We're supposed to eat this on these meals. And we're supposed to eat this way. And we're supposed to have this and then this, and we're always supposed to say yes. And like, that's just not how I operate anymore. I really evaluate what's available to me. And then I'm like, "What is like, 'Hm, yeah, that's a hell yes.'" And then my philosophy has always been if it's not a hell yes, then it's a hell no. And I stole that from Greg McKeown, *Essentialism*. I've talked about that book 1000 times. But I really, really appreciate that. And then I fill my plate up accordingly. And I want to be very intentional with saying I fill my plate. Because one thing that I used to do that would not be a helpful behavior, again, practical behavior, is to graze. And just like hanging around the kitchen island, or wherever the food, the food table is, and just kind of pick here and there. And some of this, it led to me eating for like, hours over the course of hours, just kind of grazing and I never felt physiologically satisfied. I never felt truly full. And I also felt like not psychologically satisfied because there's something about starting a meal, filling up my plate, ending the meal, meal's over, that really feels psychologically satisfying to me. So I always try to plate my food with hell yes, foods and leave the rest. What about you? How do you approach parties?

HOLEA

Basically the same thing, I just use different terminology. I consider myself to be a picky eater. As in like, if, like, if I'm going to eat certain foods, like it's going to be like, "Absolutely," like you said, it's going to be a hell yes. Like it's going to be not just some subpar cookies, I'm not just eating a cookie because it's there. Okay? I'm going to be eating the one that I want or the few

that I really want. And the other thing is the, like you mentioned, the filling of your plate, like I like to think of, I like to bookend, like bookend my eating, like -

ANNIE

Yes.

HOLEA

I am going to commit to eating a meal. Knowing that I just feel better when I eat meals and I don't snap. Like snapping just doesn't feel good in my body. So bookending it, grabbing that plate, filling it up with the things that I want, you know, prioritizing the things that I know that make me feel better, and then working in some of the things that I like want because they're delicious. This is the only time of year I've had them. Those literally are the things that I absolutely do.

ANNIE BREES (INTRO)

I love this, again, has come up with our members. It's to me at the heart of what they're telling me they want and what we often encourage them to do is raise their standard for what they're eating and what they're not eating. Because again, I am no stranger to this myself, but like I will at points in my life, I have been eating six-month-old candy that is stale. That is gross. And for some reason, I'm like getting a chair out looking in the back of a cupboard, and I'm like, "I just need something sweet." And then I put it in my mouth. I'm like, "This isn't even good," but yet I continue to eat it. And our members have that - they're like, "What is going on?" It's like raise your standards, like, we are not settling for, as you said, subpar cookies, or candies, or treats or whatever, like, you deserve foods that you love, and foods you really enjoy. And foods that leave you feeling good. And if the food doesn't do that, for me, it's out.

HOLEA

Yeah, not worth it.

ANNIE

No, I deserve nothing but the best.

BOTH

[Laugh]

ANNIE

As do you and everyone listening to this. The other thing that I know Jen has talked about as it relates to alcohol, because alcohol obviously can increase the overall calorie consumption, but it also can interfere with sleep, it can leave you feeling kind of crummy the next day, after a few drinks, say no to those subpar foods gets a little bit more difficult. And before you know it, you're like, I had two drinks. And then two drinks turned into three drinks. And before you knew it, I was just like, hovering over the chips and dip bowl or whatever it is. So one thing that's helped Jen is to have a drink in her hand, but not necessarily an alcoholic drink. So if she would say have a glass of wine, she might her next option might be you know, a sparkling water or something, and

she would keep that in her hand to feel like she's participating in kind of that like culture where we're having a party, and we're having a lot of fun, but she wasn't over-consuming alcohol. And the other, which I really love because I feel the same way, I feel compelled to have something in my hands or something like a plate of food or drink or something. Where - I'm talking with my hands, that my hands are coming up like Ricky Bobby, like, I don't know what to do with my hands.

HOLEA

[Laughs] Exactly.

