

260. Strong Convictions Loosely Held



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With Your Host

Jody Moore

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I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy* episode 260: Strong Convictions Loosely Held.

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.

Hey everybody, welcome to the podcast. Hopefully there's not too much crazy background noise. But there's a lot of kids out there, we've got cousins over and it's finally gotten hot outside. So we're playing in the house, out of the house, water everywhere, dogs, cats, we've got all of it happening right now. And I need to record a podcast, so I'm just going to do it and if you catch a little background noise, you'll know what it is.

Today I'm going to talk to you about being wrong. Are you ready? This is a subject that I feel like I have a pretty good perspective on, pretty good understanding of, because of the thousands of hours that I've spent coaching individuals as well as coaching myself and doing my own work. And that's not to say that I am really good at this even, or that I don't still experience and struggle with what I'm going to teach you today, I absolutely still do, I still have this very human natural instinct in me to want to be right.

But I just feel like I have a little bit different perspective on it than a lot of people, and that's what I want to offer you today, because I think it's really powerful to understand what I want to teach you here about being wrong.

So one of the innate functions of our brains, one of the ways that as human beings we on default naturally operate, that's somewhat instinctual even, you might say, is to not like to be wrong. We don't want to be wrong. We want to be right. Isn't that true? So I think it's a fascinating thing to step back and look at.

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Why do we not want to be wrong? Why do we want to be right so badly? Why will we sometimes engage in a debate or an argument to the detriment of our relationship, or suddenly become this version of us that we don't want to be, that doesn't feel good at all? Why do we hold so tightly sometimes to what we think is right and try so desperately to prove it to someone when, if we stop and take a step back we're like, it doesn't even really matter in the end.

Have you ever gotten into an argument with your spouse or someone and after a while you can't even remember what the argument was about in the first place? You just know that you're mad, and you know that they're not listening, and they're not hearing you out because if they did, for sure they would see that you're right. So we all do this on some level or another in various ways. And I want to dive into it a little bit today.

So first of all, what do I mean by wrong? I think it's important that we pause and consider what does that even mean? Because oftentimes right or wrong is very subjective, it's just one person's opinion versus another person's opinion. And so we could say that nobody's wrong and we could say that nobody's right. They're just different ways of thinking, different ways of viewing the world or a particular topic. But for some reason we cling to right or wrong.

Sometimes it's even something completely subjective about ourselves that we haven't paused to even consider our own opinion on. For example, I do a lot of coaching of women who are wondering, "Am I doing a good enough job as a mom? Maybe I'm not doing a good enough job." And I say, "How would we know?"

When you think I'm not a good mom, you could be wrong about that. And their brains kind of wrestle with, well, how would I know? And a lot of times we don't even have a clear definition. We just have this feeling that's driving us, we haven't logically thought about how to know whether a good

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mom or not because the truth is, you just get to decide that. You can decide you're a good mom or not a good mom, it's totally subjective.

How about like does he love me? Does my husband really love me? This is another one I coach on a lot and they'll say, "I just don't think he cares about me as much as I care about him." And I'll say, "What if you're wrong?" And they'll say, "But what if I'm right?" And in the end I'm like, "Yeah, but we just get to make that stuff up."

He cares about me, or he doesn't care about me. Here's the truth, sometimes he cares about you, sometimes you get on his nerves, that's the reality, that's true with most of our relationships. So you can decide that that means that he does care about you and it's just normal, or you can decide, no, he doesn't care about me or he wouldn't feel that way about me that often. So I don't know.

These are just a lot of subjective things that I think are interesting to notice that we think there's a right and wrong answer and maybe there's not even. Or maybe at least we want to slow down and consider how we're going to define that.

I posted a video on Instagram last week, so by the time this airs it will have been several weeks ago. But I'm posting videos on occasion on Instagram, and if you want to go check me out there, I'm at [jodymoorecoaching](#) on Instagram. But anyway, the video was about a woman saying to me, "How do I stop judging and being irritated with my husband when I think that he's doing it wrong?" And the example that I love that she gave me was, for example, "When he's making pancakes. And I just think he's doing it wrong." How do we let go of that?

So notice how we think there's a right way to make pancakes and a wrong way to make pancakes, but where did that come from? Somebody came along like Martha Stewart or Rachael Ray or someone and said, "This is the right way to make pancakes." And we all went, "Oh, yes, definitely,

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Rachael Ray, that's the way to make pancakes. Thank you." But, Rachael Ray just made that up or learned it from someone else, who at some point made it up.

