

271. Discomfort Now or Later



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With Your Host

Jody Moore

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I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy* episode 271: Discomfort Now or Later.

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. I am happy to be with you today. And today we're going to talk about some discomfort. We're going to talk about discomfort now or discomfort later. If you're thinking that you wanted to hear more about comfort and happiness just stay with me. I think you're going to find that this is actually the way to that.

This is why I call my podcast Better Than Happy, because while it's perfectly normal for our brains to believe that being happy all the time would create the best life and that that's what we really want and to seek that around every corner. That actually doesn't create our best life.

And there are many, many things that we want to be unhappy about. And there are many instances when being willing to be unhappy, being willing to be uncomfortable at least, really gets us what we want in the end. And not to mention, helps us become more advanced, more evolved versions of ourselves. So here's what I want you to think about today. I want you to think about something that you want to do but you also don't want to do.

I want you to think about those habit changes, or to do list items, or goals that you've set for yourself that part of you really wants. You want to be good at doing it, you want to have it done, you want to have the result that doing it would create in your life. But the actual doing it part is another story. It's hard to get yourself to do, it's uncomfortable to do, it's overwhelming or you don't enjoy it.

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So I am working on editing my book right now, which is actually really fun right now because as I'm going through making some edits, I'm loving my book so much more. It took me a minute to get there. It's really overwhelming writing a book. But I'm really excited about it and I think you're going to like it, whenever I finally get it done and out there to you. But it's a lot of work and it's not the kind of work that I would say is always my favorite work to do. It's certainly not my strength.

I don't consider myself a writer and there's a lot of things about writing that I don't know and I'm not practiced at. And so it requires a lot of focus. It requires a part of my brain that I'm not used to using all the time. It requires a lot of energy. And so I was telling my husband the other day. I don't really want to write a book, I just want to have a book that I wrote. And I want that book to be really good, which means there's a lot of work I have to put in, I don't really want to put in. So I want to write a book but I don't want to write a book. Do you see what I'm saying?

So whatever that is for you in your life, I have many other things like that. Writing a book is just the big one that's on my brain right now. But sometimes it's just as simple as I want to clean up the kitchen and straighten the living room every night before I go to bed. So that the next morning when I wake-up at least that part of the house is orderly and clean. I want to do that and yet some nights, many nights I don't really want to do that.

I want to get up and exercise in the morning or I want to at least exercise four or five days a week. But some days when it's time to exercise I don't really want to exercise, certainly if I try to do it early in the morning I really almost never want to do that. So we all have things like this in our lives.

So here's how I like to think about it. And I have clients that bring me this situation quite a bit. They'll say, "How do I get myself to do this thing that I can't seem to get myself to do?" And where I always go in my head as a

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coach anyway is I notice that this person is sort of at battle with themselves in this situation.

So I like to think of it as the two versions of me. I have the part of me that is most interested in what's going on right now. The part of me that wants to experience pleasure and ease right now and doesn't want to experience discomfort right now. I call this my short term self. It's the me that's here right now feeling what I'm feeling right now, experiencing what I'm experiencing right now.

I love Tim Urban's TED Talk on procrastination. It's called Inside the Mind of a Master Procrastinator. It's fantastic. Go check it out. But anyway, he calls this part of us the immediate gratification monkey, which I think is a great description. It's sort of like one of those monkeys with the symbols in its hands banging them together saying, "I just want to do something fun and easy right now. I don't want to do that hard thing. Or I want to eat junk food right now. I don't want to not eat it. I don't want to eat salad." So immediate gratification monkey, we all have it.

Okay, now, there's this other part of me, there is this part of me that wants a long term result. There's a part of me that is able to understand how my short term decisions are affecting my longer term results. And that part of me is the part of me that wants whatever results I think I would get by doing the thing. That's the part of me that wants to have written a book, wants a book in order to put my work out there in the world in a different way to help reach more people and help more people.

That's the part of me that wants to come downstairs every morning and see that the kitchen and the living room are organized so that I feel like I'm getting a good start to my day. I'm not starting behind. It's the part of me that wants the healthier body that I get when I exercise regularly. So that part of us, Tim Urban calls the rational decision maker. Rational meaning we weigh out the costs and the benefits, we think about pros and cons. We make decisions that consider both.

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We don't just do what the immediate gratification monkey does which is just I want what I want and I want it right now. So these two parts of us like to argue with one another. They like to be in competition with one another, which doesn't feel good to us, this is why we feel this sort of dissonance within, that clients bring to me saying, "Can you please help me? I'm stuck in this spin."

