

Balance365 Episode 306 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 thousands 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

Jen, the three sneaky reasons people are eating more than they think. Why are we even talking about this? Don't you think people know how much they eat?

JEN CAMPBELL

No, they don't (*laughs*). That's why we're talking about it!

ANNIE

You and me both, humans in general.

JEN

Humans have no idea. And Annie and I are included in this from time to time.

ANNIE

Yes. I've told stories before, I'm sure, on this podcast about how I have been surprised by the calorie density of some of the foods that I've eaten. And I do this for a living. So we're not saying, "You suck and we're perfect." We're saying humans in general are not great at this. We consistently, even with the best of intentions, under-report how much we eat, right?

JEN

Absolutely. And I know we're gonna get into this, but it is the nature of our brains. Okay, it's the nature of our brains. Every single person listening will struggle with this. It's one of those challenges when we say, "Weight loss is simple, not easy," this is what we mean. This is the not easy part because the nature of our brains leads us to consuming a lot more than we are aware of.

ANNIE

Yeah. And what's really frustrating about this experience is, I'm sure you've had these members, I certainly have had members that come to a coaching call and they are adamant that they are not overeating. Yet the scale is not going down. And they are so incredibly frustrated, because they feel like they're putting in all this effort towards changing their eating behaviors, but they're not getting the desired result.

JEN

And that's a very challenging place to be. It's when your perceived effort is high and your results are low. That is a recipe for burnout. And that's where I see a lot of women quitting on the process.

ANNIE

Mm hmm. Yeah. But the reality is, is like we said, we just aren't great at accurately assessing how much we eat. A lot of the reason is because humans, our eating behaviors are easily influenced by seemingly insignificant details like the size of your plate, who you're eating with and how much they serve themselves, how accessible or convenient food is. It's just so easy that calories, again, even with the best of intentions, can unintentionally creep into your day.

JEN

Mm hmm. Absolutely.

ANNIE

So, we're going to talk about the three most common situations that we see in our members to hopefully just bring some awareness to these situations. Because in a lot of cases, simply just increasing awareness, shining the spotlight on the fact that these things are happening, can help reduce the frequency or the intensity of them. So awareness is one of those, kind of, mind blowing experiences for members, like simply just having that insight like, "Oh, I know I'm more likely to do this," or, "I need to be on the lookout for this," just naturally reduces the behavior. But before we get into what they are, if you are not already on our wait list, you should be, because our doors open soon, right?

JEN

They do.

ANNIE

Just a few days, literally. In less than a week, a week or so?

JEN

12 days?

ANNIE

Something like that - soon. You could be just days away from ending this restriction with dieting, the frustration of, "I'm trying to lose weight, but I'm not losing weight," or "I'm losing weight, but I can't sustain it. I can't maintain it." Or the frustration that comes with forever researching the perfect plan or the perfect foods or the perfect exercise routine. Like you could be done with all of that. Get your name on our wait list. Go to balance365.com/waitlist or click the link in our show notes so you can be the first to know when our doors open and save some money. Who doesn't want that, right?

JEN

Yeah, absolutely.

ANNIE

Okay, so the three reasons. Reason number one that you are eating more than you think. You wanna tell them?

JEN

Sure, number one is snacking, but not intentionally snacking. This is like the unintentional snacks that you have in the day.

ANNIE

Yeah. Do you do this?

JEN

Uh, yeah, from time to time, it definitely creeps up on me.

ANNIE

Yeah. This I see it really common with parents specifically.

JEN

Yeah. Well, I'll also say parents and office people, corporate staff rooms and cookie jars, jar of candy sitting on the side of the desk and, "Hey, I'm running for a coffee. Who wants one?"

ANNIE

Mm hmm. So this falls under what we would call mindless eating or sometimes even automatic eating. Like Jen said, bowls of candies on desks or crusts of sandwiches when you're cleaning up lunch. You're cleaning up breakfast, lunch, dinner, and you're like, "Oh, I'll just pop that in my mouth real quick." Or the handful of almonds or goldfish crackers that you grab when you are serving someone else.

JEN

Every time you pass the pantry.

ANNIE

Yeah. It's not just that these calories add up. It's really the fact that most people don't even recall that they're having these snacks.