So, interesting how we think there's a lot more right and wrong in the world than there actually is. There are just opinions, and ways, and philosophies, and a lot of us holding onto our right and wrong about it all is creating a lot of unnecessary pain, and suffering, and disconnection, and not serving us in any way.

So I want you to think about how it feels if you share something, maybe you say, "Oh, this movie, it's so good, you have to see it." Maybe you tell that to your friend, a family member or somebody. They go to the movie and what's the next thing we ask them when we see them next after they saw the movie? We say, "What did you think?" Now, if they say, "Oh, you're right, that was an excellent movie," think about how you feel. You get this little hit of validation.

That's why we like to be right, because we make it mean that not only were we right about the movie, but we're right in some way as a human being, there's something happening that's right with us, we got it right. The way we perceive to the world, in this case the movie was right. Now, let's say in that same situation the person goes to the movie and we say, "What did you think?" And they go, "I don't know, not my favorite." I don't know about you, but this is how my teenagers respond to just about anything that I say.

My husband and I love to recommend movies and of course they're movies that we loved when we were their age and obviously those movies are not as impressive to them. And so they'll go, "Not my favorite." Now, part of me realizes, okay, that's alright, of course, they're a different generation and all of that. But a little part of me feels a little dig of like I wanted to be right about this. I wanted my teenager to validate my opinion about this movie. So it's just interesting to notice, it's just fascinating to notice how we want to be right.

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And when we're wrong we feel terrible. Now, the reason why is because of like I said, what we make it mean about us, about our validity, about our accuracy in judging the world, about our ability to make predictions, or have opinions that play out the way we think they're going to play out. We just want to be validated in that way because we then give ourselves permission to feel better about ourselves. I dare say everything that we're trying to do is because we're trying to feel better about ourselves.

Now, let's talk for just a minute about when we do something or say something that even we agree is wrong. Let's take it to the extreme of like what if I do something or say something, or show up in some way, in a way that I think is morally wrong, it goes against my values, it goes against what I think is 'right and wrong' in terms of moral goodness. So maybe you have a belief that it's 'wrong' to yell at your kids. But you just yelled at your kids. I'm sure nobody listening can relate to this, but I can, so we'll just use me as the example.

So if I believe that it's wrong, it's not me being the best mother I can be, it's not me at my highest self, it's not what a good mother does and I want to be a good mother. And I just yelled at them then I'm going to feel probably guilt and shame, alright.

So let's talk about guilt and shame for just a minute. Guilt and shame are emotions that I would create within me, not because I yelled at my children, but because I yelled at my children and I'm thinking the thought, yelling at children is wrong, and it's wrong to do something wrong. Are you with me?

Okay, so I want to break down guilt and shame. Guilt comes from the thought, I did that and it was wrong. So guilt is okay, I'm okay with you having some guilt sometimes, you guys. I'm okay with me having some guilt sometimes. I think it's useful, I think, hey, maybe I want to feel guilty about that, because I want to believe that it's wrong for me to yell at my kids, that is not what I expect of me. That is not what I believe goes with my value system.

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Now, shame, on the other hand, is the second part of what I shared with you earlier, which is I'm wrong because I did something wrong. Now, what I find when I'm coaching clients is that it's very rare that they feel guilty, I yelled at my kids and I don't think yelling at your kids is the right thing to do. Point taken, thanks, brain, let's clean that up, that's not usually what happens. Usually we slide from guilt right into shame. Shame is again, I'm wrong because I did something wrong.

And while I said guilt is okay, I'm alright with you feeling some guilt, I don't think shame is useful. I don't think it does serve you. I know I've talked about this before, Brené Brown talks a lot about this.

But it's important here with this idea of being wrong, because if you think it's wrong to do something wrong, then you're going to not want to look at it. You're going to hide from it. You're certainly not going to want to talk about it to anybody. And you're probably not going to get any leverage over that behavior. In fact, you're going to feel so terrible that the next time the kids do something you're likely to yell at them again because there's so much negative emotion built up.