So what is the solution to this? Well, I like to recognize for myself that the solution is that I need to own that I'm either going to choose discomfort now or discomfort later. And knowing that is very powerful, here's why. The immediate gratification monkey thinks I don't want to do that thing because it's hard. And I don't like doing hard things so I'll not do it and then I'll avoid doing hard things. Except that if we don't do the hard things in the short term we mostly likely will create hard things for ourselves in the long term. So we're not actually avoiding the discomfort, we're just postponing it.

Let's take raising children for an example. I can choose to not discipline my children, because disciplining them is not very fun. I don't like to have to think of a consequence and enforce it. I don't like to have to deal with them when they get upset when I punish them, or when they don't receive the reward. I just want to give my kids all the things they want and cater to them, do all the chores myself. This is honestly what I wish parenting could be like because I don't care.

I would much rather set the table, do the dishes, put their laundry away, clean up. I'd much rather do it all myself than try to get my kids to do it. Trying to get them to do it is much harder, they don't even do it right, then I'm frustrated and I have to go back and do it anyway. And trying to discipline them, then there are all kinds of upset and I have to deal with that. So that's harder to do.

But not disciplining them, not enforcing expectations, not teaching them, have a basic work ethic and do some chores might create even more

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problems, or at least it's not going to help me escape problems in the long run.

I see this with parents of young kids a lot. It's, well, we just don't know what to do. We just think that maybe she'll outgrow this and maybe she will, but also maybe not. Maybe we're going to have even bigger problems as the child gets older. Maybe choosing some discomfort now of being able to figure it out and being able to do difficult things might save us some discomfort down the road. So again, that's true with all of the examples I gave you earlier.

I can choose to not exercise, which some days I do, some days I think, you know what would be better than exercise? Watching this TV show, laying down on the couch, hanging out with my kids. Some days I choose that. Or even it's continuing to work or something like that. So maybe I'm escaping the discomfort of getting on my exercise clothes, sweating or lifting heavy weights or doing all of that, that's not super comfortable.

But if I don't choose the discomfort now of exercise, what discomfort am I likely creating later? Is it that my body won't be strong? I may have other health repercussions. At some point it's probably going to catch up with me. Now, the further out the consequences of not doing the short term thing the easier it is for the instant gratification monkey to win.

If I have something to do at school or at work tomorrow, and maybe I don't want to do it today, then I could choose not to do it, but the consequence of not doing it is going to happen tomorrow. I'm going to be in trouble tomorrow, or I'm going to be punished relatively soon if the deadline's tomorrow. So that's when we usually kick it into gear and decide, okay, let's do this. If I have, again, back to health, the consequence of not taking care of my body, not trying to be as healthy as I can, could be anyway a ways away. So it's much easier to give in to the instant gratification monkey.

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But again I like to just recognize for myself, I either choose discomfort now or I choose discomfort later. It's not that I'm escaping the discomfort, because the instant gratification monkey thinks we are. And I just like to be onto myself that that is not the case.

Now, this is also not to say you should judge yourself when you give in to the monkey. Sometimes we all give in to the monkey, and that's okay. I think it has to be somewhat of a balance. I think sometimes the monkey needs to win. But I think sometimes we want to also think about and tap into the rational decision maker.

So when my clients come to me and they say, "How do I get myself to just do the things that I plan to do?" This is another common one I'll hear, they'll say, "I scheduled my day. I wrote down all the things I was going to do. I was going to get up early." Of course I love how we always start it that way. We're going to get up early and have that miracle morning kind of morning. And then I was going to get a jumpstart on things before the kids got up and then I was going to get the bathrooms cleaned and etc. And we plan out this whole day for ourselves.

And then they say to me, "But I just can't get myself to stick to it. Can't get myself to do it." Maybe they do some of it, maybe they do none of it. So what I tell them is, "Well, we can't be mad at the monkey. We're supposed to have that instant gratification monkey. We're not mad at him. He's not bad. He's just very loud. He's a lot louder than the rational decision maker." So I want to be onto myself that that's what's happening but not to beat myself up.

The second thing is I'm going to have to sometimes tell the monkey, "Sorry, you don't get your way today." And I'm going to have to then deal with the discomfort that I have as a result. That's it. I have got to be willing to be uncomfortable. But if I'm uncomfortable now in the name of comfort later, here's the other thing that's so brilliant about this. The more you're willing to be uncomfortable the better you get at discomfort.

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My teacher, Brooke Castillo is always saying this, “Let’s just get good at feeling negative emotions. Let’s just get good at feeling terrible.” And this is why. Because the better we get at it in the short term the more amazingness we create for ourselves in the long term.

