



Lisa: Hi everyone, I am so excited today. And I do have bags under my eyes right now, because it's very early for me, but midday for our wonderful special guest who is Robin Long. And I have been privileged enough to get to know her in a business group in America, of all places. And as soon as I heard what she did and what the name of her business is, I'm like, we're going to be totally friends, as long as her idea and balance meets with mine.

Luckily enough, it totally does. So I would like to introduce you to Robin Long, from the Balance Life of Pilates inspired lifestyle with Robin.

Hey Robin.

Robin: Hello, how are you?

Lisa: Thank goodness that we both kind of vibe on the same level about this concept of balance. But I would like you to share, in your own words, a little bit about who Robin is, and what leading a balanced life actually means to you.

Robin: Yes. Well, first of all, I agree. I love that I had the same thought when I met you, was like oh, we're like similar, but I wonder. And then I just- obviously we feel like we have connected in such a cool way.

So yes, I'm Robin. And I started as a Pilates instructor, I live in Santa Barbara California, and I'm a mom to two little ones so we're also kind of in the same boat in that regard. I have a four year old and an almost two year old at home, and that's why I'm locked in my bedroom right now to do this interview as this is how it works.

Yeah I started as a Pilates instructor, and I actually really got into Pilates first because it came at the perfect time in my life when I needed a transformation. I had been always a very healthy active person or at least wanted to be a very healthy active person, but often felt like I was stuck in a lot of cycles of dieting and exercising and guilt and shame and starting over, dieting, exercise, guilt, shame. Over and over and over from a very young age.

For me, it started in high school really, and the thing is, I was raised in a really fantastic, wonderful, supportive household, and yet I still was dealing with all of these body image issues, and weird relationships with exercise, that I've come to learn are so normal for people, a lot of people just think that is the way it is, especially as a woman, that's the way you live. And so as I found Pilates, for me it came at a time when I really needed to break free from that. I also was dealing with a lot of stress in my life that was taking over, manifesting into my body, aches, pains, anxiety, and Pilates really flipped a switch for me, changed my life.

I started teaching traditionally in the studios, classes, private clients, and I've eventually taken that online which now I do all of my teaching online and also just come at it and provide a community and resource very similar to you, but with a Pilates twist that is all about how to live a balanced healthy life, and basically for me that means realistic. Sane, not trying to strive for perfection, not falling victim to all the fads and the messages that the media tries to serve us on a daily basis, and finding your peace and your freedom, as it relates to food and exercise and just living healthily.



Lisa: I just love that, and especially with you mentioning that guilt and shame spiral that happens around food and I feel like in the small steps membership and in the balanced life membership there's- we have this constant, everything's okay, it's not that we don't have to- it doesn't have to be 100% all the time. So I love that we're on that same level, because I do feel last night I did an interview with a Chinese medicine doctor, and it was all about the stress that we're living, like our cortisol, its effects- it just shuts down other parts of our body. If you're going to feel like you want to become committed to something like Pilates, or you want to move down the whole foods path, it's just so important to do that in a way that it doesn't cause extra anxieties- We're already living that, most of us. These things are meant to help.

So tell me, why Pilates? Because my experience of Pilates is I was like again, I've got to get into Pilates because I've got really terrible posture after breastfeeding kids, and pregnancy, and all that stuff. And I could see all the benefits, it makes sense to me, it's super fun, so I went into my local place and it cost me \$95 for an initial session, for them to then tell me yes, you can do Pilates, and here's where your level is at, and then it was going to be something like \$35 per appointment. At the time, I was like I just don't have that kind of money, so Pilates seems like this really super inaccessible, and exclusive form of exercise. Can you tell me why Pilates is so damn good, and share how people can get some free stuff- you've got a free workout and you also sell so much awesome stuff on your website, but how does it become a part of this balanced life?

Robin: Yeah, so so many things I can speak to for that. Yes, Pilates is known for being very expensive. That is just true. In person Pilates training is expensive, it's \$100 an hour for a private session, we have \$75 an hour for classes when you're using the equipment, and then mat classes now are around the same, \$30 a class. And that's US dollars, so I don't know if we're quite speaking the same language, but I know it's a lot of money.

And one reason that is, is because instructors go through a lot of training, and it's very- it's not like you can just become a Pilates instructor like that. Pilates instructors really work with your body, they really pay attention to how you're moving, your alignment. Almost in a way that's similar to- if you're a good Pilates instructor, in a way that's similar to physical therapy. Knowing how the body works, correcting imbalances, and when you start doing that and healing the body and for example, if you have poor posture, and you- yeah I know everybody sits up straight in their chair, I feel like every time I say I'm a Pilates instructor people go, oh.

Lisa: I did the same thing when I met you.

