

Ep 236. Boundaries



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Jody Moore

[Better Than Happy](#) with Jody Moore

Ep 236. Boundaries

I'm Jody Moore, and this is Better Than Happy episode 236: Boundaries.

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.

Jody Moore: Hey, everybody, what's happening? Do you have your ticket to Better Than Happy Live? I don't even know if there are any left because I'm recording this podcast about a month in advance. But if you want to come hang out with me, I'm going to be in Salt Lake on February 7, we're going to spend an entire day together. I'm going to teach you a little bit about the types of things you hear here on the podcast, except you're going to be able to ask me questions and we're going to go a little bit deeper into some of the concepts, and then, I'm going to do a lot of coaching that day.

Jody Moore: So anything that you want help with is fair game, and maybe you want to come and get coached or maybe you just want to come and listen to coaching. All of that goes, we're going to spend the entire day together and I'll tell you that it will be one of the best ways you can utilize your day. So go to jodymoore.com/live if you want to join me. Again, I don't even know if we have tickets left, but maybe we do, I hope we do. You should come and hang out.

All right, so today I have a special treat for all of you because I have my sister Natalie Clay on the podcast. Natalie's been here before it's not her first time, so you guys probably know her. If you're in Be Bold you know her because she does coaching calls every week. But I'm excited to have her, so say hi, Natalie.

Natalie Clay: Hello, everyone.

Jody Moore: Now, it's going to be a little confusing because we sound the same, right? Do people tell you that?

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Natalie Clay: I get told that a lot. Except what I hear is that when they listen to your podcast, they listen to it at one and a half speed, and when they listen to mine, they listen to it at half speed.

Jody Moore: Because Natalie talks just a little bit faster than me. That is what Jake said one time, he said, "I listened to your podcast at one and a half speed and it sounds exactly like your sister Natalie." So anyway, it's okay. You don't need to know which one of us it is talking. Natalie, introduce yourself for people who don't know you.

Natalie Clay: I am Jody's younger sister. What else do you need to know?

Jody Moore: As you like to be called.

Natalie Clay: As I've been known since high school.

Jody Moore: She's the prettier one, let's be honest.

Natalie Clay: I'm the prettier one. I'm the smarter one. I'm the funnier one. Should I go on?

Jody Moore: No, we get the point.

Natalie Clay: I'm also the younger one.

Jody Moore: It's true.

Natalie Clay: And then I follow that up with, well, who's the one that's had Botox and who hasn't? I'm the younger one-

Jody Moore: Obviously.

Natalie Clay: I'll just let everyone know.

Jody Moore: Obviously.

Natalie Clay: So yes, my name is Natalie clay. I am a wife and mother, and I'm a couple's coach.

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Jody Moore: She's a certified life coach through the Life Coach School just like myself, the best coaching school on the planet. And we're not just saying that.

Natalie Clay: No, it's worth every cent.

Jody Moore: Yeah. So you're a couple's coach. Tell people what that means.

Natalie Clay: So, I love coaching people on marriage because what I find is that, in all the relationships we have, marriage is such an impactful one. It affects so many different areas of our life. And I also find that we bring into it a lot of preconceived ideas on what that relationship should be like. We tend to compare against not only the movies and our parents, but also our friends. And I find that we cause ourselves a lot of pain, because of these ideas that we bring into marriage. And so, I love helping people to tweak this area of their life, because I find that small tweaks can really bring a lot of relief. And a lot of people that come to me have been in counseling a bunch and they're kind of at the end and feeling like, okay, maybe we should get divorced, maybe we should stay together, but we really want to make sure we've given everything we've got. And so, it's kind of a last-ditch effort.

Natalie Clay: And, what I find is that it's a really logical, rational process. And I work with each of you individually and also together. And it's not only fun and rational and makes a ton of sense, but it's really about how do you become happy as an individual so that you make that whole partnership even stronger, that you really do need to hold people in order to have a functioning marriage.

Jody Moore: And I love just how well the men respond to it. Because more often than not the woman is the one that finds you right or sort of-

Natalie Clay: Sometimes, I'm kind of surprised-

Jody Moore: Not always?

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Natalie Clay: Not always. Sometimes, the man is driving the show and signing them up. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jody Moore: Okay, that's cool. All right. So, enough about you. We're going to talk about boundaries today because Natalie and I, we kind of brainstorm together like, what do we want to talk about? And this was something that she and I both have been thinking about doing a podcast episode on. Okay, so Natalie, why don't you begin and tell us why you wanted to talk about boundaries today even?