Now, some of you might be thinking, okay, but Jody, you’ve taught us that our thoughts create our feelings. So that means that we could think about it differently and then not have discomfort. Why wouldn’t we just change our thoughts so that we can enjoy it in the future if we don’t do it? And here’s what I say to that, you can try that.

Sometimes a little bit of thought work will help. But I also want you to keep in mind that we have upwards of 40,000 thoughts per day. And so trying to rewire your brain and redirect your brain is not just as easy as flipping a switch, it requires a little work. It requires some conscious effort. And so I do want you to sort of reserve that for the times when it is really necessary. And I don’t know that in these situations that it’s always necessary. I think most of the time it’s not necessary.

So we could change your thoughts about cleaning the bathroom so that you want to clean the bathroom more. That’s one option, requires a lot of work. Or we could just decide to clean the bathroom and not love doing it. We could just decide to be in whatever emotions we experience and do it anyway. And that’s what I typically recommend in a situation like this, because we sometimes sit around doing thought work all day as though we’re working on it. The bathroom’s not any cleaner in the meantime.

And as human beings there are just certain things that we choose not to enjoy. And I don’t think it’s usually necessary to change your thinking around it.

Now, I do also want to talk about stuck pain versus progression pain. And this is something I taught recently on the webinar I did on stress, if you were there, you heard me teach this concept. If you’re in, people, that

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webinar is in the bonus content under bonus webinars so you can go and check it out. But I want you to know that discomfort now versus discomfort later, it's not creating the same result.

The ease that we would experience right now versus the ease we're going to experience later are going to take us to different places in our lives. Here's what I mean. So if I'm willing to choose discomfort now and I'm willing to do some things that I kind of don't feel like doing, that I don't really enjoy doing, that kind of discomfort is moving me some place. Because like I said, it's going to create that different result. It's going to give me a healthier body, a cleaner house, a book, whatever it is that I'm working on.

I'm going to achieve certain goals that I want to have in my life. So it's discomfort that I call progression pain. It's moving me somewhere. When I choose discomfort later so that I can have ease now it's what I call stuck pain. So it's often similar, if not the same emotions, but the difference is it's not moving me anywhere. I'm not changing circumstances in my life by changing results in my life. I'm not changing myself. I'm not becoming more of who I want to become and creating what I want to create. I'm still in discomfort but I'm stuck in a spin of discomfort. Are you following me?

So choosing discomfort now means we're choosing progression pain. Choosing discomfort later means I'm choosing stuck pain. You can see why I recommend you choose discomfort now, at least more often than we probably are.

So when people ask me this question, "How do I get myself to do what I really want to do?" It's an interesting one for myself as a coach, and for those of you that are coaches listening, it's a tough one because when they say, "How do I get myself to just do the dishes every night?" I want to say, "You just do the dishes, you just do it." But people really mean when they ask me this is, how do I deal with all the negative emotion? They think they want me to help them to feel better about doing the dishes.

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And again, there's maybe a little bit of progress we can make there. We could do the work of trying to make it more fun and have more fun. And I'm all for you experimenting there. But at some point we just chalk it up to like you know what, you just don't like it and you do it anyway. Because that is a much more valuable skill than trying to change your brain to love doing dishes. I promise you. The better you can get at doing things that you don't want to do the more amazing your life will become.

So I use the word 'mind management' or the term 'mind management' a lot here on this podcast. I say, "We just have to manage your mind." But I'm not always talking about managing your mind to feel better. Sometimes managing your mind is listen brain, listen instant gratification monkey, I know you don't want to do this. We're going to just do it anyway.

So I'm managing myself, I'm still allowing – you don't have to like it I like to tell myself. But we're just going to do it and not like it. Because I don't know why we think we should just feel happy and positive all the time. I don't know why we think we should enjoy all of the things we're doing in our lives. I mean again, you can try that, maybe you can get there. I haven't been able to. I've had much more success just allowing myself to not like it and deciding I'm choosing some discomfort now so that I can have the progression it will provide me and avoid some discomfort later.

Alright you guys, choose your discomfort, choose it now. Let's do that. You guys are amazing, I love you. Thanks for tuning in today. If you're new to my podcast you must get the Podcast Roadmap, go to jodymoore.com/map and it will give you a little onboarding into the podcasts. But it also has a directory of episodes that will speak to various topics that we get asked about a lot. It highlights our most popularly downloaded episodes and it's just a great tool. So I would invite you to go download that. It's totally free.

Thanks for joining me. Thanks for sharing this with your friends. Make sure you tag me on social media, I'm at Jody Moore Coaching on Instagram and

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Facebook, when you share so I can give you a shout out. And I hope you have a beautiful amazing rest of your week. Take care. Bye bye.

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.