

Ep 218. Positive Thought Problems



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With Your Host

Jody Moore

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I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy*, episode 218, Positive Thought Problems.

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.

Hello, my friends. What's happening? Are you ready for another podcast episode? I am. This is one I've been sort of stewing on for a while, thinking about how to present to you in the right way. And I'm really excited about how it's come together in my outline. Hopefully I will be able to articulate it in the way that I want to today, to help you.

First of all, I want to mention that I am so looking forward to meeting so many of you at *Better Than Happy Live*. By the time this episode airs, that event might be over. I haven't looked at the calendar to see when this one will air. But as of the time I'm recording it, we are a few weeks ahead of that event happening in Lehi and I'm so excited to see you.

It is sold out, so if you didn't grab a seat, I'm so sorry, you'll have to catch me next time. But I'll be back next year. We did open up even a second day, and it just excites me so much to see how many of you are wanting to dive in and apply these tools in your life. So that's what we're going to do there.

If you missed it and you're kind of bummed and you want to really take your life to the next level, I really want to encourage you to join me in Be Bold; Be Bold is my coaching program. You pay monthly. It's super affordable. In fact, people are always telling me I should raise the price, but I don't have any desire to do that. I want to keep it accessible to a lot of people. And I like to over-deliver on whatever I'm charging.

So Be Bold is really the doorway into everything else I do as a coach. So if you've been thinking, like, "I want to work with Jody closer. I want to understand this stuff on a deeper level and I want to get to know her,"

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whatever it is that you want to learn from me, I have a lot to teach you that I can only barely scratch the surface on in a podcast.

And so make sure you check out Be Bold if you haven't already. The best way to do that is to go to jodymoore.com and click on the Be Bold program, and you will find a lot of information there.

Now, let's talk about positive thought problems. "How could positive thought be a problem, Jody?" you might be wondering. It sounds like a crazy title, right? Isn't that what I teach, that you should choose your thoughts and you should choose positive ones, would be sort of the assumption.

So the answer to that is yes, and no. The reason I want to dive into this is because I'm seeing some common errors that people make as they start applying my work.

So the first thing that I want to make sure that you understand before I go deeper into this concept is that there are no good thoughts and bad thoughts. There are not right thoughts and wrong thoughts. There are not useful thoughts and not useful thoughts in terms of we can't define it that black and white.

There are thoughts that, for you, are good or bad, or right or wrong, or useful or not useful, but it's not as simple as here's a list of thoughts that are great to think and thoughts that are not great to think. Because it depends on many different factors. It depends, first of all, on the person thinking the thought.

Okay, so a thought that, to me, is a good thought or a useful thought or a powerful thought, might, to you, be not useful. You might reject it. You might find it to sort of trigger other problematic thoughts for you.

So, from person to person, thoughts that are useful vary greatly. It also depends on the circumstance. So a thought that serves me well in one circumstance might not serve me well in a different circumstance, or again,

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when we start bringing in all these variables, a thought that works for me in one circumstance of my life, you're never going to have the exact same circumstance in your life that I do. And so, when you try to pick up my thought and plug it into your circumstance, it may or may not work.

Now, there's nothing wrong with trying that, by any means. I'm all for stealing thoughts from other people. That's where I find my most useful thoughts actually, are from other people and borrowing their thoughts.

But my point is that sometimes you guys hear me offer a thought in a podcast or on a coaching call or something – those of you who are in Be Bold. And then you'll come back to me later and say, "Well I know you teach that..." here's one I get a lot of questions on, "You teach that everything happened exactly how it was supposed to. But I'm just really struggling with that and wrestling with that."

And I can talk you through why I find that to be a useful thought for me so far in really any circumstance. But that doesn't mean that it's a "useful" thought. That just is, for me, a thought that brings me so much peace and it helps me let go of arguing with the past and it helps me move forward and focus on things that are within my control. So it's a great thought for me.

And sometimes, for some of my clients, it does the same. But for other people, their brains will reject it. It's not useful. It causes them more resistance. It causes them some other kind of negative emotion that doesn't serve them, or certainly in a certain circumstance it may not work.

So please don't think that what I'm teaching here on this podcast is that these are good thoughts and these are right thoughts. I am simply offering you different thoughts, many times. I'm offering you a different perspective than what you may have considered, than what your brain is probably giving you on default, and I'm trying to show you the truth, which is there are certain things that we call thoughts that are optional, and there are other things that facts or circumstances, and the truth about what we can and can't change and which one is creating the results in our life, okay.

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So that's the first thing I want you to know. The next thing I want to teach you is, when we talk about positive thought problems, one of the ways I see this come into play, for both myself and my clients, is when we try to go all the way to believing a thought that we really don't believe at all yet.

