

## 252. Expectation Pain



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Jody Moore**

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## 252. Expectation Pain

I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy* episode 252: Expectation Pain.

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, my friends. Welcome to another podcast episode. I hope you're having a fantastic week. Today we're going to talk about relationships. We're going to talk about all different kinds of relationships, and I want you to listen to this and apply it to any of your relationships. We all have different types of relationships happening in our lives and I think you're going to find this to be relevant to literally any relationship, any interaction you have with other people in your life. Relationships play such a huge role in our lives. They really impact our overall state of well-being.

If we have healthy, happy relationships we have a healthy, happier life experience overall. Now, of course, it's not a constant either. Sometimes our relationships are going well, or we might have certain relationships that are easier and healthier and then others that are challenging.

I think it's the challenging ones, it's those difficult people that come along every now and again that are our most valuable teachers, that provide the best lesson for us. So, today I want you to think about the expectations that you have of people in your life, people that you're in relationships with.

Now, this is a natural, human thing to do, to have expectations or ideas about how people should be. We have lots of ideas not just a few ideas. We have like these pictures that we create in our mind. We have these full-on stories about how people in our lives will be. We develop these stories

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in many cases before we even enter into many of the relationships in our lives.

I want you to think back to before you had kids. Did you have a picture of what it was going to be like to be a parent? Did you have an idea of sort of how your kids would be and an idea of how it would feel anyway to be in relationship with them. I know I did.

I pictured myself loving and kind and sitting with my arms around them in church and them cuddling up to me. All kinds of little moments, little stories, little sub-plot stories that I created in my head about how it would be when I was a mother and when I had kids.

Now, some of those things maybe have come to pass, many of them have not. Some of the things that I notice in my relationship – in all of the relationships, but let's just talk about the kids for a minute, some of them have been a lot harder than I anticipated and some of them have been a lot more magical and sweeter than I imagined.

But overall, I would say my picture of how I thought I would be with them, how I thought they would be was pretty off. We do this with our marriages. We tell ourselves, "Well, when I get married it's going to feel like this. Our lives are going to look this way. My spouse is going to treat me this certain way or feel this certain way about me." I don't know about you, but I tend to do it in the little, tiny areas of like what our morning routine would be like, what it would be like when we go to bed at night, what our holidays would be like, whether or not we would travel together and how that experience would be.

I would dare say that, again, most of what I created in my mind, the story I came up with is nothing like what my marriage is. My marriage is amazing in many ways and better in many ways and it's harder and more challenging in many ways than what I imagined.

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I think what's fascinating is that we do this so much with our parents, but as kids we don't really have that picture, we just have the parent we have. We don't really know any different. We don't have anything to compare it to, but as we get older and we become more aware then we start to create this story of what our parents were supposed to be like.

It's not just a story about what they should be like now, but even what they should have been like in the past. Right? I coach people on this all the time. Like, "My mother should be more supportive, she should listen more, she should be more available." Or, "My father should be more accepting." Or, "My parents shouldn't fight with one another." All kinds of noise we have about what our parents should be like and a lot of background noise about how they raised us wrong.

We do this with mother-in-laws, sisters, friends, bosses, we do it with almost everybody in our lives. So, the problem with this part of our humanness is that other people in the world, other people in our lives are not good at all at being who we think they should be. Have you noticed this?

First of all, they're not good at reading our minds. Many times, I find with my clients that they're not even making requests of people, they're just sort of saying, "Of course, they should know that. Of course, my spouse should know I need help. Of course, my mother should know that I want her to come over and watch the kids. Of course, my kids should know that I don't want them to lie to me."

So, people don't read our minds. We need to get better at voicing our requests. I'm all for you doing that. But the second piece, and most important piece of this is to remember that people are not at all good at complying with being who we think they should be. You know what people are good at? Being themselves.

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When we want them to be different than they are so that we can feel better, we call that having a manual for someone. Just like you have a manual for how your car is supposed to operate and if something isn't working the way the manual says it should then it's broken and you need to take it into the shop and get it fixed.

That's what we tend to think about people. Didn't you read page 37 of my manual? It says that you're supposed to call me back when I call you. You're supposed to reply to my text messages. You're supposed to want to talk to me. You're supposed to behave in this certain way. Didn't you read the manual? Something is wrong with this friend of mine. We need to take her into the shop and try to get her fixed.

So, when we feel angry or resentful or hurt or whatever negative emotion we feel because the person that we're in relationship with is not behaving the way we want them to that is us having a manual. We punish ourselves with our manuals.