Natalie Clay: Well, I feel like this is something that comes up a lot because we use this word boundaries a lot and people say, you've crossed a boundary of mine or I think, it tends to get misused. And it tends to kind of add some confusion to a situation when we're not really clear on how we really want to use our boundaries. So, especially when it comes to my clients who are married, and they're asking me, "Well, shouldn't I set a boundary? I've told him that he needs to help out in this area, and he's not. So, isn't that a boundary?" And so, I like to make sure that it's really clear on what actually is a boundary versus what is a request. Because I do think we handle them in a really different way.

Jody Moore: Mm-hmm (affirmative). So I see, I'm sure you see this too, but a lot of my clients come to me and they'll say, "Hey, I need help with a boundary or I think I need a boundary here." Or like you said, "This person is not upholding my boundary." And I find that... At least the way you and I teach boundaries, a lot of people are misunderstanding what a boundary even is. And there's a lot of sort of mistakes that they're making with boundaries, right? Or misconceptions about how to use it best.

Natalie Clay: I would agree.

Jody Moore: Would you agree?

Natalie Clay: And I also find though, that when people start learning this work, they start thinking, well, if something's happening that I'm really not comfortable with, does that mean I just have to change my thoughts? And decide it's okay, if they're yelling at me, or okay, if they're swearing at

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me. So, I think there absolutely is a time and a place for boundaries. But just like all the work we do, I think it's really helpful to have a clear way that we're going to use all these tools.

Jody Moore: Yeah, it's such a good point, because we teach that no other person is causing you emotional harm, you're causing it with your thoughts. And so, people think what we're saying is, so you should just think positively about everything that everyone does, and then you'll feel good all the time.

Natalie Clay: That's right.

Jody Moore: Which is not what we're saying.

Natalie Clay: Mm-mm (negative).

Jody Moore: We actually, as human beings, who have values and belief systems and things that we want to keep, are going to want to feel bad in certain situations. And so, a boundary is just... Here's what I love about the way we were taught boundaries with the Life Coach School is that, you don't have to have any reason for it, you can just decide, I don't want to be around someone who talks that way or acts that way or behaves in that way.

Natalie Clay: Right.

Jody Moore: You don't have to justify it with anything, you don't have to say that they're wrong or bad, you can just not want to be around that type of behavior.

Natalie Clay: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jody Moore: Right? It's awesome. Okay, so let's dive a little bit deeper, though, into some of the sort of mistakes that we see people make. So I, first of all, hear people a lot of times say, "That person is not..." What's the word they use? "They're not-"

Natalie Clay: Upholding.

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Jody Moore: ... "upholding my boundary." Right? And I always say, well, other people don't have to uphold your boundary.

Natalie Clay: That's right. They don't have to follow anything you ask them to do.

Jody Moore: Especially if they're adults, and you have no authority over them, then they really don't have to... Everyone comes to this earth with agency and they really can do whatever they want, right?

Natalie Clay: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Jody Moore: So what we teach is that if it's your boundary, it's your job to uphold it. It's not anyone else's job to uphold it, right?

Natalie Clay: That's right.

Jody Moore: What do you think about that?

Natalie Clay: I think that's 100% true. So you can say all day long, well, don't cross my boundary, but that's just all talk when it comes down to... You don't really want to leave it in someone else's hands to take care of your needs. And that falls in line perfectly with everything else that we teach. But I always think of boundaries specifically, in terms of our safety. So it doesn't have to be a safety thing. Like Jodi, you were saying, it could just be something you don't prefer to be around, which is great. But I oftentimes use them when it comes to, this makes me feel uncomfortable, or it makes me feel unsafe. And of course, that's always coming from your thoughts, but that doesn't mean you don't necessarily want to take action.

Jody Moore: Mm-hmm (affirmative). What other mistakes do you see?

Natalie Clay: Yeah, so I think sometimes what happens is, people get really upset and so, they decide that they're going to set a boundary sort of as a way of punishing their spouse or somebody else in their life, and I don't think that's an ideal way to set boundaries. Really, ideally, when you're setting a boundary, it's coming from love, love for yourself and also love for that other person. So when you think about, I'm in charge of what

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I'm allowing myself to be around, and if I don't like it, then I may set a boundary. And that protects me but it also allows me to continue to have loving thoughts about you, because I'm not leaving it up to you to make sure I'm treated in a way that I prefer.

Jody Moore: Yeah, totally. And we're going to walk through the steps in just a minute, the process that we recommend for our clients to set boundaries, but I think it's so important to just think about... When you say it's a loving thing to set a boundary, I think most people are like, "What?" But if you think about it, it's showing up. It's expressing to another person what your request is, what your desire is. But, the other piece that we really teach is that you have to have a quote, unquote consequence, and I don't mean consequence in that it's punishing that person, necessarily, but what are you going to do if they don't honor your boundary in order to just, like you said, receive the treatment that you want for yourself?