JEN

Yeah, like you can't even remember at the end of the day, you can't even *remember* that you have done all this eatin. Because it's so sneaky, it's so automatic. It may not even register with your conscience. I remember going through this process myself getting on top of my mindless eating. And I could not believe - so when I decided to become aware, I could not believe how

many times I dipped my hand in the almond jar every time I passed the kitchen. And I was like, I'm doing this all day.

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

And this isn't even satisfying.

ANNIE

Yeah. And I mean, these experiences are often quick. They're often on the fly. You're standing in the kitchen. You're commuting, you're on your way. You pass by the kitchen on your way to the bathroom, or you pass by the front desk where there's a bowl of chocolates on your way to your meeting or whatnot. Again, it's really just about bringing some mindfulness and your attention to these experiences. I have had conversations again with members who swear they eat three meals a day and they don't snack. But in troubleshooting, "Okay, well, what's going on? Why are you not losing weight?" They take another look at what's happening in between meals and they are blown away by how many small bites and snacks that they are indulging in.

JEN

Yeah, I had a client refer to this as realizing, what'd she call it? "I have a conveyor belt of food" (*both laugh*). I'm going towards my mouth all day. And it was so, so funny. And I can just visualize it. I know exactly what she means. You have your meals and then you have just these tiny little snacks headed towards your mouth all day long.

ANNIE

Yeah. So again, in the spirit of awareness, just being mindful of, "Oh, this is a thing that a lot of humans are naturally inclined to do. I'm going to give this some attention. Like do I do this? How often do I do this?" It could be a really great little self experiment.

JEN

Totally. And I want to also mention that one of the reasons I think this is missed or overlooked is because we're often looking for those obvious moments or those obvious eating experiences that are keeping us from our goals when we feel like really full. Or we've gone out to a restaurant and overeaten and had, you know, the steak and the potatoes and the dessert and the wine. These unintentional snacks, they likely won't lead to a feeling of fullness, like something you can obviously pinpoint, like, "Oh, I've overeaten again." But they likely also disrupt your hunger. So even though you don't feel full, if you're someone who kind of has these little snacks all throughout the day, you likely don't experience hunger in that natural rhythm that we teach our members to kind of look for. Because you, again, that conveyor belt of food. It's not large volumes of food, but it's just these small volumes of food that you're eating all day long.

ANNIE

Yeah. And please, I don't want anyone to walk away from this podcast thinking that either snacking is bad or that they have to be perfect and they can't ever have these little nibbles or bites here and there.

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

That's not the point. The point is, as you said with the almonds Jen, like when you are doing this multiple times a day consistently, that's where we can get an increase in calories that -

JEN

Are unintended.

ANNIE

Yeah. And not supportive of a calorie deficit.

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

Right. So, we snack. If you're hungry, go for it. But maybe be on the lookout for these mindless eating experiences.

JEN

Yeah. And as we always say, which I mean, fine print, fine print, fine print, because we know there's a lot of disordered eating advice out there. We are a product of what we do most of the time, not once in a while, right? Nibbling on your kid's crusts before you toss out the food or whatever you're doing, once in a while, it's not going to, that's not spiral here. It's more looking out for the patterns, the conveyor belt (*laughs*).

ANNIE

Yes. Yes, if you have a pattern of a conveyor belt.

JEN

Yes.

ANNIE

(*Laughs*) Yeah. Okay, that's another good segue into this second reason because there is, I think, some food morality around this group of foods. These are calorie dense, low satiety foods. And listen, I think we have all had experiences with incredibly tasty foods that you just feel like you could eat and eat and eat and not get full, right. In other words, they are low satiety. Mine is definitely like chips and crackers.

JEN
Mmm.

ANNIE
Like that sort of, things in a bag, in general (*laughs*).

JEN
Yeah, so I guess if people are interested, there are like satiety indexes online where you could look up high satiety and low satiety food. But in general, low protein and low fiber foods will lead to low satiety. Higher protein and higher fiber foods will lead to higher satiety. More processed foods often lead to lower satiety due to, you know, protein and fiber intake, but also just how quickly you can like, you know, you barely need to chew potato chips, right? Compared to if you were eating a baked potato. So that's the other thing. They're down the gullet pretty quickly, digest pretty quickly. So there's that issue as well. And they're often high calorie.

