

Ep 203. Feelings First



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With Your Host

Jody Moore

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I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy*, episode 203, Feelings First.

This podcast is for people who know that living an extraordinary life is not easy or comfortable. It's so much better than that. This is *Better Than Happy*, and I'm your host, Jody Moore.

Hey, everybody, welcome to episode 203. We are going to talk about feelings first today. This concept is super powerful, but only if you want to change your life, only if you want to live an extraordinary life, which is why you're here. You wouldn't be listening to this podcast if you didn't.

Now, I want to make sure that you guys know that we have transcripts of these podcasts available because we didn't for a long time and I got a lot of requests for them and I kept saying, "Sorry, we don't do that." And finally, I was like, maybe we should do that. So, thanks to Pavel who edits my podcast and his team, who does beautiful show notes and transcribes everything and makes it available to you on the website.

I also want to mention that, normally, I set aside a nice quiet time when I can be in my office on my own to record the podcast, and this week's been a little crazy because my husband's been out of town and Monday was a holiday, which I normally work on Mondays. Anyway, long story short, I have my three-year-old daughter with me today and I thought, you know what, I'm just going to record the podcast and Taylor is going to be there.

And we'll try to edit her out, but you might hear some little sweet sounds. She likes to play with her little toys, you know, like the little tiny Hatchimals and the little LOL dolls and the little Shopkins. She loves all of those little teeny-tiny toys right now. She lines them all up in a line and then she uses her little imagination to have them talk to one another and play with each other, which is so awesome to hear the things that her toys talk about with each other.

And I don't know if I should be worried because, a lot of times, they're fighting. One of them is yelling at the other one and one of them is threatening a timeout to the other one. It says a lot. Let's just leave it at

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that. It says a lot about me. It says a lot about Taylor. It says a lot about our family, but it's all good.

Anyway, we're going to talk about feelings first because feelings are really, really powerful. They're really important. It's important that you understand them. I find that the more I understand feelings, the more I'm willing to examine them and take a look at them and understand the role they play in my life, the more I can leverage that information to my benefit. So that's what I'm hoping you're going to get out of this episode.

So let's begin by reminding ourselves that feelings are the motivation for us as humans. Everything we do is motivated by a feeling, by something that we are trying to feel right now in the present. Now, that's the other thing I want to talk about with feelings. Feelings are a present experience. They're something that happen to us right now in the current moment.

There is no such thing as past feelings. There's no such thing as feelings from your childhood or from something that occurred in your past that you're feeling now. You're only feeling a feeling currently in the present moment and it's because of what you're thinking currently.

Now, here's why we get confused and we sometimes talk about past feelings or past thoughts, is because our brains remember events and we have lots of thoughts that we're not consciously aware of that are rattling around in there that create feelings for us. So that lack of conscious awareness or that original development of that thought that our brains picked up in maybe some past moment is still in there and that's creating a feeling.

But you're still only feeling a feeling in the present because you're thinking a thought in the present, okay. There are no future feelings either. A feeling is only something that you can feel right now in the current moment. So the reason I'm pointing that out is because, if you think about the way our brains are motivated and the way feelings motivate us and drive us, is we have that primitive survival part of the brain that is most concerned with the current moment.

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Now, we have lots of other functions of the brain that are concerned about the future and think about the future, but the primitive survival brain that is so, so strong and powerful is only concerned about the present, and feelings are something that we feel in the present. So, the brain isn't going to give up a sure – fairly sure, I should say – fairly likely to happen positive feeling that we could feel in the present for a possible future feeling that may or may not happen. That doesn't make any sense to our brains.

Why would I want to sacrifice feeling good right now, when it's a fairly sure thing, for something that I might possibly benefit from in the future but I may not, it may not even work out that way? So this is powerful to know, but feelings are so, so powerful, they're driving us every day. And being consciously aware of what's happening in the brain is the key to it all.

Now, the other thing I think is so powerful about feelings is that the worst-case scenario in any situation in our lives, the worst thing that can happen ever is a negative emotion. Now, I know that's a hard concept to grasp sometimes.

I was just reading a story on the news. It was a really tragic story about a woman who's gone missing and about her five children, who it sounds like are locked up with grandma right now and a husband who sounds a little sketchy and, anyway, lots of dramatic scary things happening. So, when we say the worst thing that can happen is a negative feeling, let's take an extreme situation like that where there's a person who is potentially violent or dangerous and children involved. The worst part of all of that is the negative emotion, right?

Even if someone gets physically harmed, we could argue that physical pain is pretty bad, right? You could definitely make the case that being in physical pain is worse than being in emotional pain. But I do find that it's the emotional pain that comes along with the physical pain that makes it the most intolerable.

