

## Ep 251. Emotional Switch



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Jody Moore**

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## Ep 251. Emotional Switch

I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy* episode 251: Emotional Switch.

Welcome to *Better Than Happy*. I'm your host, Jody Moore. I'm a mother to four children. I'm a huge Taylor Swift fan, and I'm a master certified life coach. I'm here to teach you how to manage your brain and manage your emotions so that you can create a life that's even better than happy. Are you ready? Let's go.

Hello, everybody, what is happening? What's new? Don't you hate that question, especially right now? You know what's new? Nothing. The same thing, different day. It feels like the same day, right?

A call I did last week with my Be Bold masters who are just some of my clients who go through an intensive week-long and then we get together every month and I teach them and coach them. Anyway, we did a call last week and we talked about time. We talked about how our experience of time is so fascinating to observe right now.

Because we used to be complaining about how we didn't have enough time and now some of us are complaining about having too much time. Others of us feel busier than ever and the days for some people are crammed, but the weeks and months are going slow. For other people it's all going slow. Anyway, I just think removing our daily markers of time as we're used to, and our weekly markers as we're used to it's really fascinating to watch our experience with time changing, don't you think? Maybe we should do a whole podcast on it.

Anyway, that's not what I'm going to teach you today. What I'm going to teach you today is a concept I'm calling emotional switch. So, we're going to talk about emotions. We're going to talk about feelings. I use those two words interchangeably so when I say emotions and feelings I'm talking about happy, sad, angry, mad, irritated, joyful, love, compassion, judgment, resentment. Those are emotions or feelings and there's a lot more of course, but what I'm not talking about are sensations. In other words, hunger, fatigue, physical pain, physical pleasure.

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Those kinds of things while they can start to bleed into the emotional space a little bit, I tend to classify those as sensations. So, let me just begin with that. We're going to talk about emotions or feelings today. Now, don't turn me off, those of you that are not usually into talking about feelings. You know who you are.

Here's what I want you to know. Emotions and feelings are not soft. I used to think they were because I'm kind of wired more like a typical man than a typical woman in that I am not super emotional. I'm definitely lower on the emotional rollercoaster, if you will, than a lot of people, especially a lot of women. I don't know if that's a good or bad thing it just is how I am.

So, when people used to bring up emotions in the past and feelings, I was kind of like, "Okay, here we go. I'll just try to be patient and endure this, but I don't really need this. This isn't really necessary for me. It's not that useful." So, stay with me because here's what I believe now.

Regardless of your sensitivity to emotion, emotions are everything and the more I understand emotion the more amazing my life becomes. Not just outwardly, but I mean my experience of my life becomes more amazing. Because emotions are the fuel that drive everything we do.

Our emotions are what create our experience of the world. So, the better we understand those emotions the better that we are able to get leverage over ourselves and having leverage over ourselves is amazing because that is how we have leverage over what we create. Again, how we experience ourselves, our lives, and the people and things around us.

So, this concept of emotional switch I've been playing with in my head for a little while and I asked my husband because I feel like he knows everything. He's very smart. He's very knowledgeable about trivia-type things and anything he doesn't know he's quick to Google and he will find the answer because he's curious. He's curious about the world.

So, I said to him, "Hey, honey, you know when a train is going down a track and then there's another track that veers off in a different direction and it

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seems like the train is going to keep going on one track, but then suddenly that little switch happens and it directs the train over to the other track. What is that little switch called?" He said, "Well, I don't know, but let me look it up," and he looked it up and he said, "It's called a switch."

I said, "Darn, I kind of wanted it to be called something fancier than that," but it's called a switch. So, I want you think about that visual as I teach you what I'm going to teach to you today which is that a train headed one direction that seems to be going full speed down one track, but just one little switch in the track redirects the train over to the other track.

So, as human beings our brains like to stay on the same track they're on and our bodies like to remain in the same emotional state that we are in. I call this a state change. We prefer not to have physical or emotional or mental state changes if we can help it because state changes require a lot of energy.

Let's talk about physical state changes for just a moment. Imagine that you are standing around in the chapel before church starts and you're talking to your friends. Suddenly, you realize that church is starting and you need to go and sit down and stop talking. There's a little part of us that's kind of like, "Oh darn it." Because we wanted to keep talking to our friends because we like to stay in the same state which is standing up, talking.