ANNIE

But also to really focus on what as you said, I think you've talked about this a little bit earlier in the episode, what else is going on besides food. And for me, the holidays, I have a pretty small family, only child, my mom passed away like, it's a rare opportunity for me to see my extended family and to catch up with them. They, you know, some of them live out of town or out of state. And so really like spending time connecting with those people instead of the food is really, really helpful. So I try to just walk away from the food and get more involved in the conversations and catching up with friends and family that I care about. And on that note, I feel like I'm just like, these are just pouring out of me, and feel free to interject anytime, Holea. Because of the scarcity around food that can come with holidays like this is my mom's breakfast casserole or Aunt Jan's cookies, or my mom's cut-out cookies. You can ask for recipes.

HOLEA

Or get a to go box.

ANNIE

Yeah, yeah, yeah. And you know, hopefully, your family and friends would share that information with you. I don't know, maybe some won't. Maybe it might be a secret. But that's an option for you. If you're like, "I love this food, but I'm now full. I really enjoy it. I'd love to have more of it." Ask for the recipe.

HOLEA

Yeah.

ANNIE

And you can make that whenever you want.

HOLEA

I feel like there's also an abundance of food that is made. So it's very likely that there's leftovers or enough you know, if you're, like, open to asking like, "Hey, do you think I could like take a couple home? Because I love these so much." I'm sure that they wouldn't say, "Heck no." Because it also, like around here, the Midwest, food is a love language. And people are like, "Oh, I feel so loved because you want to eat all this wonderful food I made you. So here's some more."

ANNIE

Yes, yes. I can receive like I will -

HOLEA

[Laughs]

ANNIE

I will be, happily be on the receiving end. I don't give love that way. [Laughs]

HOLEA

I give like, "I bought you bread. Bread and maple syrup."

ANNIE

Yes, you did. And oh my gosh, both were so good, that bread did not last long in my house. My kids came home after Holea left, and they're like, "Can we have more of that?" And I was like, "It's gone."

HOLEA

Sorry. [Laughs]

ANNIE

You ate it all. [Laughs] Holea, are there any more practical party tips that you would recommend?

HOLEA

I mean, I feel like, too, you're just kind of - circling back to one of the things that you said around like, you know, you were talking about like connecting with other people and stuff like that. That's a prime example of how you're focusing on what you want to like move towards in that experience versus what you just want to move away from, because I'm sure it also doesn't feel good to have like, inauthentic conversations simply because you're trying to avoid the snacks table right? So it's actually like considering what it is that you want to be doing, you know, like, our family often gets into like board games or card games or something, you know, and so things that, you know, you're busy with your hands and you're busy, you know, interacting with one another. But somehow it also never fails that a snack bowl ends up in the middle of the game table. So it's also just, you know, again, having that consideration of that thing that you're moving towards, that connection piece. And also, you know, this idea of, you can be outwardly connected, but you can also be really connected with yourself of like, "Okay, I'm connecting with others. And I'm noticing I'm not hungry right now. So maybe I'll just go grab that sparkling water like, that's enough for me to feel like" - to Jen's point, feel connected still to that social aspect.

ANNIE

Yeah. And if you're new to connecting to yourself in that way, it's okay to go take a moment, like in the bathroom, take a breather, like, drown out the noise, the distractions, just have a minute

like, "What do I need right now? Where am I at? How am I feeling?" And in the end, then, return to kind of regroup, gather yourself, and then go back, because in the same way that I think about a meditation practice, you know, maybe a really experienced individual with a strong meditation practice, they might be able to meditate in the middle of a New York subway, someone that's just learning to meditate, they might need to, like, I need a silent room, the windows closed, like, no music, just me. I really mean some, like, intense focus period. And so it's okay, if you're hearing Holea and I talk about, like, how do they make these decisions kind of on the fly? If you're not there yet, we got there with practice.

HOLEA

Lots and lots of practice and errors along the way, maybe like it wasn't, it wasn't perfect practice by any means.