So I want you to imagine that you are sore, that your body hurts, that your muscles hurt and you don't know why. You just wake up with pain in your

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body, with sore muscles. Maybe you even can't move in some way. That's not going to feel good. But it's the not knowing why that is the worst part of that experience. It's the fear about, "I don't know what caused this, I don't know if I'm going to be able to get better. I don't know how to prevent it in the future or solve it now if I don't know the cause of it."

And it's that fear over maybe it's even going to get worse, that's the most intolerable part, right? Versus, you wake up with sore muscles and you wake up unable to even move in the ways you normally do because of a really intense workout that you had the day before. Now, that soreness is not even that painful, right? Actually, it's kind of a good feeling because the thoughts you're having are, "This is so good for my body. I worked out so hard. This is going to help me get stronger."

So again, back to that extreme example I was talking about in the news story I just read of the missing woman and her children. The terrible thing about all of that is the negative emotion that all of the people involved in that story are experiencing; the fear, the sadness, the uncertainty, the worry, the confusion. That's all terrible.

It feels terrible, right? But in the end, it's just feelings. And me reading that story, I found all this kind of fear and sadness and worry rising up in me. Now, again, I don't mean to say that I'm experiencing anything to the level that those family members are, but the worst thing that can happen is a negative emotion.

And as soon as you know that, the world becomes a less scary place because emotions are not something we have to run from. They're really not a problem. They're just vibrations in the body. Okay, so that's the number one thing I want you to know.

The second thing I want you to remember about emotions is that anything we want is because of how we think we will feel in the having of it. Remember, I said feelings drive us, they're the motivation for everything we do.

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So, I want you to imagine that your child has left the church. I coach on this quite a bit. Somebody has a child who's left the church. Maybe it's an adult child or maybe it's a teenage child who wants to leave the church. And my clients come to me saying, "Help me, Jody, how do I be kind and loving and gracious and allow my child to make their own choices and watch them make what I think is a mistake and not try to control them? Or do I try to control them? Where is the line between me being the parent and having expectations and telling them what I think is best versus letting them make their own choices?" All of this kind of drama is what I do lots of coaching around.

So, if you're in that situation where you're really wanting your child to come back to church or you're wanting your child to want to go to church and to develop a testimony, stop and ask yourself, what is the reason why I want that?

Now, our initial answer is always going to be, "I want that for my child because I think that's what's best for them, I think that's what will create the best life for them and the best future for them and will serve them best in the eternities and that is why I want that."

But then, if we ask, "Okay, and why do you want those things for your children? Why do you want your child to have the best possible life? Why do you want your child to live into the best possible future and have a connection with God and all of those things? Why?"

Well, it just seems like a given, right? We never stop and answer that question. But if you keep asking why, why, why, and dig all the way down to the bottom of the motivation, you will find an emotion there. You will find it's because you want to feel peaceful about your child's life. You want to believe that they're going to be okay and things are going to work out and they're going to have the kind of experience you want for them because then you will feel calm or relieved or happy in some way.

That is how we are wired as human beings. It's not selfish. It doesn't mean that you don't genuinely care about other people or that you're putting

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yourself in front of other people. It doesn't mean any of that. This is how we're supposed to operate as feelings. If you don't know what the emotion is you're seeking, you need to keep asking, why, why, why until you get to the bottom of it.

Okay, so, feelings are powerful. They're a power to drive us. Their influence over us is amazing and when we understand that, then we can leverage that knowledge to really make the changes we want to in ourselves and in our lives. And this is the way to 10X your own growth.

So, I believe that, as we go through life, we do grow, naturally. Like, things happen, events happen, and we learn things along the way. And I think that we are all growing and evolving. But there's the growth that will happen if you just operate at the effect of your life, which is not a bad thing, but there's also the ability and the potential to 10-times your growth, which will 10-times your contribution and 10-times your experience in this life. And that's what understanding emotions does.

Now, I also want to make sure that I'm very clear that the work I do and what I teach here on this podcast and with all my clients is not just about feeling good all the time. I heard somebody recently referencing my work who described it as cognitive behavioral therapy, which does have a lot of overlaps with CBT, but it is not that. I am not a therapist.

And the way this person described it was that CBT is an amazing tool, but if it were true that our thoughts were creating all of our feelings then wouldn't we just want to think positive thoughts and feel good all the time? And this person said that they'd noticed that they don't really want to all the time or it doesn't feel realistic or doable or feel like the kind of life they want to live to do that.

And I was like, they're misunderstanding my work. Let me just try to clear it up. Thoughts do create feelings, 100%, but that doesn't mean that we want to feel good all the time. It doesn't mean that I want to think happy positive thoughts all the time. I want to be sad when people I love are struggling. I'm still sad because of a thought that I'm thinking, but I want to keep that

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thought. I want to be appalled at the story I read in the news today about the missing woman and her children. I'm appalled because of a thought that I'm thinking, which is, "That's terrible, I hope those kids are okay. I hope they find that woman and I hope she's okay and I feel so sick for her mother who is probably worried sick about her."

