Balance365 Episode 348 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
Welcome back to another Q+A. In these episodes, we answer your questions, and today we are diving into a common relationship dilemma: what to do when you feel like your partner's eating habits are throwing *your* nutrition goals off track. Get ready for some straight talk and some tips on how to have that tricky conversation with your significant other about eating habits. Plus, we'll share our own experiences navigating this common challenge. And if you're tired of the endless cycle of restrictive diets that leave you frustrated and hungry, imagine effortlessly creating healthy, satisfying meals that nourish your body and support your goals without the guilt or the confusion. Start your journey to balanced nutrition. Download your free guide today. Find the link in our show notes. Enjoy.

JEN CAMPBELL
So this question was very long, it was sent to me, and I'm going to pare it down into just a couple of sentences. Essentially, this woman had to spend three months away from her partner for work reasons, and she lost 15 pounds. Then her partner moved back, they were reunited, and she is rapidly putting on those 15 pounds. She says, "My fiancé is the reason I overeat." And talks about how he loves food, loves eating out, loves being at restaurants, and she just says, “Help.” What do you have to say about that, Annie?

ANNIE
Well, as we were saying at the beginning of this, I mean this with nothing but love and respect: it's an interesting way she phrased that. “My fiancé…” What did she say? "My fiancé is the reason I'm gaining weight?"

JEN
“Is the reason I overeat.”

ANNIE
“Is the reason I overeat.” Again, nothing but love and respect here. It's not your fiancé, it's your behaviors.

JEN
It's you. You are the reason you overeat.

ANNIE
I don't doubt I don't doubt that in proximity of your fiancé, or anyone that has a different set of behaviors, you might be more easily swayed into different behaviors. Deviating from behaviors that you have by yourself versus when you're with other people.

JEN
Yeah.

ANNIE
We all do. That's very human. That's totally normal, right. But at the end of the day, we are responsible for ourselves. And again, being in proximity to someone might make adhering to some of the behaviors that we want easier or more difficult, right. My boyfriend, for example, has wonderful eating behaviors. And when I am around him, I naturally eat more fruits and vegetables, more protein. I drink less. I snack less, right.

JEN
Mm-hmm.

ANNIE
But the flip side of the coin can be true for other people. Being in proximity with siblings, with roommates, with girlfriends, and coworkers that are eating lunch out every day-

JEN
Your kids.

ANNIE
Your kids can make some of those behaviors also more difficult. And I think the opportunity here is, step one is, we have to take responsibility for our own choices.

JEN
Mm-hmm.

ANNIE
And that could be absolutely a game changer to say, just as you were saying, “The responsibility isn't someone else's. It's mine.” And that should feel really encouraging and empowering.

JEN
Yeah.

ANNIE
Because if it's yours, then you can change it, right?

JEN
Yes. If your habits are always based on another person, then you don't have control of them, right? As soon as you make that mindset shift of, "Oh, wait, no, no, no, no. He can eat whatever he wants. *I* still have choice. I still have control in this situation."

ANNIE
Yeah. And if it's applicable, you could certainly have a conversation with your partner. “When you're not here, these are the things that come more naturally to me. Could we start incorporating those things when you are here?” So I can have both. I can have time with you, enjoy time with you, and feel like I'm on a good trajectory with my health goals.

JEN
Yeah. I have a lot of empathy for this person because I am married to somebody whose nickname is literally Snacks. That is what his brothers call him. “Hey, it's Snacks.” (*Both laugh*). And so I completely understand. And I also am familiar with feeling my habits being pulled in that direction, and for me, momentarily allowing myself to be very resentful and to blame, right?

ANNIE
Mm-hmm.

JEN
And it is very disempowering to do that. I don't want to feel that way. And I don't want to feel that way about him. I want him to be able to make his choices that work for him, and I need to make my choices that work for me. So I'll share a little story that happened to me. This was several years ago, he was in a big snack phase. He was in grad school, very stressed and doing a lot of emotional eating. We would get our kids to bed at night, and our thing was to sit down and watch TV together. And he would like, I mean, he was like, “Got my snacks here, got my snacks here, off to the couch.”

ANNIE
Party!

JEN
And I found myself, you know, also indulging in those snacks. Then again, that familiar pattern that I have where it's like, "Oh, it's all his fault. If he wasn't like this, blah, blah." That's all going on in my head. Pause. “Jen, this is on you.” Like he's going through what he needs to go through to survive grad school. That's on him. What do I need in these moments? So what I decided was, I decided to tell him, this is what I needed. This is not my blanket advice to everybody. What I needed was to remove myself from that environment for a few moments. So I told him, I was very honest, “This is a struggle for me. This has nothing to do with you. I want you to do you. So I'm going to go upstairs and watch TV. When you're done snacking, send me a text and I'll come down and we'll sit here together. But this has just, this is just too challenging for me.” His feelings were hurt initially, but I made it very clear, “It's not about you.” You know, that's his own stuff.

ANNIE
“It's not you, it's me.” (*Laughs*)

JEN
So I did that for a few nights. And he ended up telling me that ended up being really good for him, because he wanted me to come down, and so then there was an end point to his snacking.

ANNIE
Mmm.

JEN
He'd have his snacks, and then he would, there would be an endpoint. He'd put stuff away. He'd text me, I'd come down and we'd watch TV together. The other thing is, I found after doing that for a few nights, it just helped me break that habit. So like, essentially, what happens with a habit is, that all habits have a trigger, which leads to a craving, which leads to a routine, which leads to a reward. I personally don't find it difficult to form bad habits (*laughs*). So, essentially a few times of him getting out those snacks, my brain was like, “Whoops, this is a habit now!” So breaking that habit and going upstairs, kind of getting away from the food for a few nights, for me, broke the habit. Where it wasn't just that I was trying to resist a craving, the craving went away.

ANNIE
Mm-hmm.

JEN
Then I was able to return to the couch, and in the future, I found even if he did want to have a snack, my desire to partake in that with him had gone away. And I was able to sit there, and he could snack, and I felt confident, you know, having my diet soda or whatever I decided to have instead. So that's the story that worked for me, but everybody has to sit in those moments of going like, “What do I need right now?”

ANNIE
Mm-hmm, yeah.

JEN
Right.

ANNIE
And to your point too, some of these eating experiences, whether it's snacking or dining out or celebrating with food, might also be intertwined with connection and love and a shared experience.

JEN
Yeah.

ANNIE
And so part of the solution might also include finding ways to still get that connection, without it centering around eating out, or desserts or snacks on the couch, right?

JEN
Yeah. Totally.

ANNIE (OUTRO)
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