Robin: Oh, how do I look? So yeah. Let's just say for example you have poor posture, I can totally relate to the holding babies, breastfeeding situation, or even sitting at a desk all day, right? You sit like this, and your chest muscles get weaker or get shorter and tighter, because they're like this, and your back muscles get longer and weaker. So you're unbalanced. You've got something happening here and something happening behind you, and it's imbalanced. So what happens is you go throughout your day and you continue using your body improperly, all throughout the day, no matter what you're doing.

Those muscle imbalances get reinforced as you go throughout your day. So then you go into a workout, and you're actually not using your muscles the way they're



designed to be used. You're working in your imbalances and maybe you end up with some pain, or things aren't getting better, you're not seeing results, and it's because you're not using your body correctly and your muscles efficiently. So Pilates is like, in a nutshell, if you're doing it right, and you're doing it well, it really focuses on the form, your alignment, so that you're using the right muscles and activating them properly, and when you start to do that, you see fantastic results because you're not just going to the gym and slopping through a workout for an hour and not really making any progress, you're actually spending focused time thinking about your muscles, learning how to use your muscles, and yes, then you get those benefits of strengthening and toning and all the aesthetic benefits that we love. You're also getting the functional benefits so that you get more out of your workout than many other forms of exercise.

Does that make sense?

Lisa: Yeah, that totally makes sense. Totally as I am every single time I talk to you. So is there any time that is too late to start Pilates?

Robin: No, no. We have- I work with 95 year old clients, it's never too late, and that's the beauty. It can be- I love bringing it to high school kids, high school dancers. I love bringing it to high school athletes, learning how to use their body right and then down the road from there, it's never too late to start figuring out what is going on with their body? How can they use it more efficiently? How can I- really what I love about Pilates, it's like get the most bang for your back, right? And especially as busy people and kind of the approach that you have with your community of- you probably don't want to spend hours working out, or hours preparing a healthy meal, you just want it to be realistic and something you can do for the long haul. So that's one reason I love Pilates, is it really falls in line with that, most bang for your back.

Get on your mat, focus on what you're doing, use your body right, and you can do so much more in fifteen minutes than say an hour of just a sloppy workout, just because.

Lisa: I love bang for my back, especially with kids and that sort of stuff. Okay, so what is your- you mentioned before about how you don't- you try to keep your members and your community away from all the fads that distract us when it comes to living a healthy balanced life. So what is your philosophy on food then?

Robin: That's a really good question, and it's a pretty hard question. I was just writing an email about this because there's just so much out there right now. I mean, there's paleo, there's that new documentary what the health, there's- have you guys heard about that over there?

Lisa: Yeah.

Robin: There's the new book by Dr. Gundry, I haven't read it yet. All this to say there's just- you can get conflicting information all day long, it's like what is the right thing to do? So I think that the similarity we say is what I just continue to come back to, is well first of all A, what works for one person doesn't mean it's going to work for everyone, so that's kind of the first disclaimer, right? Whether that be because of your body, whether that be because of your value system, where you live, all the things. We're all different and have different- I think it's okay for us to all go different ways with our diet.



Additionally, I just always come back to keeping it simple, and eating as real, fresh, whole foods as possible. So if that means you go the vegan route and you eat more real, fresh, whole vegan foods, or if that means you're more of a paleo type person and you eat real unprocessed foods that fall in line with the paleo diet, I think that's sort of the one thing that I continually come back to, is that's one thing we know for sure, right? Those eating fresh, real, more simple foods, is agreed upon by all, that that's the route to go, and staying away from the unprocessed packaged foods, chemically laden foods and that kind of thing.

Lisa: I love it, but I also love that there's- I agree. When I learned about all the different theories, I was like, well this is confusing. And the only thing that everyone has got in common, is that they're not saying that processed food is the winner here. I think we do, we need to eat basic foods, and then we need to listen to our own bodies, because it will give us signs all the time, that we're on the right track or we might need to change things up. But you also have young kids, and so do many of the small steps members, so how do you bring this balanced philosophy into your home and with your kids, because as we know, it can sometimes not be all that easy to feed. You are a mum who runs her own business, and has little ones, you moved away from your family, you don't have that support there as much, so what does balanced family life around exercise movement, food, and just life in general, mean to you?

Robin: Yeah. It's interesting as my kids are just starting to get bigger, and how that becomes more of something that I think about on a daily basis. I say that I think I could have had the tendency to gone a little bit more of a controlling mom route, no my kid is only going to eat this organic everything. I could have gone that route, but my kids who are at very young ages, have both had food allergies. My daughter has outgrown all of hers, my son, we're still working through some things. But I think that it was kind of meant to be that that happened in my life, because at a certain point, I had to just feed her food. And something- if we're out and about, and it was just a certain choice and it wasn't the best choice then, I had to feed her. She couldn't have all the things, because she had food allergies.