So again, guilt is I did that and it was wrong. Shame is I am wrong because I did something wrong, which is a lie, you guys, you're not wrong for doing something wrong. Did you know this? Did you know that we are going to do it wrong probably half the time, as human beings? Even things that we believe are wrong, let's just set aside all the things that everybody else wants to tell us are wrong, that we're like, I never even considered that that was wrong. Thanks for giving me more reason to self-loathe and feel ashamed.

I'm just talking about the things that you already think are wrong, things that you know better than. Things that you sometimes just do because you can't stop yourself, or sometimes you do them consciously, making a choice to do something wrong, did you know you're going to do that? It doesn't make us wrong. It makes us human beings having a full human experience.

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Now, sometimes when I'm coaching people this way, they misunderstand what I'm saying. And you might be thinking in your brain, wait a second, what is she talking about? It sounds like justifying sin, and that's not what I'm saying at all. I'm not saying that it was right the thing that you did and that we justify it. Justifying it is the opposite because the reason we start justifying things is because we don't want to feel bad. And so we think that we have to convince ourself that maybe the thing we did wasn't wrong after all.

And I want to offer to you that that doesn't have to be, sometimes maybe that's true. I do think there's like a lot of you probably that are beating yourselves up for things that aren't necessary, that are not even 'wrong.' That you probably don't even want to believe are wrong, but there are times when we do want to keep the belief, hey, that was wrong.

But what I'm saying is, rather than try to justify it and decide it was right, what if we decide, I did that wrong thing and I'm just as amazing as I was before I did it and I'm going to do wrong things again and get it wrong in the future. And I'm going to be just as valuable and whole and just as right then as well. What? What if that's true, you guys?

So here's one of the reasons that I know there's a lot of you listening that don't understand that, is because I did an episode called Understanding Racism a few weeks ago. And in that episode I said that, "Our country," my belief is that our country, "When we set it up, when our founding fathers wrote the constitution, they wrote it in such a way as to benefit straight white men." That was their main thought process.

And that one sentence that I said got some of you kind of upset at me. I got some messages from some of you saying, "I can't believe you would say that, it's so judgmental and cruel, our founding fathers were led by God to found this country, and they were good amazing people." And my response to that is, "Absolutely they were, they were led by God, I believe, and this

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country was founded on amazing, righteous principles, and also on some things that were wrong.”

But our founding fathers aren't wrong for being wrong, they didn't know any better. They had a different interpretation of the world and human beings. And I have no judgment of them for being wrong, when they believed that straight white men were superior to Black men or women, or any women in general, or homosexuals. They were wrong about that, but I don't think they're wrong for being wrong. I just think they didn't know. It doesn't make what they did okay; it doesn't make it right, it was still wrong.

But they're not wrong, they're not bad people, it doesn't change the fact that they did amazing things as well, but they were wrong about that part. The only reason we get riled up is because we think that it's wrong to be wrong. But what if it's not wrong to be wrong? What if we're all going to be wrong at times? Because we all have blind spots and limitations and we just are going to get it wrong, sometimes intentionally, sometimes just not knowing.

I heard this said somewhere and I can't remember where, it was a long time ago. But I heard someone say something about like, “The problem with putting someone up on a pedestal is that pedestals tend to tip over quite easily, because they become top heavy.” So I love that because we see this happen, the defensiveness that some of you felt when I said that about our founding fathers.

The disappointment that we feel when we hear that Lance Armstrong didn't just win all these Tour de Frances, he was actually taking some illegal drugs along the way. Leaders in church history weren't as perfect as we thought they were, even though we're like, I kind of knew they weren't perfect, but I didn't know this thing.

Any time we don't acknowledge that people are going to get it wrong half the time, they're going to get it wrong just out of ignorance, out of just

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mistake or sloppiness. And sometimes they're going to get it wrong even intentionally knowing that they're getting it wrong and doing it wrong, morally wrong, legally wrong, however you want to define wrong. Human beings get it wrong half the time.

And as soon as you can make peace with that for yourself, first of all, let's talk about doing it for others then we'll talk about for yourself. When you make peace with it for others then you're free to love people. You can stop judging everyone for all the things they're doing wrong.

I was just coaching a woman today whose sister doesn't let her kids come over and play with my client and her kids. And she just can't understand this, and she's so hurt by it. And she thinks that it's selfish. And she thinks that it's co-dependent, and she has all this judgment. I'm like, "But what if she's not wrong, or what if, even if it is co-dependent, or selfish, or whatever, what if we just go, "Yeah, that's human beings we get it wrong half the time.""