So, people are not good at being who we want them to be. They're only good at being themselves. They're not good at reading our minds and do you know what else they're not good at? They're not good at being us. They're only good at being them. I say this because a lot of times in my coaching I'll say, "Well, why do you think that your husband should," let's say, "want to hear about your day?"

I'll coach women who say, "He doesn't really listen very well. He doesn't ask me questions. He's not engaged. He's on his phone. He doesn't want to hear about my day." I say, "Why do you think that he should want to hear about your day?" She'll say, "Well, I would do that for him. If he wanted to talk and tell me something I would be attentive. I would put down my phone." I say, "You know what your husband's not good at? Being you. He's good at being him."

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Again, I heard a woman recently getting coached about her mother not wanting to come over and help out at her house very often and not wanting to come and watch her daughter, even though the mother told her she was moving to be close to her so she could help out with the daughter.

Suddenly, she's finding that the mother is saying, "No, I'm not available. I can't take her." If she does, she doesn't want to have her for very long.

So, my client is like, "If I had a grandchild I would want to be with her. I would be willing to help my daughter watch her child and I would want to be a part of their lives." So, again, I say, "You know what your mother is not good at? She's not good at being you. She's only good at being her."

I know this is disappointing, you guys. I'm with you. I don't understand why everyone doesn't think like I do. Why do they not act like I do? Why do they not see the world I do? Why do they not behave the way I do? Except that then I remember, oh yeah, that would be terrible if we just had a whole bunch of mes running around. It would be boring and weird and not a good thing at all actually.

We want everyone to be them. We don't want people to be us. When we want them to be us we suffer. We punish ourselves with our expectations of how other people should be, you guys. This is the most important thing I want you to hear in this podcast episode. The reason I want you to drop your expectation of other people and who they should be isn't for those other people. They're going to keep being themselves anyway, no matter what. I want you to drop it for your sake. Okay?

I want you to be able to enjoy the people in your life and to enjoy your own life experience and to stop turning yourself into a miserable, crazy person trying to control everyone around you.

Now, another thing we do is we tell ourselves the lie that we just want it because we love them. This is a lie because – let me give you an example.

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So, again, I heard a woman being coached the other day whose husband drinks and she thinks he drinks too much, and she doesn't like it when he drinks. She's like, "I just think that it would be so much better for him if he learned how to just understand his thinking and how to feel his feelings and to not drink. If he stopped drinking his life would be better."

So, when he's drinking she's upset, she gets mad at him. She's like, "I don't understand why you keep drinking," they engage in a fight. Now, she thinks that she wants him to stop drinking for his sake, but she's not there yet. She's nowhere near there yet. When we tell ourselves that we want it because we love them, we're not loving them, we're loving a different version of them that we think would be better.

We're like, "I love you, husband, but we're just going to change a few things and then everything will be fine." So, when we are suffering over them not being different then that is not about us loving them. When we just genuinely want it for them you will know the difference because you won't be suffering at the effect of it. If they don't change, if they choose a different way, you're not going to blame them for your suffering and your pain. You're not going to be resentful, you're not going to be angry.

Now, this doesn't mean you might not feel some clean pain. Okay? So, I think that when we see the people that we love make choices that we think might impact them negatively at some point then we feel a sort of hurt for them. But it's a much more subtle, quiet, behind the scenes hurt.

It's not the kind of pain that makes you angry and try to control whether your controlling is obvious or it's passive-aggressive. Maybe you get upset with people or maybe you just disconnect from people. All of that is coming from suffering that you create your own suffering. Hurt is still created by you, but I think it's a natural, healthy thing to experience.



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So, let's look at Christ's example of this. He's always the perfect example of how to be a human, right? So, Christ wanted people to repent, to forsake sin and to follow him. He wanted people to draw closer to God for their sake. He did this perfectly. He was sad for them if they didn't choose that. He had that kind of quiet, clean pain hurt because He loved them, but He wasn't in suffering over them not choosing that. He wasn't mad at that. He didn't try to control them and turn into an out of control version of himself.

He just loved us all so deeply. He didn't blame His hurt on us and make us wrong in some way. He understood and understands why people have a hard time living in this way that would serve them best. He forgives us no matter what. He doesn't carry resentment or anger about it. He just says, "I love you. This way is available if you want it and if you don't want it. I love you no matter what."

It doesn't mean He didn't feel some sadness and hurt on our behalf. You see what I'm saying? It's a different experience than the suffering that we create when we have this picture and we believe something's gone wrong when people don't follow our picture.