ANNIE
Some of my favorite foods, some of my really yummy foods, foods that I used to eat all the time that are lower satiety or at least lower satiety on the satiety index, things like croissants. I remember as a kid, my mom bringing home croissants, and feeling like I could eat three or four.

JEN
Oh, totally.

ANNIE
And just not even phase me, right.

JEN
Yeah.

ANNIE
And I think this is such an important point because as great as internal cues like hunger and satiety are to guide what you eat and how much you eat, it does get a little sticky if you're eating a low satiety diet. So this is why we really encourage internal cues to be used in conjunction with balanced plates.

JEN
Yeah. I want to say something about this, and it's something that I've experienced and I know many of the women I've coached have experienced: You can also have a high protein and high fiber meal that is covered in fat, essentially. Which ends up kind of skyrocketing the energy density, the calories in this meal. Because you know, fat is not bad. It is good, but it doesn't really contribute to your satiety while you're eating. In fact, it can contribute to your food being really tasty. You know, throw some butter on a potato, throw salad dressing on a salad. But it makes it even more tasty, which means you want to eat more. Fat helps us feel satiated between meals, but there's, I always explain it like there's like a law of diminishing returns here.

Like more fat does not equal more satiated. So if I have, say, I don't know, let's say I have two tablespoons of fat on my plate somewhere. If I put four tablespoons of fat on my dinner, if I put six tablespoons of fat on my dinner, that's not going to lead me to be satiated for double or triple the amount of time, right? So the honest truth here is we have a lot of people out there running around hysterical about carbs. But when we are working with women, carbs are not the problem. Often. I don't want to say "all the time," there's never blanket things you can say in nutrition coaching, because everybody's different. But I see more often than not, a lot of women we work with, their fat intake is extremely high. And back to point one about getting more aware, when our members become aware of this, they are shocked. They are absolutely shocked how high their fat intake is. It is often far above general health, general nutrition and health recommendations. This was also me at one time. I don't think this is actually a struggle for you, but this was for me, for me at one time, this was happening, I believe, because I did keto and low carb for so long. And when you are restricting carbs or when you are doing a restrictive diet, that's like, "Fat is great. All the fat." You develop habits of putting a lot of fat on your food. Now keto was good for me for a time in that my diet before keto was clean eating, which is like low calorie, low fat, essentially eat your broccoli, chicken and rice. So keto was a relief for me where I was like, "Oh, I can have" - initially it was a relief, "I can have all these things that I haven't had in so long and they're okay. I don't have to feel, you know, quote unquote guilty." I did keto or some form of low carb dieting for years. And I developed all these little habits of having lots of fat on my meals. So then when I was, I'm trying to transition away from keto to just becoming a normal eater, I had a lot of very bad habits with fat that I had to undo. And that was challenging for me because I would describe it as like my palate had gotten accustomed to high fat, everything. Right.

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

So in the end, what kind of keto low carb dieting got for me was that I felt very, I guess, satisfied, like taste-wise by high energy density meals.

ANNIE

Yeah, that makes sense.

JEN

Yeah. So it was salad grilled chicken and a whole bunch of dressing, which I was taught was okay, but I had no knowledge of calories, calorie density back then. And it's like, "Oh, you've got 90 calories from the lettuce. You've got 90 calories from the chicken breast and you've got 700 calories of dressing on top!" right? I was just very unaware of that, of calorie density. And honestly, if - you don't have to go off the deep end counting calories, but having a general awareness of calorie density of different foods is, in my experience, very important for people with weight loss goals. Because they're just shocked sometimes by the calorie density of some of their meals, as you were saying.