All of those thoughts are creating my feelings of fear, and I want to keep those thoughts. So this is important to know because when you know that you're the creator of all of your feelings, it doesn't mean that you go in and you consciously look at every single thought and navigate every single feeling. But when you want to, when you want to generate certain feelings, then you can.

And I'm going to expand on that here today by teaching you about feelings first. So, this is the way most people think the world works. This is the way you probably believed it growing up if you're like me. This is the way that you're taught by most of your teachers in school, who, by the way, I'm so impressed with what they're teaching in schools nowadays. I think schools are understanding all of this stuff too.

But this is the way I was taught by my teachers growing up, who were amazing people, but this is what we just used to believe, right? We believed that if you wanted to accomplish something in your life, if you wanted to change something in your life, then you should take some kind of action. And when you take the right action, then you will get the result that you want. And once you have that result, you're going to feel better.

So, let's talk about some examples. Action – let me pay off my debt. If I pay off my debt, I will have the result of positive net-worth and then I will feel financially free or financial peace, some kind of, maybe, relief, right? That's what we think; action, result, feeling.

People think, "Okay, let me take the action of eating less and exercising more, and then I will get the result of being at my ideal bodyweight and then I will feel loving and accepting towards myself." Right, action, result, feeling. We think, "I'm going to take the action of cleaning up my house and

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then I will have the result of a clean house, and then I will feel relaxed and focused and peaceful in my home.”

Let's take the action of going to school and have the result of earning a degree and then we will feel confident as we go apply for that job. Let's take the action of working really hard, and then we will have the result of succeeding and then the feeling of happiness. That's basically what we think, right?

We think, let's take the action of keeping the commandments and then we will have the result of living a righteous life and then we will feel close and connected to God. Now, sometimes, we cut out the part where we take action because things just happen. Circumstances in the world happen. People happen in our lives. People do things or say things or certain events occur, so it wasn't necessarily us taking the action, but we still believe it was the result and then the feeling, right?

So, for example, someone does something really nice for me and then I feel gratitude. My kids make a choice that is a choice I like, they chose what I hoped they would choose, and then I feel relief. Someone gives me a compliment, and then I feel confident.

So, in some situations, it's not even us taking the action. It's just the result happening due to somebody else using their agency, and then our feeling, right? So that's what we think. And it makes sense that we would think that because that's the way we experience the world. And, by the way, this isn't a bad way to live. Like I said, just living in this way and believing this is the way it works is not maximizing though the power that you have over emotions.

It will get you a little bit of progress, but it's not going to get you the 10X progress we're going to talk about next. What we're going to talk about next is feelings first, okay. So the key is to take every one of those examples I just gave you, and instead of waiting to feel the feeling at the end, you're going to try to generate that feeling and emotion before you take the action.

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Okay, so let's walk through them. Again, I want you to think about it. It's going to be feeling, action, result. So, if first I decide to feel financial peace, financial freedom, financial abundance, and then I go pay off my debt, I work to pay off that debt, I'm 10-times more likely to find the way and to take the action necessary to end up successful and have the positive net-worth.

If I put the feeling first of loving myself and then I work on eating less and exercising more, I'm 10-times more likely to get to the result of the ideal bodyweight. If I decide to feel relaxed and peaceful and focused in my home and then I go clean it, cleaning it, first of all, is a lot more fun from that place, but also, I'm a lot more successful and confident about getting the clean house in the end.

If I decide to be confident about my abilities and proud of myself and then I go to school, think about what a better experience I'm going to have at school and what a better student I'm going to be as I earn that degree; feeling, action, result. So, in other words, choose to be happy and fulfilled first, then go work hard and you're much more likely to succeed. Choose to be connected and close to God and then keep the commandments, and then you will live a more righteous life, right?

So, you can keep the commandments out of fear and just obligation and guilt, nothing wrong with starting there. But ultimately, what if you developed the feelings first of a love of God and then keep the commandments? That is the ultimate in righteousness, right?

Now, with regards to these other areas where somebody else does something or something in the world happens and then we feel an emotion, it's just good to know that you don't have to wait for those things to happen to feel any of the emotions you want to feel. You can feel gratitude even before somebody comes and does something nice for you. You can feel relief even before your kids make a decision, or even if they never make the decision that you want. You can feel confident without anybody complimenting you.

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So, of course, the key to all of this is to understand that we always are the creator of our emotions in the first place. So even though it feels like, I did that thing, I got that result, and then I felt good, that is not what happened. We did the thing, we got the result, and then we believed a different story and we thought different thoughts and that's why we felt good. We just didn't give ourselves permission to believe that story until we'd done the thing.