Jody Moore: So maybe it's as simple as removing yourself from the situation, but what are you going to do for you, if they don't uphold your boundary? And it's not about punishing anyone else. So, it's loving and kind because it's you owning your side of the relationship. It's you owning your own needs and your own desires, and still communicating requests, but allowing other people to make decisions about how they're going to behave.

Natalie Clay: Yeah. And this makes me think of one client in particular as we're talking about ways to misuse our boundaries that, I've been working with him for a while, and he said, "I just really need to make sure that I'm getting this boundary piece really clear with my wife." And so, when I hear that, I'm kind of questioning, well, why does your wife really need to understand your boundaries so clearly? Because really, that tells me that he's putting it in her hands a little bit to try to follow through on the way he wants to be treated. And again, I think that's problematic, because that really, it sets him up, to put it in her hands whether or not he is allowing himself to be treated in the way that he wants to be treated, where when he knows his boundaries, she doesn't necessarily need to be clear on them,

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because it's what he knows he's going to do when things aren't going the way that he expects.

Jody Moore: Which is an interesting point, because I used to teach my clients that you set a boundary and then you tell it to the other person, but I don't actually think that's necessary very often-

Natalie Clay: I agree.

Jody Moore: Sometimes it might be, right? You might think, the respectful thing to me, explain to my spouse or whoever, next time you swear at me, I'm going to just leave the room or whatever. But-

Natalie Clay: Or if you are drinking and driving or texting and driving, I'm not going to allow the kids to drive with you, things like that.

Jody Moore: Yes. But many times, to your point, it's not even necessary. Most of us, if somebody hits us, right? If I'm downtown and somebody walks up and tries to hit me, I'm going to run away from that person. But I don't walk around downtown to everyone and be like, "Just so you know, if you hit me, I'm going to leave." Or, "I'm going to call the cops." Most of us actually already have a lot of boundaries, that we just sort of know, inherently, we haven't necessarily thought through them logically. And we don't have to walk around and tell them to everyone, we just know, this is how I protect myself if this thing occurs that I don't want or don't like.

Natalie Clay: Yes, I love that. And one way I explain this to my clients sometimes, is a similar concept, which is, if a homeless person comes up to you, and maybe they're swearing at you or whatever it is, something that's making you uncomfortable, you don't take any time, you don't feel really bad for leaving the situation. You don't have to explain anything to them. You just know, yeah, this doesn't work for me, and I don't feel safe in this situation, so you leave. And it doesn't even have to be a really dramatic situation, it's just, this thing happens and it happens sometimes, and then you know how to take care of yourself. And I think we could use a lot more of that in our personal relationships because a lot of times, we do conflate these situations with a lot of dramatic thinking like, why are they doing this?

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How are they going to take this if I just leave the situation? That they're going to get even more mad and all these things, and we tend to get ahead of ourselves and start worrying about what might happen next.

Jody Moore: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Natalie Clay: But really, we can kind of compare the two and realize, it doesn't have to be such a dramatic situation, when we're not leaving it to them to have to take care of our needs.

Jody Moore: Well, and that's what I love about a boundary is, it's so easy to get upset with the other person in our lives. I coach a lot of women who have a mother-in-law or a mother, some sort of mother figure in their lives, that they feel is judging them, or that says critical things or tries to tell them how to parent their children or something, right? And what they are focused on is why she shouldn't be saying that or she shouldn't be thinking that. She shouldn't... Whatever, right? Which is what we all do. But a boundary puts the focus back on who I want to be and what I want to do because as much as we want other people to change it, that's really outside of our control. So, the boundary puts the focus back on what we do have control over, which is what we're going to do or say, or who we're going to be if and when they don't honor our requests.

Natalie Clay: And just as you say that, I think I've heard, oftentimes, the misuse of boundaries coming up when it comes to our in laws, because we start feeling really protective of our immediate family. And we think, well, if my mother-in-law wants us to come over every Christmas... Or we start making it this big deal, that's violating a boundary of mine, she can't just come over all the time, or whatever it is.

Jody Moore: Yeah, so let's talk for just a minute about the types of things that at least, in our beliefs are not boundary issues, necessarily. I mean, you can have a boundary for anything you want. But setting a boundary is not easy work to do, you kind of are probably going to reserve it for a little bit more extreme situations. Whereas your mother-in-law inviting you over for Christmas dinner every year, you probably don't want

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to set a boundary like, "Hey, mother-in-law, please don't invite us over for Christmas dinner. If you do, I'm not going to answer the phone or whatever." That doesn't really make sense. That's not a boundary issue, right? That's just an issue of you needing to learn how to say no.

Natalie Clay: And you being okay with her not liking you saying no, and you still liking you.