If I'm going to go sit down and listen then I'm going to have to choose where I'm going to sit or find where my family is sitting. I'm going to have to walk there. I'm going to have to quiet my brain and settle down whatever I was going to say or whatever I was listening to and redirect to listen to something else. These are all little, tiny things but they all add up to a little bit of emotional and brain energy so our brain is like, "I don't really want to make that change."

Now, an even more obvious example is if you're sitting in a class and listening to a teacher who's teaching you something and suddenly that teacher says, "Okay, I want everyone to group up with the two people next to you and here's your question. Choose somebody to be the scribe and

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you're going to have a discussion about this topic." Doesn't your brain kind of go, "Oh man, I don't really want to do that." Because then I have to figure out who are the people I'm going to work with and maybe we have to move our chairs, and now we have to start having a discussion which is just a different state, a different brain state than just sitting, listening, and consuming information. Our brains are like, "Eh, that's going to require energy. I'd rather not do that."

So, that's a physical and a little bit mental and emotional change in state. Typically, we choose to avoid those. This is why you sometimes think that you've had just a really bad day. It's not that you had a bad day. It's not that that day went any worse than any other day in many cases, it's just that your brain got on a track of negativity. Like you woke up a little bit late because your alarm didn't go off and so you were stressed and rushed getting out the door.

Then, your brain, on that negative track just chose to stay there. So, it started interpreting a lot of other things in a negative way. Or you had a really, really good day because you woke up happy and something went really great and set your brain onto a positive track and then you stayed on that track and you got done with the day thinking, "Gosh, this was a good day."

So, that is typical default human behavior. But we have, first of all, the ability to switch states, both physical, mental and emotional states any time, and sometimes things come along in life that make it really easy or sort of direct our brains to a switch, to an unexpected switch.

So, if it's an emotional switch I'm going to define it this way, that it's a change from your current emotional state to a pretty different, oftentimes it's the opposite emotional state. If not opposite, it's at least headed the opposite direction like we might say from positive to negative or negative to positive, and it's unexpected. A switch that's unexpected.

Now, I want to point out to you the power of an emotional switch. Emotional switches affect us pretty intensely as human beings. They create a

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significant part of our human experience. The first thing an emotional switch can do for us is make us laugh, sometimes it's funny.

In fact, I a couple of years ago decided that I wanted to bring more humor into the classes I teach and into talks that I give and when I'm speaking in public and just into my work. I was like, I'm kind of funny sometimes, but I want to be funnier. There are these people that are just naturally funny, like I think about Hank Smith, he's always funny. You could just be having a conversation and he just adds humor to it.

So, I bought a book about humor and it was basically dissecting the science of jokes and the science of humor. The book promised, as books do, that if you read this book, you're going to be funnier. Well, my sister and some other people in my familiar I think thought it was pretty cute that I was doing that and they were like, "Don't worry, Jody, you don't need to be funnier. You don't need to try to be someone other than you are. Just keep doing what you're doing."

Needless to say, I don't think that book made me any funnier, but it was definitely interesting to hear about the science of a joke. Really, what makes a joke funny to us is the switch, the emotional switch that happens. It's unexpected and it all of a sudden takes us by surprise and puts our brain on a different track.

Recently, I was talking to a gentleman who told me of this experience. He said that he felt like his wife was losing her hearing. They're a little bit older couple and he'd brought it up with her before and she assured him that her hearing was fine. So, he said, "I asked my doctor how do I get my wife to be willing to come in and see you? Because I'm pretty sure she's losing her hearing, but she doesn't think so. I think she might be in denial."

He said, "The doctor told me about this simple hearing test that I could administer at home and so I did. I went home and I stood on the opposite side of the kitchen and I said to her, 'Hey, honey what's for dinner tonight?' and she didn't answer me. So, I moved a little bit closer to her and then I

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asked her again, 'Hey, hon, what are we having for dinner tonight?' And she didn't answer again."

So, he said, "Then I moved right up next to her and I said, 'This is the third time I've asked you what we're having for dinner tonight.'" And she said, "I know and this is third time I've told you, we're having chicken." So, a joke like that makes us laugh. Probably somebody could've delivered it better than I did, but it makes us laugh because it's unexpected, right?

We're expecting to hear a story about a woman losing her hearing and how her husband is going to break her the news. In the end, what we hear is that the husband is the one who's losing his hearing, right? It's an emotional switch. It kind of makes us laugh in some circumstances. That is actually an important part of the science of humor is the unexpected change in direction of a story or a joke.