So, what I always recommend to my clients when we're coaching on this is, okay, first we have to identify that we have a manual. We have to really identify and recognize that we are creating our own suffering with this picture and this story and this manual that we've created of how this person should be.

We feel justified in it, don't get me wrong. I know you have a lot of good reasons for it, it doesn't matter. When you recognize that you're creating your suffering then the next step is we just put the manual down. We decide that maybe we don't know how this car is supposed to operate. Maybe we don't know what this person's life was supposed to be.



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Our idea of what a husband should be, what a marriage should be, what a parent should be, what a friend should be, maybe all of that is just made up and we can just put all of that down and instead of having our nose in a book in our manual I want you to look up at the movie that's happening in front of you. Not the movie in your head, the real-life movie. The movie IRL is how the young kids say it, right?

So, when your nose is in that book, in that manual, you're missing the movie that's happening and the great thing about this movie is you have a front-row seat and you also get to interact and play a small role in the movie. But it's still a movie. You're here to witness it, you're here to experience it.

This is what I try to remind myself about each of my children is that I don't know what their future is going to be. I don't know what they're going to be like when they're in college. I don't know how often they're going to call me or text me. I don't know if they're going to come home as much as I hope they will, but they may or may not. I don't know who they're going to marry. I don't know what their life is going to be like, or if they're going to get married.

I don't know anything about their future. I try not to have expectations of their future because I know that will cause pain and suffering for me because the one thing I do know is that I'm pretty bad at predicting the future. Instead, I just think I can't wait to watch the movie of Isaac. I'm watching it right now. I have a front row seat. I get to interact with it a little bit and I'm going to continue to watch it unfold. I'm going to watch the movie of Macy and of all of my kids. I'm going to just continue watching the movie of my parents, the movie of my husband, the movie of my clients.

I, honestly, as I was writing the outline for this episode was thinking how becoming trained as a coach helped me so much to do this work in my personal life and my own relationships and that's not to say I'm perfect at it

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by any means. But I feel like I'm better at it today than I was because when I sit down to coach a client I do my own work before any coaching call to get my head in a space of love.

So, many times I don't know who I'm going to be coaching on a call. I might have a name, but I don't usually know very much about that person. Maybe they give a couple of sentences about what they want help with, many times they don't. So, I go into it not knowing very much, but I know that I don't have to know anything about anyone to love them. I'm capable of loving people as are you. We're all capable of loving people.

I go into every coaching call with the thought, "I love this person. I love them enough to tell them the truth. I love them enough to show up and be the best coach I can be for them and that's what I'm going to do now." Because I get my head in that space, I'm very good at loving my client.

Now, when I'm with people in my personal life, my role is different. I'm not there to coach them, so I'm not always there to tell them everything I think and see. They are not asking me for that, but I am still able to get my head in the space of, "I love this person," just like I do with my clients. My clients are opening up and they're telling me their problems, they're telling me their mess, they're telling me their weaknesses and their faults, and I love them for it.

So, I can think about everybody in my life that same way. I've trained my brain to do that and you can train your brain to do that, too. You don't have to get trained as a coach. You just have to decide, "What if I just love this person exactly as they are? What if I don't have to change them in order to love them? Now what?" So, if every time you let your brain run away with a story of what should have been you create suffering for yourself. That's what I want you to know.

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Now, you don't need to beat yourself up for doing it. You don't need to say, "Ugh, I shouldn't do that." You kind of have to just observe yourself doing it at first, but you can interrupt that brain at any point and say, "No, no, no, we're not going to do that. We're not going to run down that rabbit hole of the story of how this was supposed to be different than it is" because I'm tired of punishing myself. I'm tired of punching myself in the face with that story.

Now, I kind of touched on this earlier, but I want to dive a little deeper into the way we look for justification for our painful stories, okay? We use all kinds of things to justify our stories and keep punishing ourselves. So, for example, sometimes I coach women whose husbands aren't working, they're not making money, or they're not making the amount of money that their family needs to live off of.

Sometimes they want to use things like our church's Family Proclamation to justify their painful story. To say, "See, it says right here the husband's role is to provide for the family." Or we use scriptures or conference talks. We use what other people say. We use other people's opinions and their validation of our story as justification that we're right.

Now, listen to me, you can do that if you want to, but I want you to ask yourself, what's the upside to doing that? We use all of this evidence to justify our resentment, our suffering, our judgment, and then our own disconnection from that person. So, I don't really care how justified your story is, if it's creating all of those things for you then it's not useful. It's not righteous and it's not important.