ANNIE

Yeah, you're right. That was not my experience, because I never made it through more than two days of keto or low carb to ever feel deprived enough for to have the backlash like that. But I will say that this point number two, the low satiety foods that are calorie dense does influence my eating choices as someone who dines out often. I have shared before, I can think of very, very specific numerous examples where I have some awareness of the calorie density and then the profile of the foods that I'm eating: quickly just scan the nutritional profile of a meal or whatnot before I order. And if I'm in the ballpark, I'm not micromanaging, but if I'm in the ballpark, I'm like, I'm good enough. Like that's great, checks the boxes. But there have been times when I have been absolutely surprised. Like, "Oh, no wonder. No wonder that doesn't leave me feeling super full," because it just because it's a lot of calories, it's a lot of fat, it's not high in protein, it's not particularly high in fiber. Like, it's really surprising. And again, not to moralize any food. It's just a matter of helping me make more informed decisions.

JEN

Yeah, I think too, from a food neutral place, which we really try to encourage people to take the morality out of their food choices, and instead just look at it from a neutral place, if I'm going to eat a croissant, or if we are ordering pizza, my very neutral kind of approach to eating these foods are, we are eating a high calorie, low satiety food. That's it. I'm aware of that. I'm aware to add more satiating foods either earlier in the day or with that meal. And the other thing is, you know, if I'm having one of these meals that's low satiety, it's like mental note, you'll probably get hungrier sooner than you usually would if you were eating higher satiety meals. Very neutral, you know, cause and effect. That's it.

ANNIE

Yeah.

JEN

But if you're eating foods like this all day long, like that explains if you have a low satiety breakfast, you're going to be very hungry for lunch a few hours later or a snack type of thing, right? Which can lead to all this snacking because you just have a low satiety diet overall.

ANNIE

I also want to mention, too, that I used to feel a lot of shame or embarrassment around how much I could eat of some of these foods thinking that like there was just something wrong with me. Like, I remember jokes in my family about like, "You must have a hollow leg" (*laughs*). Like, I'm sure it was done with good intentions, but I do remember thinking like, "Oh, am I eating that much?"

JEN

Mm hmm.

ANNIE

Now knowing what I know about food, it's how a food is comprised can influence the likelihood that I would overeat particular foods. And it's not reflective of me.

JEN

Yeah, and I also wanna mention, just with you using the word overeat, if you're eating low satiety, high calorie foods, again, back to the hunger and fullness point that we mentioned in point one, this may not be obvious to you because you never feel over full. Because it's just not satiating food. So you're not getting, you know, a strong fullness cue when you're eating it.

ANNIE

Yeah, yeah.

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

Which again, we've said before, these are tools, these are all tools and no tool is going to work perfectly, all the time.

JEN

Yes.

ANNIE

So this is why having comfort and awareness and familiarity with multiple tools like awareness, like internal cues, like journaling your food, like mindfulness that meals can all collaborate and work together to support you.

JEN

Yeah, for sure. And different tools for different times of life, as well.

ANNIE

Yes. Yeah. OK, the third and the final point that we want to touch on and that contributes to people eating more than they think they're eating are the things that you eat when drinking and socializing.

JEN

Yeah.

ANNIE

So there are a ton of studies, I think, on how we're eating and where we're eating and how the food is presented and the size of plate it's served on and the size of utensil that we are eating with can influence how much we eat or don't eat, right? One in particular that I came across when doing this outline was that people are more likely to serve themselves more if the person

they're sitting next to does the same. Like if I'm sitting next to you and you serve yourself a larger portion, or what I perceive as a larger portion, I am then more likely to serve myself a larger portion.

JEN

That's fascinating, yes.

ANNIE

Right?

JEN

Yeah, I can see that.

ANNIE

This can also look like you're done with dinner and you're waiting for everyone else to finish and you find yourself just nibbling on whatever you have left on your plate. It might look like, if you are dining out, eating the complimentary appetizers like the bread basket, the chips and salsa, whatever is in front of you, right.

JEN

Yes (*laughs*) oh my god, yeah.