Jody Moore: Yes. That's right. We don't try to control other people so that we can feel better and don't have to say no or don't have to speak up for what we want, that's not what boundaries are, right?

Natalie Clay: Correct.

Jody Moore: You can just say no.

Natalie Clay: It's so funny how often that comes up in my coaching with... You were asking earlier about the men that I coach, and so often, when they say, "Well, she'll be really upset if I just decide I'm going to do whatever with my night if she's kind of cold and distant." So what? It's okay if she's upset, or it's okay for you to do this, so.

Jody Moore: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, I'd love to ask even myself that, what if it really is okay? What if it's just okay that they're upset? It's not easy to do-

Natalie Clay: That's a tough one. No, it is not.

Jody Moore: No, it's not easy, but it is okay. And if you think about it... I know sometimes I get upset and when someone's trying to talk me out of it, I get even more upset. I just want to be mad right now.

Natalie Clay: That's right.

Jody Moore: Okay. So, we've talked about common mistakes. Love is the fuel we're trying to get to, but I don't know, I want to hear your thoughts on this. I don't know that you have to get all the way to love-

Natalie Clay: Sure.

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Jody Moore: But we would just want to think about... I like to think about things on a continuum, maybe on the far-left side of the continuum, we have hate and anger and resentment and all of those kinds of negative emotions, which is where unfortunately, I see people mostly set boundaries from. And then, on the opposite side is love, but even before love, closer to the middle could be just compassion, curiosity, open mindedness. Some of those emotions that might feel more available than love are probably still definitely, a better place to set a boundary from than resentment and hate, yeah?

Natalie Clay: Yeah, I would agree. But I think, when it sometimes feels hard or tricky to set a boundary... I'm thinking of a woman I was coaching today who was saying that her husband gets really upset and he'll throw things and to the point where sometimes he'll even hide her keys and break her phone so she can't leave. And in a situation like that, she was actually really beating herself up feeling like she should be getting to love. Because I talk about that a lot in my podcast and I know you do, too, that you'll never go wrong. When you choose love, love will never cause pain or hurt, which I completely agree with.

Natalie Clay: But in a situation like that, when it's talking about your safety, I think, I do start with love but I think, in her situation, what I advised is, you have to start with love for yourself. And you have to take care of your needs, and you have to keep yourself safe and you have to honor those thoughts and feelings that are coming up. And if you don't feel safe, then getting to love for that other person is going to be impossible. And it might not actually serve you, you have to kind of follow some of these natural instincts as well. We want you to stay safe in these situations. But when you feel love and you honor your boundaries on what is okay for me, then that is how eventually one day it becomes much easier to love them because there it doesn't feel like there's so much risk involved.

Jody Moore: Yeah that's a really good point. I like to think of it as, I'm trying to get to love for everyone in the story. So that's love for my husband who's taking my keys and destroying my phone, love for me, love for my

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kids, if the kids are involved, love for everyone in the story. Which is tricky because we're used to having good guys and bad guys in stories like this.

Natalie Clay: Right.

Jody Moore: So it feels like if I'm going to love me, that means I have to be angry at husband, or if I'm going to love husband then I have to just tolerate mistreatment. So love for everyone, I love that idea because it requires that you sort of step out of the story and take a look at the big picture. It's actually not love for anyone to enable or tolerate quote, unquote bad behavior, right?

Natalie Clay: Mistreatment.

Jody Moore: Yeah, mistreatment. Unless you want to change your idea of how people should treat one another, then it's not even loving, really, we could say towards him to just allow that. Right? It's sort of enabling. So, yes, it's such a good point. If you don't love you, and you're not taking care of you, and you're not compassionate and kind and curious and all those emotions about you, it's going to be very challenging to get there with that other person.

Natalie Clay: That's right. And with this woman in that situation where when she decides, my number one job is to love and honor my needs in this situation, then over time, when she consistently does that, she won't have to feel as afraid of him. Because it's not up to him to keep her safe, that's her job and she wants it to be her job, because she's the one in control in these situations. So over time, it becomes so much easier to love him and to choose deliberately, to love him because there's no risk in it.

Jody Moore: Yeah, totally. Okay, and so, the alternative then, which again, I just want to speak to briefly, so that anybody listening, you can sort of just consider your own situation, is, when we're resentful and angry, we're like, "That's it, I'm going to set a boundary. I'm going to tell him that if he does this again, then I'm out of here or whatever." I think unfortunately, a lot of people are actually setting boundaries, sort of subconsciously, when we play this game of, I'm going to show him, I'm going to punish him,

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or I'm going to show her. Even though we don't necessarily formally, call it a boundary, we sort of create boundaries to try to punish someone, try to get back at someone, which doesn't work at all.