And we just love her because we have our own 'wrong', what if we just choose to love people? Doesn't mean we don't have boundaries, it doesn't mean that we don't have limitations and things as to what we tolerate in relationships. I'm not saying that. I'm just saying, people get it wrong, we can still love them, respect them, appreciate them, believe in them, believe that they're led by God and all of it. But we have agency, which means half the time we're going to get it wrong. So you accept that for other people.

Now, it's also important that you accept that for yourself. And I find that it just goes both ways. If you're judgmental of other people you are also probably judgmental of yourself in some way. And if you're judgmental of yourself you're probably also judgmental of other people.

You might be more aware of one area or another, but it always, it's like walking into fog. It's not like you have fog on one half of your body and not the other. You can't have one leg in the fog and one leg out; you're just in

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the thick of fog. And so if you're in judgment, you're just in judgment of yourself, of everybody around you, it's just a judgmental fog. So you come out of the fog and you learn not to judge, you can start with you or you can start with other people, it doesn't matter, it's probably going to go both ways.

So I did that thing that was wrong, or I said the thing that was wrong or I was wrong about whatever and yet I'm not wrong for being wrong, I'm just a human. What I really am is good, what I really am is right and a 100% lovable, and whole and complete, because from that space you start living into that version of you.

If you're saying in the version of I'm wrong and I should beat myself up and feel terrible, because at least that might compensate for it in some way, you're wrong about that. That's not going to compensate for it, it doesn't help the world. It doesn't go back in time and change the thing you did. It doesn't help any of the people that were involved in that story that felt hurt as a result of it. All it does is keep you perpetuating the idea that you are wrong.

So you have to decide, yes, that was wrong and I want to think it was wrong, and I also want to believe that I'm whole, complete and good, so now what?

You know what comes next? Curiosity. I wonder why I did that thing. I wonder what I was struggling with. I wonder what I was thinking. I wonder what's going on for me. I wonder what I need that I'm not giving myself. I wonder what I could do to prevent that from happening again. That kind of wisdom only comes from embracing yourself, even embracing your wrongness. When I say your wrongness, I mean the wrong things that you do say and think sometimes, because you're a 100% right.

Now, I want to also talk about just being wrong in general, I want to step away from the moral right and wrong for a minute. I want to talk just a little

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bit more about just general knowledge. One of the things I noticed a long time ago, back in my corporate career even, and I've noticed it over and over again since. Is that the most successful, most accomplished, most confident people that I know, most knowledgeable people certainly, that I know, are not afraid of being wrong. Because they are open to learning more.

And if we're not open to being wrong, we're not open to learning more. If all we want to see is what we already know and what we already believe, and we just want to keep reading books that validate what we already believe and that reaffirm what we already know, then we don't expand our knowledge base.

So I notice this again, with people that were – when I say successful, sometimes I mean in the more traditional sense in terms of whatever their goals and ambitions are, but also just in the sense of really connected relationships, really confident grounded people, really kind loving people, to me those are things that are successful, people that had really good balance and had their priorities in line, to me, that's success.

And those people are all the ones that say, “Ha, tell me more about that. Tell me why you think that, I want to understand it.” And when they have an opinion, and someone comes along and offers a different opinion, they're like, “Now, wait, what are you saying? That's interesting. I had never thought of it that way before.”

My clients that get the most out of coaching are the ones that are willing to be wrong about their thoughts. They come to me with painful thoughts that they think are true. But if they're holding on really tight to those painful thoughts, there's not much I can do to take it away from them, I can't pry it away from them, that doesn't work. I can try to show them, but the ones that come to me really open and really willing to be wrong and really consider that they're seeing things a certain way, but that's not necessarily

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reality. Those are the ones that make progress really, really quickly in coaching.

So we want to try to open ourselves up to being wrong, tell me more. Now, this is challenging to do, I get it. I still feel that resistance come up within me. So here's how I'm working on it myself. For example, I get an email from someone telling me whatever they want to tell me that they think I said wrong on the podcast, I posted wrong on Instagram. I did it wrong when I was coaching. I get some of that.

So I get that message and I feel the resistance come up within me. The next thing I do is I remind myself, this is because of what you're thinking, this is fascinating, what are you making it mean that this person doesn't like what you said, that they disagree with what you wrote, what are you making that mean? Obviously I'm making it mean that I'm wrong for saying something that someone didn't like, which is so fascinating. Because of course with like tens of thousands of people that are listening to me every day, somebody's not going to like it.