Another thing that an emotional switch can do for us is create these really powerful experiences. Sometimes really beautiful, good feeling, powerful experiences. So, some of you have probably heard me talk about my kindergartener who rode the bus to school this year back when we had school. I was joking that Oliver's prayers were answered. He does not have to ride the bus to school for the rest of the year.

But at any rate, he was riding the bus and he was really nervous about the bus. He cried a lot of mornings for a long time about getting on the bus and his teacher at the end of the school day he would cry. He just got really nervous about getting on the bus. He nervous about who he was going to sit with and all kinds of other things.

So, as his mother I have lots of thoughts about my child being nervous. Sometimes I'm feeling really sad and empathetic for him, sometimes I'm feeling frustrated with him, but lots of what I would say is generally negative emotion about my son and this whole experience with the school bus.

One morning we were going to the bus, school had been in session for quite a while so I'm really thinking that he should be getting used to it by

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now and I'm feeling all this negative emotion. Then, we were a little bit late to the bus stop, so the kids were already getting on the bus which makes Oliver even more nervous because then he can't find the friends he wants to sit with, and he thinks he's not going to get the right seat, and he's just overwhelmed.

So, then I was feeling kind of guilty about being late and all kinds of negative emotion, right? As my child got on the bus, his amazing bus driver, Mr. L says, "Oliver, I saved a seat for you right here by your friend." Okay, so that, for me, created an emotional switch.

Instead of thinking how irritating this is and how sad I am for Oliver, my thoughts suddenly completely shifted tracks to, "Oh my goodness, Oliver has so many people looking out for him." Mr. L I love you. Thank you for looking out for my son. Thank you to the other kids on the bus who always befriend him and try to take care of him. What an amazing community we live in. What an awesome school district we're in. What a great neighborhood. What great people we have around us. Complete emotional switch.

Mr. L could've saved Oliver a seat like that and Oliver hadn't been so upset and if I hadn't been so full of negative emotion it would've still been kind and sweet, but it wouldn't have impacted me as significantly as it did that morning. I was nearly in tears which is hard to get me to do.

Now, unfortunately, the same is true when it comes from going from positive to negative emotion. This is why disappointment is one of our least favorite emotions because not only is it a negative emotion, but it's an emotional switch.

So, in other words, there's something that we think is going to happen like the prom and maybe we're really looking forward to the prom and maybe we've been thinking about the prom for many, many years and we've been imagining what it would be like, and we've picked out a dress, and we have a date, and we have this vision in our mind of what we're going to experience. That's why when the prom gets canceled because a lot of the



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world has been canceled it's so painful. It's not only disappointment it's an emotional switch from a whole bunch of positive emotion to a negative emotion.

So, emotional switch is powerful because it's the pushing back against the primary emotion or the first emotion into the secondary emotion that creates an even greater contrast. I picture it like a swimmer that gets to the end of the lane and then he pushes off against the edge of the pool to head back the other direction.

Not only are we headed directions, we have a whole bunch of momentum because we're pushing back against that previous emotion. It's fascinating to think about, don't you think? Now, here's the other thing I want to talk about.

So, my kids have been watching this show on Disney+ that's really fascinating if you're looking for something good to watch with your family, it's called Imagineers. Because Disney, the Disney company, especially around Disneyland and Disney World has these imagineers who are like engineers but who get to also use tons of creativity to imagine and create all the amazing experiences that we know at Disneyland and Disney World. It's pretty fascinating to watch. You get to see some behind-the-scenes of how they created Disneyland and all the rides.

Recently, we were watching an episode that talked about when they decided to rebrand Disneyland's Twilight Tower of Terror into The Guardians of the Galaxy Mission Breakout. So, they took this ride that was the Twilight Zone Tower of Terror and they kept the same ride, the same mechanics and the same general experience that you're going to have on that ride, but they've rebranded that ride.

Here's what I think is so fascinating about it, is they originally when they created the Twilight Zone Tower of Terror, he said the emotion that we're trying to evoke for people on this ride during this experience is fear. It's the Tower of Terror, we want them to experience fear and they based it all around *The Twilight Zone*.

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So, you had what looked like an old, abandoned hotel and it had cobwebs and creepy art and creepy dolls. Then you had the whole experience, which is what is so amazing about Disneyland is it's not just the ride it's like even when you're waiting in line it's part of the whole experience.