Natalie Clay: Well, can I also say, one of the reasons it doesn't work, at least in marriage, is because, if you think about why somebody is really upset, that has nothing to do with you, right? That's all the thoughts that they're having in their head. But a lot of times there's some entitlement going on. Entitlement often leads to a lot of these actions that we've been talking about. And if you decide out of anger and rage, "I'm going to tell you that I'm setting this boundary and if you do this, I'm going to do that." That doesn't do a whole lot when they're already feeling entitled, sometimes it can make things worse.

Natalie Clay: Now not always, because again, you don't have that power over someone that's coming from their thoughts. But that's why I love the way that we set boundaries because it is all about, okay, how do I love me and what's going to make it the easiest for me to love them because they're not in charge of keeping me safe? And that's the angle that we always take, never trying to threaten in order to change them to keep us safe.

Jody Moore: Yeah, that's right. One other thing before... I think we should outline the process. But before we do that, I was just thinking, and again, I don't know even what I think about this, I'll just talk out loud and you tell me what you think. As parents, because a lot of people listening to both of our podcasts are parents, a boundary is sort of similar to the expectations that we set with children, except when we set expectations with children, it's probably more... A lot of times it's even for their benefit or for the benefit of the entire family or the household or what have you, whereas a boundary is probably going to be, I just prefer not to be around this behavior. But it's the same idea in that we set expectations, right? "Hey, listen, you need to eat breakfast before you eat that cupcake." For example, with my four-year-old daughter this morning. And so she's upset. And it's like, "Listen, you don't have to eat breakfast. But if you don't, you don't get to eat the cupcake."

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Jody Moore: And that's sort of how a boundary is and I'd like to think about it that way. Because I'm not mad at Taylor that she wants a cupcake. I'm not thinking that she's wrong, or a terrible person, or any of those things. I'm just like, "Listen, that's just the way it goes. We have choices, and this is the consequence." And I think boundaries are a little bit like that if we can remove all the emotion from it. It's like, you're allowed to yell, you're allowed to take my keys, you're allowed to do whatever you want, but I just leave if that happens, I just remove myself from the situation. I know it's hard to get to that neutral of a space, but I don't know, do you think that it's similar, or-

Natalie Clay: Yeah, I think there could definitely be some similarity there. And what this is actually making me think of is, I think once people start getting familiar with this work, the question starts coming up a lot of, when is it a request versus a boundary? So can we talk a little bit about requests? So, I would say the step before a boundary is often a request. So, oftentimes will ask somebody, "Hey, would you please not talk to me that way? I don't like being spoken to that way." Or don't swear at me or, don't yell at me, or whatever it is, right? And we get to ask and make requests of people anytime. And so, sometimes people say, "Well, when is it a request? And when is it a boundary?"

Jody Moore: Yes.

Natalie Clay: So, I have my ideas on that. I'd love to hear what you advise people on that.

Jody Moore: You go first.

Natalie Clay: Okay.

Jody Moore: I'll tell you if you're right or wrong. I'm just kidding.

Natalie Clay: So, again, I think it comes back to safety. And it comes back to... I think, sometimes a request can actually turn into a boundary where a lot of times we'll make the request first, like hey, I'd appreciate it if you didn't yell at me, or if you're really upset, let's talk later when you've

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cooled down, because I don't like it when we're just in these yelling matches, or whatever it is. But at that point, remember, we're not telling them that, and then we want to be careful not to expect them to follow through on that. Because then we're kind of setting ourselves up to feel a little bit of resentment there, where we're making the request for us, and whether or not they follow through on that request really isn't about us at all.

Natalie Clay: It tells us how they handle their emotions. So at that point, if it continues, then maybe you put a boundary in place where again, you don't have to have this big discussion with them. But in your head, you know, hey, I'm going to make that request. And whether or not they follow through on it is totally their decision. But I know if I'm going to feel a lot of resentment later, or I'm just not open to having someone yell at me, then if they start yelling, I'm going to say, "Hey, you're upset. I'm going to go for a drive and we're going to talk about this tomorrow." Or "We'll talk about this once you've calmed down."

Jody Moore: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Natalie Clay: Now, of course, the other piece of that is, they're not going to like that. And you have to learn to be okay with that also, which requires some growth, but that's good growth.

Jody Moore: Yeah, I completely agree with what you're saying. I was going to ask you this question and you don't have to give an example. Unless you have a really juicy story then you should for sure tell us but-

Natalie Clay: Some people would really appreciate me sharing on the podcast.

Jody Moore: No, I mean the story about you and your life.

Natalie Clay: Okay, I was going to share one with you and Jake, but continue.

Jody Moore: Or about me and my life or anyone in our family-

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Natalie Clay: Oh, yeah, I'm happy to... All our family.