So I think some people, there's two directions people can go. Some people can go the route of not really knowing much about whole organic real foods, and not caring, or there's the route that I probably could have gone down, which would have been a little bit more controlling. No, we're going to eat only all the good things, and none of the packaged foods. What do you call them there, packets?

Lisa: Yeah, packet foods.

Robin: Okay. I knew it was a little different, so anyways, that just helped me I think to find a sense of balance in our home, of knowing that like, okay I'm going to do the best I can most of the time, when we're out having breakfast, and lunch, and dinner at home, about when we're out with friends, or it's a special occasion. We just do the best we can with what we have. And one of the things as I'm teaching my daughter about food, I'm really- It's a challenging thing to approach food and want them to encourage them to eat healthy food, but not feel guilty or bad about eating not healthy foods but wanting to embed those good choices and behaviour.

One thing we do in our house, is we talk about all the time foods, or always foods, and then sometimes foods. And that is something we're using with my four year old language, my four year old's language. Are cookies bad? No, cookies aren't bad, cookies are delicious, they can be fine but they're just a sometimes food. They're not



an everyday food or an all the time food, but carrots are an all the time food, apples are an all the time food, and just trying to not- it's a tricky fine line to walk, to say no this is a good choice, this is a bad choice, but without saying that. That's one thing we are trying out, I'd be curious to hear for you.

Lisa: We were talking about this whenever we were together, I can't even remember. It feels like yesterday, but a long time ago though. And I was sharing about how when your kids go to school, that there's this extra layer of control that you have to just let go. They're exposed to a lot of foods, that they just definitely have been exposed to lots of different foods. And we do the sometimes food as well, I mean they see kids every single day, having Oreos or things like that. It's not-

Robin: They're having it as an all the time food.

Lisa: Yeah, Donovan gets those every day, and then it also starts to become that food isn't special unless it's from a packet. I'll make a beautiful batch of muffins for afternoon tea, and they'll be like no that's not special, have you got anything else? And they'll go to the pantry, and try to find something in a packet. I feel like it's setting them up from a tough time, if we don't educate them within the society that they are finding themselves living like. We're choosing to live in the city, not on a hill top, and these foods are a part of their life. I find my compromises and ways to give them a little bit of that, so they feel like a normal person. The longing is such an important part of life and living, and it's a core feeling that means something and if kids are starting to feel excluded, or different at a certain stage, then I'm going to do what I can to just ease them into that.

If we are as a base, having a great breakfast and a great afternoon tea and dinner, and their lunch box has got some veggies and fruit in it, but it's a sandwich with honey, and some pretzels are something I put in their lunch box, and something- they're like can you please leave it in the packet, because I'm such a tight arse and I also hate waste, I'll just buy a big packet and just pop them out. And they're like, can you buy the ones in the little packet. It'd mean so much to them. So I'm just constantly treading this line. I find that it's going to be something that as they- it's kind of an awkward time, this kind of four until seven, maybe, where they still- you can have proper conversations with them, but they're still not fully comprehending how food potentially makes them feel.

We do the sometimes food, but I just never ever want them to feel shame, or to internalise that they're bad, if they've chosen something that isn't a good choice. So yeah, I feel like it's a constant work in progress, constant. But it's like all parenting, as we hit a new level, it's a new devil. We've just got to find our ways, through them. I love hearing that about you, but I am- I was also just wondering, I guess also because stress is on my mind, Pilates and living a balanced life, is Pilates your stress relief, or do you do other things to keep things cool when the pressure is rising?

Robin: That's a great question. Pilates for me is a major source of stress relief, because of the breathing that's involved, the mindfulness that's involved, like I said you focus on your movement. So when you're doing Pilates- if you're doing a workout with me, I'm talking most of the time, and saying okay now think about how your abs feel, and think about where that leg is, and turn it out a little bit more, and it's made me like really, what? But it's connecting your brain to your body, which is a form of really meditation, and mindfulness, so as you're on your Pilates mat and you're thinking about how am I supposed to breathe, where should that arm go, where



should I be feeling this? You're not also thinking about that working out, or your kid's grade, or the friendship that's bugging you. You know, whatever it might be, if you're focused on your workout, it's a form of meditation and mindfulness, while you're also getting exercise and you're also getting the breath which is just proven to reduce stress and increase your energy and there's all kinds of research to back that up that's just breathing but it's magical.

So Pilates is that for me. Another thing that I really prioritise in speaking of cortisol that you brought up, is sleep. And I know that when you're speaking to a group of moms with young children that sometimes that can be, I'm trying to get sleep but my kid keeps waking up, so I can't get to sleep, and then you stress out about not getting enough sleep. So I don't want to do that, I don't want to put that on anyone, but if there is sleep that can be improved or controlled, that's something that for me, I'm a totally different person. If I get just a few hours less per sleep, I'm craving sweets all day, I'm snappy, I'm not focused. I noticed a huge difference.