Until I got the degree, I didn't give myself permission to believe that I'm smart and capable of applying for that job, that I'm the best candidate for the job. But I could choose to believe that story if I want to, right? There's nothing telling us we can't. Or, it could be a different story that still generates confidence. It doesn't even have to be that exact story. But if you can recognize the emotion I'm seeking – remember, emotions are the motivation – this is what I'm seeking, I could just generate some of that emotion right now and then go take action.

I was thinking about an analogy that would illustrate this for you guys and I was thinking about boats, because my family and I, we bought a boat this year. It's very extravagant for us, but we love going out on the lake on the boat. And boats nowadays are pretty fancy.

So this boat has the ability for you to set the speed to a certain point, and then no matter how far down you push the throttle, it's not going to go above that speed. It's kind of like cruise control for your boat, if you will. So, my husband sets it depending on what activity or who's driving, to a certain point.

So if he sets it at 15 miles an hour, then no matter how far down you push the throttle down, pushing it all the way down will make it go 15 miles an hour. Pushing it halfway down, it will go roughly seven miles an hour. Or he can set it up – I don't know how fast it goes, but you could set it a lot faster. You could put it at 40 miles an hour and if you pushed the throttle all the way down, it would go 40 miles an hour.

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So, the way that we operate as human beings is similar. So when we're operating from less useful emotions, like worry, stress, overwhelm, fear, obligation, guilt, resentment, self-loathing, all of these kinds of feelings that a lot of people are operating from when they take action, it's like having your boat set at 15 miles an hour.

So you're going to be working hard, you're going to have the throttle all the way down, and there's a certain cap at which you can probably accomplish. You're probably not going to go above 15 miles an hour because all of those emotions weigh you down. They prevent you from accessing your highest potential energy-wise and creativity-wise and critical-thinking-wise and strategy-wise. They just prevent so many things that you're capable of, versus we generate some useful emotion, we take action from gratitude and confidence and abundance and happiness and spirituality, and it's like, now we put that throttle down, we're going 45 miles an hour, we're accomplishing so much more, not to mention enjoying the process so much more.

We don't have to wait for the result. We don't have to wait to get to the end goal in order to feel what we're trying to feel. We can feel it right now. And the way that you feel an emotion is by the story that you're believing. The story you are believing is either a frustrating one, a heavy one, a shame-filled one, a resentful one, an overwhelming one, or a peaceful, confident, loving, spiritually connected happy and fulfilled one.

It's not the thing you do that makes you feel better; it's the story you started believing once you did that thing you did. And I just want to give you permission today to believe that story first and you can generate emotions by finding a story – now remember, it has to be a believable story, but a story that generates the emotions you want first. Generate some gratitude.

What do you need to think and believe to generate gratitude? I have an amazing life, I'm so blessed, there's so much beauty around me. I like to notice small things, like, gosh, look at the trees on this street; so beautiful.

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Look at this land where we live. Look at what a beautiful day it is today. Look at that guy helping that lady.

Like, I just try to – there's lots of big things I can be grateful for, but I find that if I start noticing the little things that I normally just take for granted, I can generate tons of gratitude. That feels really good or that's really useful fuel for me.

How do you generate confidence? Well, you already are amazing. It's not making yourself amazing. It's not being better in any way. You already are amazing. It's just choosing to believe that. Heavenly Father created you. He didn't make any mistakes. He did an amazing job on every one of us.

How do you generate abundance? You have to believe that there's enough. There's enough money, there's enough time. There really genuinely is. There's lots of work to do on money. I think we need to do another money podcast. We have money coming up in Be Bold in the next few months, so make sure you're in there if you're working on money and you want to be more abundant. But abundance is an emotion. It doesn't come from how much money you have. It doesn't come from how much time you have. It comes from what you believe about how much you have and your ability to get what you need.

Generate some happiness. Generate some spirituality by thinking about Heavenly Father in a certain way, connecting with him. This is why reading your scriptures and saying prayers is really powerful and important. It creates a spiritual connection with God and that is really useful fuel for everything else you're doing in your life.

So I want you to keep this concept, feelings first, in your back pocket. I want you to pull it out any time you're trying to achieve something, any time things aren't working, any time you're not getting the result you want, you're spinning or you're stuck, pull over the boat, reset whatever it's called, the speedometer, I don't know how it works, but reset the boat so that you can start going 45 miles an hour.

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Generate some useful emotion, feelings first. Alright, you guys, thanks for joining me today. I'll be back next Friday with another episode and I will see you there. Take care.

If you have a question about something you've heard me talk about on this podcast or anything else going on in your life, I want to invite you to a free public call, Ask Jody Anything. I will teach you the main coaching tool I use with all of my clients and the way to solve any problem in your life, and we will plug in real life examples.

Come to the call and ask me a question anonymously or just listen in. Go to jodymoore.com/askjody and register before you miss it. I'll see you there.