Sometimes these show up for people in the form of positive affirmations. Now, I'm not opposed to you having affirmations that you repeat to yourself on the regular and work towards believing. I think that can be a great practice if that works for you. By all means, keep doing it.

But I'm talking about the thought that you don't believe at all that you try to tell yourself. And what I find for both myself and my clients is that the brain just wants to be right.

So, let's just say, for example, that I think that I am worthless. I don't think that about myself, but if you had that thought, right? If somebody had the thought, I am worthless, I'm not worthy of love, for example, and they try to go all the way to, I'm amazing and I am worthy of love – if they don't believe that, the brain may reject it and start looking for counter-evidence to that thought.

You know this feeling? This is like the rebellious side of us, when we dig our heels in and we say, "No, that's not true and I will prove to you why." So the brain doesn't want you to necessarily feel better as much as it wants to be right.

I see this with money too. A lot of people want to believe that money is easy and fun. But what they really believe right now is that money doesn't grow on trees and money is hard and money requires a lot of effort and it's not for me.

So, in October in *Be Bold*, we're going to be studying money and I'm going to teach you how to shift your belief from, money doesn't grow on trees, to money is easy and fun. But the point is, if you don't already believe that thought on some level, then I don't want you to try to convince yourself, if you find that all you're doing is now looking for evidence to the contrary.

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Because what you're doing is actually reinforcing then the negative or useless thought that you already have.

The next point I want to make when it comes to positive thought problems is that sometimes, seemingly "positive" thoughts are actually the completely painful thought that is creating the problem. I did a whole podcast episode on this. It's episode 182. It's called Sneaky Little thoughts. If you want to learn more about that concept, go and check that out. But I'm going to give you just the quick version of it here today on this episode, okay, that these thoughts that sound like positive thoughts are actually problematic.

And here's what I found to be the case, is that mostly, they are a resistance of reality. So any thought that's a resistance of reality is a painful and unnecessary thought. And these thoughts, many times, feel very valid to us. We feel justified and it feels important to think these thoughts, otherwise it feels like we're settling for reality, is what people tell me. But the truth is, they're not valid, they're not justified, and they actually don't help. They only create more of a problem.

So Byron Katie teaches this in her book Loving What Is, and in what she calls The Work. She teaches that when you argue with reality, you lose, but only every time. So here are some examples of these seemingly positive thoughts that I want you to notice are a resistance of reality, that sound okay, right

I wish my house was cleaner. I just want my husband to not worry. I just want her to be happy. I wish he was here. I just want to be in their lives. I just want a connection or a relationship with them. I just want people to love me as I am.

Notice how all of these thoughts have wish or want and then they sound really pretty because they're followed by nice words like happy, clean, connection, love. So these seemingly positive thoughts are actually a misdirection of our focus. They are a focus on things outside of us, things that we cannot control, instead of a focus on ourselves internally and things that we can control.

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Alright, now, here is the final thing I want to teach and kind of the meat, I hope, of what you get out of this episode; the main thing that sort of triggered for me, hey I need to do a podcast on this.

And that is that so many of you, when you find this work, especially those of you that are podcast listeners, are trying to think a positive thought about a negative circumstance. Okay, now, some of you are like, "Wait a second, Jody, aren't circumstances neutral?" If you're new to the podcast, stay with me. But one of the things that I teach is that the circumstance, when we go to plug it into the self-coaching model, the circumstance is the facts of the situation and circumstances are neutral.

They are neutral, but what many of you are doing, and what I do myself at times, is we are trying to think a positive thought without recognizing that the circumstance is neutral. Maybe even on paper we make it neutral. But in our heads, it's still negative and then we try to think a positive thought about it.

Okay, so if you don't see that the circumstance is neutral, you're not going to get very much traction on your model. Some of you do this because you kind of skip over the circumstance or you make it really broad. In the circumstance line, you put something like, I have a husband, or I have a child, or my money, or my business, or my weight.

You make it broad, not very specific, and so you're not drilling down to a specific circumstance that triggers a negative thought for you. Don't skip the C-line when you run your models and you're doing your self-coaching. It's really important.

And the more specific you make it, the easier it will be to take a look at your brain. I'm going to give you several examples in just a minute, but once you get a really narrow specific circumstance, then I recommend that you sort of play with it in your mind. You find the neutrality of it because your brain initially won't want to think that it's neutral.

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It will want to resist that. It will want to say, no, not this one, this is negative. So I open my brain up to it by just asking myself questions like, what if I'm wrong about that? In what way might somebody, even if it's only one other person in the world, think differently about this and feel differently about it. If it were just neutral, how could that possibly be? I just kind of play with it and open my brain up to looking at it differently.