You had like cobwebs, like I said, and it looked like an abandoned hotel and then you had a video that you watched before and video even during the ride of this disaster-struck hotel from back in the day. Then you thought all these thoughts about how creepy this was and how terrifying this was.

You get on this ride that's basically an elevator ride. It raises you up fast and drops you down quickly. It's a series of up and down movement and you don't really know when you're going to rise and fall and you're moving very quickly the whole time and it created a lot of terror.

Well, when they rebranded it *Guardians of the Galaxy*, the imagineers at Disney said, "Okay, we're no longer trying to evoke fear because that doesn't really go with *Guardians of the Galaxy*." If you've seen the *Guardians of the Galaxy* movies you know that they're intense, there's a lot of action and drama, but they're also very fun and light-hearted. There's a lot of joking around happening. The characters are quite funny. They all have a good sense of humor, they all pick on one another in a funny way, and there's lots of fun music and dancing and lightness to that movie.

So, they said, "We now are trying to evoke joy. We're not going to rebuild the ride. We're going to use the same ride structure," but they decided that they could create joy with that same elevator up and down effect. One of the imagineers said, "We started thinking about a baby that gets tossed up in the air by his dad and then his dad catches him. Then he gets tossed up again and caught, and that baby starts giggling even though it's the same sensation that could be terrifying. If we feel like we're safe and it's somewhat unexpected and light and fun and we feel loved and cared for then we laugh and we find that to be enjoyable."

So, they, like I said, rebranded everything. Instead of an old, abandoned hotel, the building is now designed like The Collector from the *Guardians of*

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*the Galaxy*. It has all of his knick-knacks; it has a bunch of Marvel movie things. You interact with that ride now. You see Rocket the Raccoon right in the beginning who explains to you that we're going to help bust his friends out and you have the humor and still the intensity that is the *Guardians of the Galaxy*.

Then, this is my favorite part, you sit down in that ride and you know it's going to be intense, you're kind of freaked out, but suddenly they start playing really loud - the classic rock music that we know from *Guardians of the Galaxy*. I think there are several different versions of that ride, so there may be different songs, but the song I remember the best is Joan Jett, "*Hit Me with Your Best Shot*."

So, that song comes on really loud in your ears and everyone starts squealing and screaming with excitement and laughter as the ride suddenly takes you up high and down low again in the same elevator effect. The movie scenes that you're seeing in-between are the *Guardians of the Galaxy* characters. They're all kind of funny and intense, and so your experience of that ride now is completely different because you think different thoughts.

The same physical sensation of your stomach dropping as you go up and down, but everything surrounding it is different and so your thoughts suddenly become different. So, yes, it's the same sensation but with a feeling of joy behind it instead of terror behind it which I personally prefer.

But I thought it was so fascinating and I love how these imagineers had to step back and think, how are we going to evoke different emotion with the exact same ride? Pretty cool.

Now, another tool I want to teach you which kind of piggybacks on why I'm spending so long talking about a Disneyland ride for the second week in a row. I think I talked about Disneyland a couple weeks ago anyway. But it's because I want to teach you about another tool. It's not so much an emotional switch, but just more of a gentle redirecting of your emotional state and your emotional experience.

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Because, remember, we just defined earlier that a switch requires that unexpected surprise element. So, sometimes something in life comes along that allows our brain to make that emotional switch and that can be great or it can be painful. But the majority of the time we just have the ability to make a switch.

Now, typically what I'm teaching you here on this podcast is that if you want to feel a different emotion you need to change your thought. But today, we're going to take it up a level and I want to play with the idea that you could keep the same thought, but try to access a different emotion around that thought.

So, let me give you some examples and then I'll explain to you how you do it. So, let's take a thought like, "I don't know what to expect." We could think that thought, "I don't know what to expect," and we could feel afraid or we feel confused or we could feel uncertain, we could feel worried. We could feel a lot of negative emotion. I just don't know what to expect.

Or we can think the same thought and feel excited, and feel a lot of curiosity and anticipation, "I don't know what to expect." It's a change in tone, but I also think it's because we don't ever just think one thought at a time. Every thought we think has a whole bunch of thought friends surrounding it. I call them thought friends because they're like supporting thoughts.