I can try to change it to alter that person, but then other people aren't going to like it. The people that loved what I said the first time aren't going to like it. So that's just interesting to know.

I'm trying to make a decision about whether or not I said the wrong thing based on what someone else has to say. That's not my best way to make that decision. My best way to make that decision is internally, to get still, to connect with who I want to be, which is someone who also has a spiritual connection with God, and when I connect with all that I have to make decisions from that place, some people always are not going to like it.

So I notice that resistance and then I open myself up to like, I could be wrong though. What if I was just okay with I could be wrong? I don't reply to those messages very often, a lot of them I don't even see, my assistant tells me about them or whatever. But I'm sure there's a lot she doesn't tell

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me about. But anyway, if I do reply, it's usually some version of, you could be right, or I could be wrong, or thanks for your message, thanks for your input, thanks for your opinion, I hear you. Because I want to keep myself open to possibly being wrong.

Now, that said, I also love this quote that my friend sent me the other day, it's by, gosh, I don't even know how to pronounce the name, because it's an Instagram name, Viriyaakarunaa, anyway, I will tag her here, because this is such a beautiful post. It says, "May I continue disappointing the people that place expectations onto me without my knowledge or consent. May they see the error in their ways from trying to limit me into their narrow world view knowing I'd never play along with this created narrative of who I am." I just love that.

Now, I don't necessarily need them to see that they're wrong, I just like to remember people are going to try to place me into a narrative, that's what we do as human beings, and it's okay. And it's okay for me to even be wrong, I'm going to say some things wrong sometimes, I really will.

Okay, the last thing I want to share with you is my thoughts about why I never worry about my faith being shaken, in terms of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Saints, which is the church I belong to in my religion.

I coach people sometimes who say, "I'm just worried, what if I start learning something," or whatever, "I go down some path in my life and I lose my faith?" And I like to point out to them, "Why are you describing that like it would be something that would happen to you?" I never worry about that because I'm not afraid of being wrong. Here's what I mean by that. I get to believe whatever I want to and I don't hold on tightly to like I have to make sure I know that it's right.

Now, there's nothing wrong with it if your testimony is the kind of testimony that sounds like I know this is true. Awesome. But for me, whenever I would say, "I know this is true," it feels a little scary to me, because then I worry,

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what if somebody shows me something or I happen to read something that says, “No, this is maybe not true because of this thing.” So I don’t really think about it that way.

The way I think about it is I choose to believe that this is true. And believing that this is true makes my life better. It helps me be a better person. It helps me find peace, and calm, and love, and it helps me show up more like the person that I feel the best when I’m being, which is a person who’s like Christ as I can possibly be, which is a long way off, but that’s the goal.

And so let’s say I die, and I get to the other side and I realize, wait, I was wrong, what I thought it was going to be like, not like that at all, I was totally wrong. I’m okay with that. I’m willing to be wrong about it. I just choose to believe that I’m not wrong. I choose to believe that I know what’s going to happen when we die and I know where we came from, and I know the Heavenly Father loves me, and I know that Jesus Christ is my savior. I choose to believe that.

And when people want to go, “You know that’s probably not true, because of this, that and the other thing.” I say, “Could be, I’m willing to be wrong.” I still choose to believe that it’s right because it serves me so well to believe it.

I heard a doctor describe it as, he said, “I have strong convictions loosely held.” I thought that was such a beautiful way of saying it because he said, “As a doctor and a scientist, I have to be open to being wrong, to keep learning, to keep evolving in the area of medicine, to keep studying new things. I have to be strongly convicted with what I’m doing, but also loosely hold those convictions because I could be wrong.”

And that’s how I think about the coaching tools I use and the model. It’s how I think about, again, my religion. It’s how I think about anything in my life, when I think, no, my husband loves me. I could be wrong, he could be really mad at me, he could be just tolerating me most of the time. And I’m

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willing to be wrong. I still choose to believe that he loves me because it serves me so well to believe it. See what I'm saying?

Alright you guys, it is not wrong to be wrong, loosen up your grip on it a little bit and watch how much more peaceful your life becomes. Have a beautiful rest of your week. I'll see you next week. Make sure you subscribe to the podcast so you never miss an episode. And as always, share it with a friend. I love you. Take care.

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