So, let's take a look at some examples. Let's talk about debt, okay. Debt is a circumstance. So let's say I owe my credit card company \$50,000. We'll just use that as an example. That would be a very specific – debt's kind of broad. Let's put, in your C-line, something very specific like I owe my credit card company, I owe the bank \$50,000.

Now, that is not negative. It's also not positive. It just is. It's neutral. So, sometimes, when my clients say, "I owe my bank \$50,000," and they want to move onto the part where they think about it in a way that makes them feel a little bit better, but they don't recognize that it's not negative. So when I say, no that's neutral, you owing them \$50,000, then they resist by saying, well I can't just run around thinking that it's totally okay to go into debt because then I'm going to get even more in debt.

I'm saying, no, I'm not saying that debt is positive either. I'm just saying it's neutral. Like, it just is. It's the agreement you have with the bank that says they have given you this much money and you've spent this much money and now you are going to pay them back. You have an agreement. There is a number in a computer somewhere that's \$50,000 and you've agreed to pay that to the bank and they are expecting you to pay that. And if you don't, there are ramifications. That's it.

Those are just the facts of the situation. It's not negative until we think a thought about it. It's not positive either. It just is. It's neutral.

Okay, so the next thing we can do to play with it a little bit is ask ourselves, is thinking about it as negative serving me? And the answer to this, you guys, is a big I don't know. I can't tell you without having you in front of me and your brain for me to dive into and show you. It depends. Like I said, it

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depends on the person. It depends on the circumstance. It depends on what result that thought is creating for you.

The truth is, it's usually not useful to think about your debt in a negative way. But we'd have to test it out. Then we test out, is thinking about it in a more positive way going to serve me? Again, I don't know. We have to put them in models and test them out so see what they will create.

So, I've found, for myself when I did my work on money and debt, that thinking about it as neutral was the most useful thing for me. I didn't start thinking about debt as an amazing thing that I was proud of, but I also stopped thinking about it as a terrible thing that I should be ashamed of, because in the end, my thoughts with regards to my debt were actually thoughts about myself, about whether or not I had behaved the way I should or whether or not something was wrong with me or whether or not I was ever going to be able to create the results I wanted in my life.

So, thinking about myself in a negative way only perpetuated more evidence for myself that that was true. So when I neutralized it all, it's not good or bad. It just is what I chose to do. But I definitely am done beating myself up over it, and that is when I was able to get out of debt and clean up my money, when I saw the neutrality of it all.

Okay, let me give you a few more examples here to illustrate this. So, perhaps the circumstance is, my sister-in-law said, "I don't like you." Now, I put that one as the circumstance just to make it simple. But the truth is, sisters-in-law don't very often say they don't like you. They say something else and then we interpret it to a thought, like she doesn't like me.

But it could happen, right? Maybe some of them do at times say I don't like you or I don't like your child or something like that. So that is neutral in and of itself. It's just words coming out of her mouth. Imagine if she said it in a language you didn't understand. You wouldn't immediately feel bad because you wouldn't know what she meant.

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You feel bad because of the meaning you give to that, what you make that mean about your sister-in-law, about yourself, about your relationship, about your life, whether or not things are on track. So my sister-in-law said, "I don't like you." That is neutral.

When you're tricking yourself and trying to think a positive thought about a negative C, it typically sounds something like this, "Well she just isn't capable of doing any better." This is what my clients will tell me.

They'll say, "I used to think a thought like, she's so mean she shouldn't say that. But now, I changed my thinking, Jody, to she just isn't capable of doing any better." Do you see how what we're doing is we're keeping the C negative and we're thinking a positive thought about it, like she just isn't capable of better.

Now, that's still better than staying in the pain of she shouldn't do that. But what's even more powerful is to recognize that her saying those words and her even feeling and thinking whatever she thinks and feels about you is neutral, and thinking a thought that neutralizes it, like I'm not for everyone and that's okay.

Notice how it doesn't say that she could be better, because if she could be better, that means that she's not very good in the C-line. We want to keep her neutral in the C-line. We want to ultimately love her, but certainly her not liking us we want to neutralize.

"I'm not for everyone and that's okay. I love her and I love me. She's allowed to have whatever opinion she wants," keeps the C a little bit more neutral, you see it?

Let's look at another example. Maybe the circumstance is, "My husband doesn't go to church." Maybe he's stopped going to church. I do a lot of coaching on this in my program.

So sometimes, my clients have in their C-line, "My husband's stopped going to church." And their thought is, "Maybe he will come back one day."