So, I can be thinking, "I don't know what to expect" and all the thought friends can be things like, "And it's very scary. It could be terrible. Something might go wrong. I might not be able to handle it. This might be painful." Or I could think, imagine somebody gives you a present, you don't know what to expect many times when someone hands you a present, but you don't have a bunch of thought friends around like, "This is probably going to be a disaster. We should brace ourselves."

Instead, you think, "I don't know what to expect, but I bet it's going to be something delightful. That was so kind of this person to give me a present. I

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wonder what it will be. I can't wait to see." We actually like to not know what to expect, you guys, did you know this?

This is why we like sports. This is why when you record the game because you didn't get to see it live, you're like, "Don't you dare tell me who wins and loses." Because that would ruin your experience of the game. You want to not know what to expect.

This is why you love a good TV series that leaves you cliffhanging at the end of each episode because then you don't know what to expect and you can't wait to see what's next. So, the only reason you feel overwhelmed when you think, "I don't know what to expect," is because of all of the thought friends around it.

Another example of this is, I have clients sometimes when I'm coaching them that say that they're feeling self-pity or resentment and their thought is, "It's all on me. This is all on me." Like, "I'm the one that has to take care of the kids and get dinner ready and do all of the stuff around the house because my husband isn't home or he isn't helpful or he isn't paying attention, it's just all on me."

I sometimes try on with them, what if we keep that thought? "It's all on me," but instead of feeling resentful, what if we try on the idea that we could feel really empowered with that thought? We could feel really confident with that thoughts. We can feel like kind of a bad-A from that thought. "It's all on me."

If the thought friends go from, "Poor me. I shouldn't have to do everything. It's just not fair. Other women have it a lot easier than this. If only my husband helped out." If we didn't have all of those thought friends, if we swapped for like, "I got this. Who better than me? Just watch out world because here I come. You have no idea what I'm capable of. Thanks, me. I can handle it." Then we get to keep the thought, "It's all on me," but we evoke an entirely different emotion around it.

Another version of this is this thought, "It was meant to happen that way. It was always going to happen that way." I, personally, love that thought. It

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brings me so much peace. Whenever my brain is like, “Something’s gone wrong. This isn’t fair. This wasn’t supposed to happen this way. My life is hard.” I tell myself, “Oh no, it was totally meant to happen this way. It was always going to happen this way.”

Then I feel at peace, I feel relaxed, I feel my brain settle down and stop arguing with reality and stop trying to go back and change the past. It just sort of relaxes into, “Okay, so this is what is. Now what?” I start thinking about solutions and I start moving forward into the future. It’s so helpful.

Now, I know other people that when I offer them that thought they are in resistance of that thought. They have thought friends around it like, “Well, that can’t be true,” and they want to argue with the validity of that thought even. You can see how the same thought can evoke different emotions for different people. It’s because of all the thought friends around it.

So, this is a powerful tool that I try on for myself at different times. If I have a thought that I just can’t stop thinking, it keeps coming up, or a thought that I just notice I really believe. I have lots of evidence that it’s true so I can’t change that thought or stop thinking that thought sometimes I just ask, but could I keep this thought and access a different emotion around it?

Sometimes I just go to, what if I thought that thought but I felt confident about it? Or I felt excited about it? I felt empowered around it? Sometimes from the emotions I can get – there are other times I start with what would be the thought friends that would be necessary to redirect that thought to something more useful? So, you can do it whatever way is easiest for you.

You can literally change your experience of your life, you guys, when you understand and when you decide to be willing to play with emotions in this way. I want you to remember that emotions are not demands to be met or problems to solve. They are just information, but they are powerful and those emotions are there to direct you and they will direct your life. They will direct your experience. They will direct how you show up, but only if you’re operating on default mode, like most people are which is just at the effect of their emotions.

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But you have the ability to back up from default mode and just observe them and observe yourself creating them. When you do this, you will get so much leverage and authority over your emotional experience. All right, you guys. Have a beautiful rest of your week. I'll see you next week. Take care.

Who is your life coach? If you don't have one, I would be so honored to be your coach. I created a virtual coaching program called Be Bold that I want to invite you to join me in. We can address challenges, we can work on goals, and we can do it in so many different ways.

We have group coaching, individual private coaching, and online chats along with hundreds of hours of courses and content that I've created just for you. When you're ready to really take what you're learning on the podcast to the 10x level, then come check out Be Bold at [JodyMoore.com/membership](http://JodyMoore.com/membership).