I think a lot of people overlook that, and I totally get it. I like staying up late because it's the only time my house is quiet and I can get stuff done, I totally get it and have the same struggle, but I do try to get more sleep, especially in a really stressful season.

Lisa: Yes, everything is different if I'm tired. I can't be my best, and really if you think about it, humans haven't even had the ability to stay up super late for that long in history, if you know what I mean. It's a new thing, and on top of that, as soon as we wake up it's go, and all the things, no wonder there's so many stress related illnesses. I just love all of this stuff about Pilates, and I'm really excited to do the workout that you've chosen for us. My question is, as an online instructor and the small steps community is a pretty large one, with people at all different levels of fitness, and flexibility, movement, whatever, how- will we know if something feels wrong? Is it something that you can do on your own in your home, being instructed by someone like you without someone there, going this, this?

Robin: Yeah, well you can. Because it's proving to work, but I think it's important to- a few things. Have a really good instructor, so whether that's me or someone else, I think what's important, is that someone is queuing you through the exercises very well, so that they're not just throwing you into advanced exercises with not a lot of focus on form or set up, or what you should be able to do before you try that exercise. So I definitely, on my workouts, I provide a lot of queues of how it should feel, how you can know you're in the right position, and modifications. If that feels like this, maybe try this. Or, if you're not there yet, here's an option. Or if you want to make this more challenging, try this.

I provide a lot of modifications for people. I do think there is massive value in taking an in person class, or session or a few, to get that hands on instruction and maybe try some of my online workouts and then go and have them look at your form, and see what they say, and take that home with you and apply it to your home workouts. I think there's a great synergy that can happen when you do that. And I think overall, I teach a lot about learning to listen to your body, and your- like you said earlier that your body will tell you how foods are making you feel, in the same way Pilates helps you connect to your body in a way where you'll be able to distinguish-



I noticed that people at first when they start they have a little harder time distinguishing the good sore from the bad sore, or the good- I call it hurts so good. Yes, this hurts, but I know it's a good hurt, and I'm meant to feel good, it's okay. Versus, this hurts, should I be doing this? Learning to distinguish those different feelings, is important to help you then listen to your body, whether you take it from Pilates, or then take it when you go on a run, or take a dance class, or something. Being able to have that awareness of okay this is the good kind of hurt where I know I'm working my muscles and it's just hard, versus something doesn't feel right in my back, I'm going to stop doing that.

Lisa: Yeah. Our bodies are so clever. What I think I really like about the concept of Pilates, is also I guess kind of like maybe why I like chiropractic, because it's just about bringing you back into line with making your personal body work at its personal best. And it's not- you don't have to grow big muscles, that would just happen if you're just doing the activity. I love that idea, and I think because of all of the expense that you see, and it sort of seems like it's only for people who have a lot of time or can get to classes or do whatever. It's kind of felt a bit exclusive, and now what you've just explained, I'm like give me. I'm ready, and sometimes I do need to know the why behind why we would use particular exercise forms, because there's the CrossFit people, and there's the runners, and then there's the weight bearing, there's all sorts of things. It's all just about us finding something that speaks to us at the particular time in our life when we need to hear it.

So I am so grateful to you for sharing what you know about Pilates, which is the tip of the iceberg that you shared today, but also how this fits into the concept of a balanced life for you, and so we're going- you're giving us one of your amazing workouts, but there's also- you're running a little. You do challenges all the time, and you get people- what I love about your stuff is that you don't need to do half an hour every day. It's like, ten minutes a day, or it's fifteen minutes a day, and you'll start to notice your benefits. So tell us a little bit about if we want to go to the next step with you, where we can find that.

Robin: Yeah, so I'm big on that small steps, right? I'm big on that little bits each day, and kind of getting rid of that all or nothing mentality, like you do with so many things in your programme, and now you do that with exercise. Just because you don't have an hour to go to a class or a gym, doesn't mean you need to do nothing. Ten, 15 minutes of focused work can have tremendous benefit. And I do a lot of those. I do free challenges like we talked about. I have one happening in September on September 11th, it's a seven day free challenge and it's- if you're watching this after the fact, you can go to my website which is thebalancedlifeonline.com and you can get a free workout there, and all kinds of blog posts about Pilates, and just resources to kind of help you try it out, see how it works for you, and learn now.

Lisa: You do offer your so much. I'm really excited that small steppers have been able to meet you, and that you have given us some of your very precious kid free time. I get that. Might just inspire us to move our bodies in a new way, so thank you Robin.

Robin: Of course, thank you for having me.