

Ep 208. Family Reunion Perfection



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Jody Moore

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I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy*, episode 208, Family Reunion Perfection.

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 the podcast. Thanks for joining me. I truly feel honored that you guys show up here and listen to what I have to say each week and then you take that and you apply it to make yourselves and your families and your lives better. That is amazing, first of all.

Second of all, you tell people about it. You share it with your friends and family and people that you think would benefit from it. All of it is just so amazing. I'm so appreciative to you and I want you to know that I take this 30 minutes or so that I expend with you every week very, very seriously. It's always on my mind; what do I want to teach people? What do I think will help them? What will bring them more peace? Pretty cool thing that we have going here, right, with the podcast? So thank you for showing up.

Today, I'm going to talk to you about that family reunion that we have coming up. Now, some of you already had your family reunion. Some of you, it's not a formal family reunion. For some of you, it's just a trip home, trip to where you grew up or to your parents' house. Maybe it's a trip to your in-laws' place. But it's common in the summer – not everybody, of course, but some people in the summer are taking a little time while the kids are out of school to go and visit family.

And I notice, as I coach you guys in *Be Bold* and as I talk to you guys about what's going on, that going home, being around your family of origin or maybe your in-laws, sort of brings up a lot of our stuff. And I want to talk about it a little bit today. I want to talk about who you're going to be at that family gathering that you're going to go to. And if you already went, that's okay, use it as an opportunity to observe yourself because I'm sure there will be other opportunities in the future when you're going to see family, right?

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So, I want to begin by talking about some of the things that my clients say to me when they tell me, “I have a trip coming up. I’m going to be going to a family reunion and I’m sort of nervous about it, Jody, and I would like your help.” Okay, these are some of the things they tell me.

They say, “I just want it to go well. I just want everyone to get along. I want people there to feel good about it.” Maybe there are specific people in your family that you’re worried about like, “I just want my mom to feel good about how everything goes. I don’t want my parents to feel like we’re infringing in some way. I just hope that my brother doesn’t bring that crazy girlfriend of his or that he doesn’t act up in ways that we know he has sometimes in the past that make it challenging for everyone. I just don’t want to be irritated with everybody. I don’t want to feel the way I often feel around my family.”

So these types of thoughts, especially what I mentioned in the beginning about just wanting everyone to get along and have a good time, don’t they sound like nice thoughts? They sound like really, really useful thoughts. They sound like a good healthy way to think about your family and this get together that you’re about to have.

I want to offer to you that they may not be. I’m not saying that there are thoughts that are right and thoughts that are wrong so we have to test them out. But for many people that I coach in many different circumstances, these thoughts that sound nice are actually terrible thoughts to be having going into your family reunion, going into your vacation.

They’re not necessary and they’re not useful. What they are is versions of trying to change what is. Sometimes they are versions of us trying to change the people outside of us, trying to control things, trying to handle and manipulate and take responsibility for other peoples’ emotions and thoughts and experiences. And other times, they are a rejection of our own thoughts or experiences or reality.

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So we'll come back to that one in just a minute, to you rejecting your own experience. Let's talk for just a minute about why we try sometimes to control other peoples' thoughts and feelings and experiences.

First of all, we are sometimes under the impression that we are able to control other people because of what we observe in our lives when it comes to our ability to influence people. Okay, so I want to talk about influence for just a moment, because those of you who have been listening to me for a while know that I teach that we can't control other people. It's really a waste of our focus, and I still am going to stand by that.

But we do sometimes influence other people, and here's how; here's what I mean by that. When you show up a certain way, when you say certain things or do certain things, or behave in a certain way, sometimes the people outside of you choose to think thoughts about you or about what you've done or about themselves in that situation that then cause them to feel good.

So you are someone else's circumstance. For any of you that know the model, the circumstance is the thing outside of us, and you, to other people, are a circumstance. So you're not controlling them. You're not causing them to feel good or bad or any other emotion, but the way you show up is a circumstance, and then they will have thoughts about you.

So, I'm not trying to say that we don't have influence over people. We do. And most of the people at your family reunion are probably not in my coaching program – I don't know why. You should tell them to get in there, don't you think – as many of them are probably not even listening to this podcast – which again, you should tell them all to listen. I'm just kidding. Don't tell them that. They probably don't want to hear that.

But in reality, they're not paying attention to their thoughts. They're not thinking the way you are about their ability to choose how they want to think and feel in any situation, which means that they are just reacting to circumstances. They are just sort of operating more or less at the effect of

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what their brain tells them. And that's why it feels like you have such a powerful influence on other people.