ANNIE

And speaking of errors, I think that is a good way to kind of wrap all this up that if in the event you found yourself, you overate at a party or you overeat for weeks or four months on end, it's okay. It's really, it's okay. There's no need to beat yourself up. There's no need to over-exercise or withhold food to make up or try to negate for, you know, any of the quote-unquote, damage that you've done. You don't need to jump on the scale and feel bad about it. You can just move on, small shifts back to your normal routine, your habits, and carry on.

HOLEA

Yeah, yeah.

ANNIE

Because as I said, come January 1, the diet industry spends a large percentage of their marketing money in January, because they know, people have likely spent the last couple of months overeating, overindulging, and they're feeling kind of crummy about themselves. And that makes you super susceptible to those quick fixes, like fast results that inevitably fail you. They leave you feeling even worse six weeks later, so just say no.

HOLEA

Yeah. [Laughs]

ANNIE

Carry on, Nancy Reagan, just say - wasn't that her? Just say no to drugs?

HOLEA

I'm not sure.

ANNIE

And diets. Drugs and diets. [Laughs]

HOLEA

Well, so the other thing here is that, like, it may sound simplistic to say just pick up where you left off. It's no big deal. But the biggest thing, like when it comes to being able to do that, it's like, "Yeah, great. That sounds great. But how do you do that?" It's like you meet yourself with compassion. Again, acknowledging it's been a really busy stretch. There's been a lot of holiday get-togethers, it's been stressful. And this is how I cope. This is how I moved through the season. And here I am today. Again, meeting yourself where you're at, what is the next reasonable step? You know, just again, meeting yourself with that compassion after a stretch like that.

ANNIE

And you also join coaching.

HOLEA

Whammo.

ANNIE

[Laughs]

HOLEA

That's it.

ANNIE

Because then you can get into our community, you can talk with coaches, like Holea, like me, and we can remind you when you need the reminder like, "Hey, this is okay, we're gonna be fine. Here's our game plan. And we're gonna, we're gonna make it through this together. We can do this."

HOLEA

Yes, yes.

ANNIE

Okay, Holea, this was so fun. Always so enjoyable. You and your Tim Tams and movie references. And what else was it? Cut out cookies.

HOLEA

Like, that's the thing, like when you say casserole, I'm like, "No, no, it's called a hot dish. The hot dish. It's not a casserole."

ANNIE

We grew up a state away. How did that happen?

HOLEA

But Minnesota and Iowa are just like, very, very different, I feel.

ANNIE

Well, I like casseroles. Okay?

HOLEA

All right.

ANNIE

I will try your hot dish.

BOTH

[Laugh]

ANNIE

But it's like soda and pop.

HOLEA

Pop. Yeah.

ANNIE

What do you say?

HOLEA

Pop.

ANNIE

Yeah, I think pop's the Midwest thing too. Right?

HOLEA

You know why they call it pop though, right?

ANNIE

No.

HOLEA

Because when you leave it in the car in the winter, it goes, "Pop!"

ANNIE

Really?

HOLEA

[Laughs] When it freezes, like -

ANNIE

No, I mean, I knew that it did that. But is that really why they call it -

HOLEA

[Laughs] I don't know.

ANNIE

- soda? Or, pop?

HOLEA

If you needed a dad joke, I'm here for you.

ANNIE

Oh, God, I love you. You're -

BOTH

[Laugh]

ANNIE

Okay, well, who knew? Don't fact-check that, please.

HOLEA

Yeah.

ANNIE

[Laughs] Or the Nancy Reagan quote. I'm sure we'll get a message about both saying like, "I'm sorry, that's incorrect." They were just jokes. They were just funnies. Just funnies. We're here for your comedic relief. And food and fitness can be fun and funny. It doesn't have to be so intense and serious. Holea, thank you for your time today. I appreciate you helping all of our listeners navigate the holidays in a way that feels good. And we'll talk soon. Okay?

HOLEA

Sounds good. Thank you.

ANNIE

All righty. Bye-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 to join coaching.