Jody Moore: But here's my question. I was trying to think... I mean, obviously, like I said earlier, we all actually have a lot of boundaries, we just don't think about them.

Natalie Clay: That's a good point. Really good point.

Jody Moore: But other than those kind of unconscious ones that the majority of us share. I can't think of a time when I really had to set a boundary with somebody in my life-

Natalie Clay: A firm boundary?

Jody Moore: Like a really stop and think about, Okay, this I'm not okay with, this is what I'm going to do if they don't change. Have you?

Natalie Clay: Well, one thought comes to mind with an old boyfriend, that was a significant boyfriend. That at a point, I got to a point realizing, it's not useful to have any more contact with them. So I just decided, if they call, I'm not going to answer the phone anymore. And I did that, and it was really not dramatic.

Jody Moore: Not dramatic, but definitely, a boundary especially because you-

Natalie Clay: For sure-

Jody Moore: ... kind of had to tell yourself that, right?

Natalie Clay: Yes. I needed to consciously know how I was going to respond when they acted.

Jody Moore: Yeah, that's good. But the reason I bring that up is because I think that boundaries are pretty rare-

Natalie Clay: I agree.

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Jody Moore: That was many years ago for you, 20 years ago or so, right?

Natalie Clay: Sure.

Jody Moore: And maybe there have been others that I'm just not thinking of, but mostly what we're doing is making requests to your point. And I'm all for making requests, I think we should be making more requests of one another. I think we... At least, I know in our family we're all very polite and trying to be giving, which is good. But I think, in general, in our society, in our culture, a little bit more straightforward sharing about what we request from one another might be useful. The problem comes, like you said, when we get emotionally tied to whether or not they meet it.

Jody Moore: One of the things I see a lot in my coaching is, for example, maybe it's, well, my mother said that she was moving up here so she could help take care of my kids, and now she never will. And I ask her to, and she always says she's busy, right? And now we're upset with mom for not watching the kids. And she even said she was going to and then, to your point, we make it mean all kinds of dramatic things about whether or not we're important to her and whether or not mom likes our kids, and just so much drama. So I say, keep making requests, but what we're trying to teach people in our... At least I know, in my work, and I'm sure you as well, is you don't have to tie your emotions to whether or not they do it, right?

Natalie Clay: Which is harder said than done, but absolutely.

Jody Moore: But I remember having this conversation with Brooke Castillo once. She was like, "Oh, yeah, I ask my husband to do things all the time. He'll be leaving for the store and I'm like, "Bring me home some flowers." And he says "Okay." And sometimes he does it, sometimes he doesn't." And I asked her, "Well, what do you think though if he doesn't bring home flowers?" And that's a small example, but she said, "I just think, "Oh, he totally loves me anyway, he just forgot." Oh, yeah, that's so simple, but our brains don't naturally go there, right?"

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Natalie Clay: Right. But that solves so many problems. I say that to my couples a lot, if you just gave everyone the benefit of the doubt... Or one thing I tell them is, I want you to just go a couple days, just as if you could not let go of the thought that your spouse adores you, your spouse and your kids adore you. And if you view everything through that lens, everything looks very, very different. When they forget the flowers, when they get in a bad mood, suddenly, it's not about you, which it never is, and you can see it in a much softer way.

Jody Moore: I like that.

Natalie Clay: But one thing I also want to say about this is... Because I agree, I think boundaries can be rare, but I also work with some people who are a bit more sensitive, and we all have different levels of sensitivity. And so, what I find is, with some people that are sensitive, they start feeling like, "Well, why do I have to set boundaries? If I was a stronger person, this wouldn't bother me so bad." And so, I also want to speak to that and just know that, anything that really bothers you, it's okay that it does.

Jody Moore: Yes.

Natalie Clay: And remember, if you feel like you are sensitive, and you're not okay with being yelled at or someone swearing at you, or whatever it is, it really is okay. And remember, on the other side of that sensitivity, comes somebody who's very thoughtful, has all these other amazing talents. So, it's not that, it's... Boundaries aren't associated with strength, they're not associated with mental well-being, it's just you as a person. And if you're accepting yourself exactly the way you are and decide, it's okay, I don't like this. And guess what? There's no reason you should learn to like it if you don't.

Natalie Clay: So, although it doesn't need to be dramatic, this is a big dramatic exit or whatever, it's okay if you don't like it and a boundary can be something as simple as, "When they act that way, I put in my AirPods and I go in my room and I tell him I'm tired." It doesn't have to be this big

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stance that you're taking, but allow yourself to be okay or not okay with where you're at.

Jody Moore: Yeah, I love it. That's good advice. Okay, so we're going to talk about the process for a boundary now in four steps.

Natalie Clay: Perfect.