ANNIE

And again, some of this might kind of point back to point number one, where you're not even aware of it. You're not even recalling it as a part of your experience. So I think this is just something to be mindful of, of like how, when I am eating in proximity with other people, what are my behaviors? What am I more likely to do? What am I less likely to do? It could also be, a contributing influence that I hear members talk a lot about is either being self-conscious of how much they're eating in front of other people or feeling distracted by conversation, getting roped up in the socializing aspect and they're just like eating and they're not really connected to how they're feeling in their bodies as they're eating or what they're eating, right? And then they leave the party like, "Oh God, what did I..." (*laughs*)

JEN

Yeah. This just happened to me a few weeks ago. I had gotten together with a group of friends for like just a little pre-Christmas get together. And there were like meat and cheese platters and I was sitting at a table and the meat and cheese platter was right in front of me on my side of the table. And you know, we, I was there for several hours and all of a sudden I was like, you've eaten a lot of meat and cheese. And I realized it's just, it was just right there. I just kept kind of, Oh, we'd talk, I'd grab another piece of cheese. I'd grab another piece of meat. And the friend I went there with, she was across the table where there was no food around her and she was not doing that. And it reminded me of how, you know, again, back to behavioral studies that we have, the closer in proximity you are to food, the more likely you are to be unconsciously eating it.

ANNIE

Mmhmm. Yeah. A lot of meat and cheese. Love that for you.

JEN

A lot of meat and cheese. Yes.

ANNIE

Um, the other aspect that, we could probably do a whole podcast on this alone, but I just want to draw attention to it is how alcohol can influence calorie intake. First of all, just from a sheer standpoint, that alcohol does have calories, not to mention like when you're mixing it with, you know, sodas or juices or other liquids, right? That can increase -

JEN

Yeah. A pina colada can be, it's like made with cream. So we're talking about like a 600 calorie alcoholic drink right there.

ANNIE

Yes. But also how that can influence your behavior with food outside of alcohol when you've been drinking. And there's kind of two debates. I couldn't find anything super conclusive, maybe you know, but there are some studies that show that alcohol can increase hunger cravings due to like a temporary rise in serotonin, but also that we could eat more, simply because we have reduced inhibitions. So the debate is like, is it chicken or the egg? Are we eating more because we have less inhibitions? Are we eating more because it's increasing our hunger cues? Regardless of why, it's safe to say that most of us are not making our best eating choices after we've had some cocktails, right? (*Laughs*).

JEN

Yeah, I mean, in general, I would say a lot of us aren't making our best choices in life after we've had a few drinks (*laughs*). But just showing any kind of restraint around food or mindfulness is not happening after you've had a little bit of alcohol or a lot of alcohol.

ANNIE

Yeah. And again, that's not to moralize alcohol. We have podcasts (episodes) on it. If you want to include drinking in your lived experience, great, go for it. But again, some awareness of how that impacts either your overall calorie intake or your choices related to food following drinking. And again, I know this is not new to people that have listened to us for a long time, but it's not just like while you've been drinking, it can also bleed into the next day. If you have had so many drinks, you're not feeling great. Suddenly, you're going to the coffee and the donut shop, and you're skipping your workout, and then you are phoning it in for lunch because you just can't be bothered to make a reasonable choice. I've been there many times, so no judgment. But again, just awareness can help you either moderate your drinking or moderate your behaviors when drinking.

JEN

Yeah. I wanted to say that when I'm talking to members about this, you know, classic scenario, somebody's, as Annie said, putting in effort, feels like they are really eating in alignment of their goals, of their values, and they're still not losing weight. Looking at these kind of sneaky reasons, to me I compare it to having like a leaky tire, right? Like, it's not this obvious, "Oh, I drove over a nail, look at that nail sticking out." Of course, we need to fix that nail. It's like, you just have these tiny little leaks and in an accumulated state, they're really impacting your goals, right? And that we just got to get on top of these little leaks in your plan.

ANNIE

Yeah, yeah. So if you are frustrated, you swear you eat three meals a day or four meals a day, you're not snacking and you just are baffled by why you cannot lose weight. Maybe stay open to where you could be wrong.

JEN

Take a peek at these three areas, yes.

ANNIE

Yes. Is there something I missed here? Because like we said at the beginning of this episode, Jen and I get it wrong. Humans in general get it wrong. It's totally normal if you were like, "Oh, yeah, there is maybe more happening than I thought."

JEN

Yes.

ANNIE

Yeah. OK. Thank you, Jen. I appreciate it.

JEN

Thank you.

ANNIE

Talk to you soon.

JEN

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 <https://www.balance365.com/> to join coaching.