I guarantee you our church leaders didn't sit down and say, "Let's write a document called The Family, a proclamation to the world, and we'll list all the things that husbands should do and wives should do so that if a wife wants to be mad at her husband she'll have proof that she's right and if a husband wants to be mad at his wife, he'll have proof that he's right. Let's

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do that.” That was never the intention of that document or of any of our scriptures or guidance that were given by church leaders. It’s never designed to be used to put distance and disconnection in your marriage and in your family. That is a misuse of those tools.

So, what is it for? Well, you have to decide that, but the way I think about scriptures and anything else that we get from our church leaders is it’s for me to assess myself. That’s the purpose of it. So, I pay close attention to the section that says a wife and a mother might want to consider being this way because that applies to me. But it’s up to my husband whether he’s going to be the kind of man he thinks he should be. That’s really, frankly, none of my business.

So, I try not to use church tools as justification to put distance between me and the people I love. Okay, I’m going to go through a couple of other examples. Let’s imagine that your teenager decides that he’s going to start using drugs. Now, that probably wasn’t what you pictured for your teenager.

So, first option is we can be angry, worried, upset. We can make it mean all kinds of things about ourselves which is the natural tendency. We want to make it mean, “Well, maybe I didn’t do a good job in some way. Maybe I’m not a good mother.” We can make it mean all kinds of crazy things about him and what his future is going to be like or what his life’s going to be like.

When we do that, I want you to think about how we show up as parents. Usually, it’s one of two things or maybe a combination of these two things. We either try to control and manipulate the child or we distance ourselves. Sometimes, my clients will tell me, “Oh no, I’m really kind to him. I say really only loving things to him. I don’t tell him how upset I am and how worried I am. It’s just inside I’m freaking out.”

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I say, “Okay, so, in other words, you pretend, is that what you’re telling me?” None of these things help us be more connected in our relationship with our child. Trying to control and manipulate, distancing and avoiding or pretending, none of that is connection. So, if that’s not serving us, then what’s the alternative? I’m not saying that you would want to think, “Wow, drugs are amazing.” Right? I’m not saying you have to abandon your beliefs about drugs. I’m not even saying you have to abandon, remember, the clean pain, the subtle, under the surface hurt that you might feel for your child.

But let’s begin by cleaning up your thoughts. How about you think something like my child has agency and he’s to make choices, and at least half of the choices he makes are going to be “wrong.” I just get to love him no matter what. I get to. That’s my right, it’s my prerogative. Just like he has agency, I have agency. What do I choose to do with my agency? Here’s what we know, his life was always going to be like this.

I had this picture of what it was going to be like when he was a teenager, but I was totally wrong about that. It was going to be like this. That picture that I had was just made up. This is reality. This is what really is happening. This is the part of the movie of my son’s life where there are drugs. So, now what? Who do I want to be?

I can still have boundaries. I can keep my beliefs that drugs don’t serve our highest good. I can have rules about what’s allowed in my home and whether or not I’m going to keep financing certain things for my son. I can do all of that, but I want to do that from a place of relaxing into, “Okay, this is my opportunity as a mother, as a woman, as a person to evolve.” That’s what this is. That’s what part of the movie this is. My character is going to develop in some way if I choose that.

So, how can I use this experience to become a better version of me rather than how can I stop this experience and control my child? You see the shift

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in focus. I might have to do some work around what other people are going to think. That's such a valuable work to do. Think about how well that will serve you to get more comfortable with other people having opinions of you and just allowing them their opinions.

But when we get upset and we judge and we penalize our kids for the choices they make, then we wonder, "Why don't my kids talk to me? Why don't they open up? Why are they lying to me? Why will not return my calls and texts messages?" Well, the reason why is because they can feel your judgment. They feel your rejection of them.

If you genuinely want to connect with your child that has to be, "Tell me everything, child. I want to hear. There's no judgment from me. Tell me what's going on for you. Tell me what's so great about these drugs. Life is hard, right? I get it. I understand why drugs would be appealing. Tell me about that. I want to hear it all."

You know what my version of drugs are, is this, maybe it's chocolate. Maybe it's TV, maybe it's shopping. What is it? We all have a version of it. Drop out of self-righteousness and judgment, that's when you get to connect with your child, and I know that's not easy to do. I know that's a tall order, my friends, but that's what's available to us.

Like I said, you can still keep the part where you say, "I don't approve of this. I don't think it serves you. I'm not willing to support it in this way, but I love you. I don't have any judgment of you. You get to make your own choices and I'm here for you. You can tell me anything you want to, and it will never change my love for you."