Jody Moore: Okay. So, do you want to give the first step?

Natalie Clay: Yeah. So the first step is, identify your request. So, when you're thinking about something that maybe isn't working for you, kind of identify, okay, this doesn't work for me. And again, maybe we start with the request, right? We tell them like, "Hey, I would love it if you didn't yell at me." Or, "It doesn't work for me when you talk to me that way. I just want to let you know that."

Jody Moore: And it's kind of like you were just saying, there are some people listening who may be sort of pushing away thinking, I shouldn't want this or I should just get used to this or I should do thought work around this. So to identify, it's okay for me to not like this person treating me this way or? Right?

Natalie Clay: Yes. And that also just reminded me, I worked with a woman who... She said, "Oh, yeah, my husband swears at me and calls me this." And I said, "Well, is that a boundary violation for you?" Meaning does that not work for you, for him to talk to you that way? And she said, "No, he's just that way for everyone." So there also isn't a set of rules in terms of what's okay for treatment of you, because everyone's going to have their own opinion about it. But that's for you to decide. So, if you're feeling sensitive, if you're feeling like it's totally fine, that's right.

Jody Moore: Yeah, that's right. So identify it. Step two, is to decide what you will do if they don't honor your request. So in many cases, it's removing yourself in some way. So, it might be... I mean, I've worked with clients who have been like, "Hey, okay, I'm deciding that if my husband talks to me that way, if he calls me those names or yells at me, or if my wife

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behaves this way, or if my mother starts talking to me in that way, then I leave, I go for a drive or I leave for a few hours." Or maybe it's, I leave depending on how severe you think it is, maybe you leave overnight or for a week or, it's completely up to you.

Jody Moore: One of the things I hear clients say a lot is, "Well, there's nothing I can do, we're in the car... To your example, maybe he's texting and driving or whatever, there is always something you can do, right? You can say, "Pull over I'm getting out right now." I mean, you have to take ownership over taking care of yourself. Hopefully, it's not always that extreme, but there is always something you can do. And I did want to add one other example, because we're giving a lot of sort of extreme examples. I love the idea, though, that a boundary could be as simple as protecting your time even.

Natalie Clay: Totally.

Jody Moore: It could be like, "Hey, listen, I know you have a tendency to run late. And we're meeting at this time. And so, I will wait until 15 minutes after that time. And if you're not there by then I'm going to leave because I got a lot of things to do and I love you. But just letting you know, that's what I do if this person doesn't honor my request of being on time."

Natalie Clay: Sure. I like that. And I also liked the point that you brought up just about, it's what you will do, because I think that's one way we tend to misuse boundaries is will say, "If you do this, I'm going to kick you out." Or, "You're going to have to do this." Where we never want to leave it up to them to follow through on our boundaries, because we're giving too much of our power over to the other person. So instead it's, "No, if this happens, I leave." Or-

Jody Moore: It's not a threat.

Natalie Clay: Correct.

Jody Moore: It's just like, hey, just letting you know, which kind of speaks to number three.

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Natalie Clay: Yes. Which is having a conversation if necessary. So again, it's not that you have to always explain what your boundaries are. When Jodie was even talking about, if you're late a lot... So if you're late, I'm going to leave. I may or may not even ever say that to someone. But if they were consistently late, then I would plan accordingly.

Natalie Clay: But also, I would probably decide, yeah, if they're not here in 15 minutes, I'm going to go and if they call me and they're asking, "Where are you?" I'd say, "Oh, sorry, I figured you forgot, or something." Or I would text them and just say, "Hey, it looks like you're not able to make it, I've got to run." So, there are some ways to follow through on your boundaries maybe that would turn into a conversation about, Oh, yeah, however you want to resolve that for next time.

Jody Moore: Now, let's briefly on this third point here, before we go to the last one, I want to talk just about, if you haven't had a boundary, and maybe you're now recognizing that this is a boundary issue for me, and I've just been allowing this and I don't want to any more, then I think those are the times when maybe... Again, it's not black and white, but you may want to have a conversation. I've coached a lot of clients, who maybe fight with their spouses, and they have decided they don't want to fight anymore. They don't want to yell. They don't want to engage in the argument. And so, it's sort of putting up a boundary, right? It's like, "Listen, if you're mad and you're yelling at me, I'm not going to yell back."

Jody Moore: And I always recommend that they have a conversation and say, "Listen, it might feel odd..." Because I find many times the spouse is like... When they don't yell back, they're like, "Oh, now you don't even care about our marriage."

Natalie Clay: Yes, for sure.