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Now, that thought feels better. It probably provides a better result to you than this is terrible and scary and something's gone wrong and he shouldn't be doing this, he's betrayed me, all those other very negative thoughts. Maybe he'll come back one day is a better – it's a step in the right direction. But I'm telling you, you will find 10 times more relief if you keep the C neutral.

Your husband choosing not to go to church is neutral. And I'm not saying you want to think about it as an amazing thing that you want to celebrate either. We're not talking about all or nothing thinking here, you guys. Don't let your brain go to extremes. There are thousands of thoughts available to you about any given circumstance.

And when you recognize that the circumstance is neutral, it is your husband making decisions, it is your husband being in a place or not being in a place. It, in and of itself, is neutral. What we know for sure is that your husband is supposed to have his own spiritual journey in this life.

We know that your husband is supposed to have agency and make his own decisions. And we know that he's supposed to make some that will make his life even harder. So, if we neutralize the C, we can think a thought like, nothing has gone wrong here. Because isn't that true in the end?

We could look back and say, "Oh, it's so great that he had that period of not going to church because look what happened as a result. Look who he became as a result. Look what he learned as a result. Whether he comes back in this life or not, this might be part of the journey he needs to go on spiritually.

We don't know what's happening in the grand scheme of things. We certainly don't know what's happening for people individually. But the thought, "Nothing has gone wrong here," will help you keep that C neutral and really find 10 times more relief than, "Maybe one day he'll come back."

Alright, let's look at one more example. I talked about the debt example earlier, but let me just kind of flesh it out for you. In the C-line here, let's

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put, “I have \$100,000 in debt.” Maybe you have \$100,000 that you owe wherever, okay, we’ll put that in the circumstance line.

Remember, it’s neutral. It’s not bad. It’s not good. It’s not stressful. It’s not overwhelming. It just is. If your thought is – that you’re trying to get to, by the way – “I will be able to pay it off.” Notice that that is a better thought than what your default brain might give you, which is, “This is so overwhelming. You’re never going to be able to pay it off.”

But it sort of keeps the C negative. If you’re thinking that thought, by the way, and in your brain the C is negative – it doesn’t necessarily have to, but for many people, they still have the C negative. If you’re that person and you’re in that situation, then I want you to just pause and recognize first that it’s neutral.

If you need to pay it off in order to get to peace, if you need to pay it off in order to accept and love yourself, then you’re not yet seeing that it’s neutral. The key is to get to peace first and get to acceptance and love of yourself first, and that is going to make it a lot easier, by the way, to pay off the debt.

So I like a thought that’s something like, “I am rich.” Something along the lines of I have everything I need and more. I have so much. Because when we think a thought like, “I’m \$100,000 in debt,” or when we think about that C, I should say, most people think of it and they move into scarcity. They move into lack.

But the truth is, even if you’re \$100,000 in debt, I guarantee, you are rich by most standards. You have everything you need. You’re not worried about how you’re going to survive from one day to the next. You’re not worried about whether or not you’re going to have clean drinking water. You’re not worried about if you’re going to have food to eat or if you’re going to go hungry.

If that’s you, if you meet those definitions I just gave, then guess what, you are rich. So you get to abundance first and it neutralizes the C. I mean, the

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fact that you have a credit line somewhere or multiple credit lines that enable you to have \$100,000 in credit makes you rich. Even though you may have maxed out that credit, the fact that it's available to you and that you qualify for it and that you live in a country where that's available, you're stinking rich. Are you with me?

Okay, so, here's what I hope you get out of this. Thinking a positive thought about what you think is a negative circumstance, like I said, is more useful than just stewing in negativity. So I'm not telling you you're doing anything wrong. I just want you to see that it is 10 times more powerful, and it's also a little more challenging, I get that, but it's available to you to recognize that the circumstance truly is neutral.

There are many circumstances in our life that we will choose to think negatively about. But I want you to make sure that you have a reason that serves you. I want you to make sure it's because you want to view that circumstance as negative because it aligns with your value system or it's creating the result that you want. It's going to help you process what I call clean pain, that's necessary and appropriate and part of the human experience.

I'm all for keeping circumstances in our minds negative when that's the case. But there are many, many times that you may not be paying attention to. I want you to look out for when you are making the circumstance negative and it's only creating dirty pain. It's only keeping you stuck. It's not moving you forward. It's not propelling you towards your higher self. It's keeping you stuck, not progressing, or even digging yourself deeper into a ditch that you don't want to be in. In this case, pause and just play with the idea that that circumstance might just be neutral.

Thanks for joining me today, you guys. Have an amazing rest of your week and I'll see you next week on another episode. 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

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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.