So, let's talk about us showing up in a way that we want to because we think it will make other people feel good. Is it okay to do that? I feel like it is, at times. So, there are times when you may choose to accommodate other people because you understand their desires and wishes and you think that then they might think a thought that will make them feel good on the other side of it. And I have no problem with you doing that, as long as your reason isn't so that they will feel good. Did I lose you right there? Stay with me.

Here's what I mean. Let's say my husband wants me to do something that I don't feel like doing. What's something that he likes to do? Sometimes, he likes to see sci-fi movies. Let's say he says to me, "Hey honey, will you go with me to this sci-fi movie?"

Now, it may be a movie that I don't have any interest in seeing and I may still choose to go because he's requested it of me. So, if my reason is, "I want to be the kind of person that accommodates my spouse sometimes. I want to be the kind of wife that will do something and find enjoyment in it, not do it begrudgingly and with resentment; just because it means a lot to him, just because he has requested it of me and I want to honor that request in this situation.

So notice, it's all about who I want to be. It's not about how he's going to feel afterwards. He may be really grateful and appreciative and have a great time, or he may not have a good time. He may be having a bad day and he may be grumpy or he may hate the movie or he may think that I should be doing something more or something different still. So, be really careful about your reason.

Show up how you want to because it's who you want to be, not because of how you think that other person's going to feel on the other side of it. That's where I see people get into trouble. That's where we have stress about going to the family reunion, because we're like, "Hey, I think I'm going to try

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to do this thing that mom wants and we're going to try to do this thing that sister wants." Except that maybe mom's not even going to be happy still. Maybe sister still isn't happy. Or maybe, we can't accommodate everybody.

Maybe some people are just going to have to be unhappy, if that's what they choose, because it's impossible to please all the people all the time. Have you noticed? So, accommodate people because it's who you want to be, but not because you're trying to control them.

Certainly also, don't do it out of guilt and obligation. We don't want to do it to control other people, but we don't want to do it at our own expense also. So if I can't get to a place of peace and owning that this is my choice, then I need to learn how to say no.

If I'm going to go to the movie and I'm going to pout the whole time and I'm going to be grumpy, then that is on me. I have decided to try to please someone else at my own expense. We call it people-pleasing. People-pleasing will get you into trouble. Stay away from that. Choose who you want to be, okay.

So, if we're not going to people-please and we're not going to think all these thoughts, like I just want everything to go really smoothly, I want everyone to get along and feel happy, then what do we do instead? Well, here's what I want to offer to you is going to be the perfect family reunion experience for you.

When you put your head in this space, I just want everyone to feel however they choose to feel. Isn't that so much more peaceful? I just want everyone to have whatever experience they choose to have while they're there. If they want to be upset, if they want to be offended, if they want to be hurt, I love them and they can do that. And we just give them permission to feel however they're going to feel. Isn't that nice of us to do?

Because they're going to do it anyway, so you can resist it and be angry about it and grumpy about it or worried about it, or you can just allow it and make peace with it and know that these are just a bunch of human beings

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doing the best they can. And it's kind of messy sometimes, being a human being, haven't you noticed? It's challenging and we don't want to be happy all the time and we don't want to like the way things go all the time; haven't you noticed?

But if you just release yourself of trying to control any of that or thinking that it should be that way – what if you go to your family reunion just wanting everyone to be themselves? Like your brother who misbehaves, what if you just want him to be him, however he's feeling that week, whoever he chooses to be?

What if you really wanted what was the reality of the situation instead of wanting what you think it should be? Now, sometimes, when I'm coaching people on this, they're like, "But how?" Well, this is the skill of managing your brain. This is the work that I'm doing with you guys in Be Bold is teaching you how do you manage your brain.

Your brain's going to talk to you. It doesn't mean that your brain's going to stop saying, "Wouldn't it be nice if these people were happy today? Wouldn't it be nice if they just got along?" But then you just kind of notice that thought. You don't react to that thought or attach to that thought, or certainly don't start fueling that thought. You guys know what that's like, right? When you get this idea in your head and then your brain starts finding more and more and more thoughts to reinforce it and more evidence. The next thing you know, you're talking to your sister about it and she's agreeing and she's fueling it and before you know it, you have like a file cabinet full of reasons why your painful story is just true.

Instead of that, you just notice the thought, and then you kindly let it go out the back door. You kindly dismiss it and you redirect your brain to, "I just love these people exactly as they are. I just want them to be themselves. I want them to feel however they want to feel."

Here are some things you can try on instead. Instead of being irritated by it, instead of being annoyed by it, what if you just choose to be amused by these people? I mean, you think about TV shows. Like, especially the kind

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of TV shows that – I don't know about your age, but I, growing up, used to watch the Cosby Show and Family Ties with my parents and my siblings every week.