Jody Moore: Right? So I always say, "Look, if you want to, you can have a conversation that's like, "Listen, I'm working on showing up differently in our marriage. And I want things to be better. And I want to be more loving, and kind. And so, next time we get in an argument, I'm going

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to try my best not to get upset and yell. And if you're still upset and yelling, I'm probably going to leave for a little bit until you calm down. And just know that that's because I love you, because I care about our marriage, and I'm trying to work on it." But it's like a little bit of a heads up that I probably should have been doing that before, and now I'm ready.

Natalie Clay: And I love that. And I like that you said, "The next time we argue." Because I would strongly recommend you don't have that conversation in the heat of the moment-

Jody Moore: In the middle of it.

Natalie Clay: Because that's going to come across very punishing.

Jody Moore: That's right.

Natalie Clay: And it's going to come across-

Jody Moore: Condescending.

Natalie Clay: Exactly, very condescending. Whereas, like you said, I love that point of, no, this is something maybe I should have been doing before but I'm noticing that now. And just as you say that, it makes me realize how often those are the conversations my husband and I have because as much as we try to take ownership over our emotions, this is something I feel like we will always default back to in some way or another and we get better and better at it, and then we have a moment where we relapse. But it's kind of a good chance to review where kind of the next day when the emotions aren't as intense, that's when we do have that conversation of like, "Hey, I just realized, this really drives me crazy. And I know it's coming from my thoughts but from now on, here's how I'm going to handle that."

Natalie Clay: So we do end up having those boundary conversations a lot. It's just that it doesn't sound as dramatic when we're not saying, "Hey, I'm setting a boundary." It's just, "Hey, I've noticed this really doesn't work for me. And so, in the future, I'm just going to assume the best about you.

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But I'm not going to go to your family's house every single time you want to go, or whatever it is."

Jody Moore: Yeah, right. Okay, so the last step then, it sounds really simple, but it's probably the hardest step, which is to follow through on what you said you were going to do.

Natalie Clay: But it's so important, yes.

Jody Moore: Yeah. And when I say what you said you were going to do, it might be that you told them... But even if it's just what you told yourself you were going to do, it's really important that you follow through on it. And it might be hard because you're worried about the repercussions or how they're going to feel, or what have you, but it's so important, and it probably will only take once before the person realizes, oh, they really mean it. So, I was thinking about an example of a mutual friend of ours, who set a boundary with her mother because her mother just kept coming over to the house. She wanted to be with her and the grandkids, she would come to every soccer game, she just wanted to be at everything.

Jody Moore: And this person decided that she wanted a little bit of space and distance. And so she said, "Mom, listen, you can't just drop by like that. You've got to call first and you got to ask what's going on. And we've got to let you know when it's appropriate for you to be there or not. So, if you don't call first, or we don't talk about it first, and you come over, I'm not going to answer the door." And she said that was so hard, that conversation, and it was so hard the first time she had to follow through on it. But she did. And her mom was super mad.

Jody Moore: But it sort of showed her like, no, I really mean it. Our privacy and our time with our family is important enough to me that I'm going to protect it in this way. And all the while, I love you mom. And I'm so sorry, it's not my intention to try to make you feel bad or anything, but this is just really important to me and our family. And she said it took one time and that's it. And her mom was mad for a little while, and then she came around

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and their relationship is just so much better since she started just maintaining her own boundaries.

Natalie Clay: I love that. And I think another reason why this is so important is because it shows you that you can rely on you and that is so important. So, when I'm thinking about one of my clients who... They'll say, that doesn't work for me, but they live pretty afraid in their marriage even though there's not physical abuse happening or anything like that. But again, there are some things happening that don't feel quote, safe, you could say, in that situation. And when you're constantly leaving it up to your spouse to follow through on your requests and things, you're not keeping yourself safe. And that's why life feels so terrifying, because it's really up to them to keep you safe. And if they don't, you're not doing it.

Natalie Clay: So, when you follow through on your boundaries and decide this doesn't feel right to me. And so when this happens, I'm removing myself from the situation or whatever it is you need to do, over time, you learn that you don't have to be so afraid because you always have you to rely on. And you don't have to try to control other people because you have you to take care of you. Which actually makes it so much easier to love them because that again, leads to dropping all the resentment and everything else and then they don't feel like this big villain, because you know how to keep yourself safe and it's no longer this big thing. Amazing.

Jody Moore: Okay. So there you have it, folks, Boundaries. Not easy work to do, if you want help with it, natalieclay-

Natalie Clay: [Natalieclay.com](http://natalieclay.com).

Jody Moore: For couples coaching or jodymoore.com, for everything else, and we're here to help you. A good coach really can help you through the process of setting a boundary. So, absolutely. There you go, you can do it.

Natalie Clay: Thanks sis.

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Jody Moore: All right. Thanks for joining us. Thanks, Nats.

Natalie Clay: Thanks, Jody.

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.