Okay, I once had a client say to me, "Well, I guess I have to give up my dream of the mother I thought I was going to have." Because she had a mother who was struggling in a lot of ways and she said, "My mother has been my longest prayer. I guess I have to give up that dream."

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So, here's the things, my friends, I told her, "Yeah, I recommend you give up the dream." Because when you call it a dream it sounds so pretty. But the truth is it's not a dream, it's a punch in the face over and over again, so instead of living in this "painful dream" what if you choose to be a part of reality and you decide what character you're going to be in this movie?

Here's the best news. You get to be who you want to be no matter what, no matter who is in your life, no matter the circumstance. Who are you? Are you kind? Are you honest? Do you consider yourself to be a loving person? Do you consider yourself open-minded? Are you someone who you'd say is pretty self-sufficient? Are you an emotional adult? Meaning, you understand you're creating all of your emotions? Are you a person of excellence? Who are you? Who are you trying to become?

We all know we're not perfect, but who are you trying to be at your best self? We're so worried about other people being their best selves, why don't we just try to be our best selves? Okay?

So, I have one final example I want to give to you. I had a boss several years ago, probably 10, 11 years ago when I worked in corporate and I had expectations of how this boss should be because I had a bunch of other bosses who I really liked who behaved in ways that I liked and I thought I was really justified in believing this boss should behave the same way because it was the same company, and clearly I was right about my idea of what a boss should be, right?

So, I thought things like this, "She should follow through. When she says she's going to do something she doesn't always do it. She shouldn't do that, she should follow through. She should reply to my voicemails or emails in like at least a couple of days. She should give me clear direction. She certainly should not criticize my work if she didn't give me clear direction and she didn't reply to my emails. She should trust me."



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All my other bosses trusted me and they knew that I would do a good job and they appreciated my work and they gave me the flexibility I needed to do it. “She should do that. She shouldn’t falsely accuse me of doing things that are dishonest or that go against company policies. She shouldn’t go to people that are higher up in the company with these accusations about me without first consulting me about it.”

So, I had all of these ideas and more about how she should be that were all different from how she was. Okay? Now, when I thought about it that way, it didn’t control her. It didn’t get her to be different. It didn’t change her into the boss I wanted her to be. All it did was to give all of my power away and cause me to suffer tremendously with that story.

After a while, and after some work, and after working specifically with a coach – this was when I was first introduced to coaching, I realized that I was punishing myself and giving all my power away and that I could redirect to, “You know what she should do? She should just be her. That’s what she’s going to do anyway, so I might as well just give her permission to be her,” so nice of me, right?

But the benefit is that it frees me. It stops punishing me to just give people permission to be themselves. Then I redirected to, “Okay, if I’m such a great employee, if I’m so amazing then now is my chance to prove that to me, not to anyone else, just to myself.”

“If I’m not the kind of employee who pouts and gossips and blames and engages in drama and makes excuses and is disrespectful about her supervisor or anyone else, then let’s prove it.” Because I wasn’t acting that was when I had this story about how she should be different.

Then, the best part is that then I blamed her for my behavior, for me not showing up as my best. I gave her all the credit for it. So, instead I cleaned all of that up. I said, “Okay, if I’m those things, let’s see it in action. Let’s

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bring it. Let's figure out how to be her in this situation. This is what really counts."

When I have a boss that isn't the way I think a boss should be, can I still be all the things that I like to believe I am, all the things I'm striving to be? All of the good parts of me that I want to keep, can I bring all of those now? What if I could?

Okay, so clients will say to me, "Really? I just shouldn't have any expectations of my husband or my kids or my mother," and I say, "You should only have expectations of yourself." That's it. Dropping expectations of other people, by the way, is not the same as tolerating mistreatment. If you have expectations of yourself, then you don't allow people to mistreat you. It doesn't mean you don't have boundaries. It doesn't mean you don't walk away. It doesn't mean that maybe you even quit a job or leave a marriage, but you put the focus on you instead of your painful story that you made up about who they should be.

Stop trying to control the people around you, my friends. It doesn't work. Instead, who do we want to be? Expectations create pain. Now, there's one exception, when we have expectations of people and they align with what they choose and who they are then we win.

So, the one thing you can expect of people is that they will be them. A lot of who people are is good. A lot of who our spouses and our kids and our parents and our bosses and our friends are things that we love and adore. So, we can feel free to expect them to be them and to embrace and enjoy all the goodness of them.

I promise you there's a lot there if you start looking for that instead of looking for ways that they are not measuring up to who you thought they should be. All right, you guys, have a beautiful week. I'll see you next week with another episode. Take care.

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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).