I remember sitting down, because we didn't have TiVo, so you had to plan for it. It was going to be on at 7:30 or eight o'clock or whatever it was. And so you had to get ready, use the bathroom so you don't miss a minute of it, and we would watch the Cosby Show and we would watch Family Ties.

Now, those shows would be really boring if everything just went smoothly. What makes for an interesting story is when somebody's acting up in some way, somebody's upset about something, somebody's worried about something, or there's some kind of problem or challenge we have to overcome.

And sometimes, on a show like this, which we used to call a sitcom, it was kind of amusing. It was kind of funny. It was certainly fascinating to watch. So you can just be amused by the story of your family. It might make for a good TV show. And I don't mean you have to do that in a disrespectful way when somebody's going through something challenging. You don't even have to share with people what you're thinking or act out on it. But certainly, being amused by what's going on is going to feel a lot better than being irritated and judging people and wishing it were different.

What if you choose to be compassionate with people? Here's the truth, you guys; only hurt people hurt people, only people who are operating out of fear or something behave, "badly," 100% of the time, that's true. So when somebody is behaving in a way that's less than stellar or less than fun for us to be around, it isn't because they're feeling great and confident and loving themselves and loving their lives. It's the opposite of that.

It's because they're struggling. It's because they're challenged in some way and they don't know what to do with that and they don't even really understand what's going on. They haven't thought through it in their heads and they don't know how to solve for it, and so they start behaving in this way, which we all do, by the way.

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What if you choose to be curious about these people instead of irritated with them? What if you were just really curious like, “I wonder what it must be like to be him. I wonder what he really thinks about at night.” Curiosity is always kinder and feels a lot better than being irritated.

What if you just choose to be really generous in your thinking about them? What if you always gave everyone the benefit of the doubt? What if you were fascinated about them? What if you just chose to be crazy about all these people and just be in love with them? That’s my most favorite thing to do is to think, “You know what, I’m going to hang out with these people all week.” And I just choose ahead of time to be crazy about every one of them.

I just choose to be kind and curious and compassionate and in love with each of them. That is available to you. So, notice that instead of trying to control other peoples’ emotions, trying to manipulate other people, trying to people-please even, we instead shift over to how we want to feel about them.

Now, I want to talk about those other couple thoughts I have you there that I said can be not healthy thoughts to go into your family reunion with, and those are the ones that happen to be about you and your experience. So, sometimes I’ll coach a client who says, “Hey, I’m home this week with my family or I’m going to see my in-laws next week and I just don’t want to be irritated. I just don’t want to be grumpy.”

And what I tell them is that step one, in order to access this problem and get some leverage on this situation, is to be willing to be irritated and be willing to be grumpy. Because just like you have to be amused and compassionate and kind and curious and generous with the other people around you, you’ve got to be willing to do the same for you.

So you’ve got to know that you’re creating your own irritation. You’re creating your own grumpiness, but you don’t even have to figure out why.

You don’t have to figure out the thoughts creating it. You certainly don’t have to hurry and change them and run away from it. You have to just be

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willing to watch yourself be irritated. That is going to be necessary for a lot of you before you're going to be able to get to those other thoughts I offered you about just being amused, okay.

Be willing to treat yourself and be in love with yourself even when you're irritated, the same way you'll do for the other people in your family. And I'll tell you, it's kind of a package deal. The better you are at doing it for other people, the better you'll be at doing it for yourself.

And when you find yourself really, really judgmental and critical of other people, you're probably judgmental and critical of yourself as well. So we're just going to give everyone permission to feel however they want to feel. We're going to know that going to this family reunion is going to be 50/50, just like anything in life. Half the time, I'm going to be having fun, enjoying myself, and half the time, I'm going to be stressed or struggling or feeling something, "negative." And that's what makes it such an amazing experience.

That's what makes it the Cosby Show. That's what makes it interesting. That's what creates the dynamics. That is the human experience. That is what it's like being in a family and that is what we want. We want the full experience. What if you just wanted what is and stopped wanting some made up story that I don't know where we got because it's not real for anybody, but we just want the reality?

That is how you have the perfect family reunion. Please come and share with me how your family reunions go. I want to hear about it. You can find me on Instagram or Facebook @jodymoorecoaching. And I post a lot on Instagram these days, by the way. We're kind of on fire there on Instagram, I've got to say. So if you're not following me there, come and follow me so we can hang out.

But I'd love to hear from you. Tag me in your stories or your Instagram posts, wherever you're sharing pictures and experiences from your family reunion. I'd love to hear what your experience is as you observe yourself and implement these tools.

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Alright, you guys, I love you so much. I will see you next week on another episode. Take care, bye-bye.

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.