

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Jody Moore

[Better Than Happy](#) with Jody Moore

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy* episode 275: Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings.

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 everyone. What's happening? Welcome to episode 275 which is a lot of episodes. So glad that you're still here, thank you for sharing, thank you for listening. Please do continue to share the podcast. You guys help it to grow so much. And you help me get these tools and this workout to more people in the world. I'm appreciative of the reviews you leave on iTunes. So if you haven't left me a review yet, you could do that. That would be lovely.

If you want to just screenshot this episode and share it in your social media feed or something, that would be awesome. However you like to share I will take any and all of it and I'm greatly appreciative of it. If you do share on social, make sure you tag me at Jody Moore Coaching on either Facebook or Instagram so I can give you a shout out as well.

Today we're going to talk about how to help your kids feel their feelings. But I want to make sure and give you just a couple of updates about what's happening here at Jody Moore Coaching.

One of the things is an advanced certification program for coaches who are already certified in the model through The Life Coach School. And you want to take everything to the next level, you want to get a lot of practice coaching, you want to get feedback on your coaching of real clients. And you want to learn, gosh, there is a couple of dozen of specific tools that I have created that I use as a coach, some of those apply to my specialty in faith based coaching.

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

And so if you want to join me with that program, we have an information call that will be happening, I think by the time this podcast airs, it will be next week probably. So this is the last chance to get in with this group and join me for the advanced certification in faith based coaching. So you go to jodymoore.com/coach to get all the information that you need. Again, you do need to already be certified through The Life Coach School to be eligible.

Alright, the other update I need to give you is for those of you in Be Bold, or those of you thinking about joining me in Be Bold. One of the benefits to the advanced certification program that I offer is that it means you get free private coaching. So that's a pretty cool benefit to you guys in Be Bold, starting in January, that you'll be able to get free private coaching as a member of Be Bold.

But the other thing I want you to know is that in the meantime for the months of November and December I am creating a whole bonus program called Lighten Up For the Holidays. So I'm going to be teaching some extra courses and doing some extra calls during the months of November and December only. These will be the only time you can get these courses. And they will be focused around lightening up for the holidays.

So first of all I literally mean lighten up because for those of you that are interested in losing some weight, I'm going to help you with that. Did you know you can do that? You don't have to gain weight through the holidays. You could lose weight or you could at least maintain your weight if that's what you want, so that you could go into 2021 feeling really confident about where you're at with your health goals. So we're going to do some work around that.

But even if you're not interested in weight loss, you don't have to come to those calls, I'm going to do other calls that will help you lighten up emotionally, lighten up mentally, your overwhelm, your stress. A lot of you tend to at the holidays get extra heavy. You take on more responsibility,

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

you take on more stress. You take on the emotions of the family that you're seeing, that maybe you don't see all year long. This year with the pandemic and everything else happening in the world it might feel extra heavy. And guess what? I don't think that's necessary.

So I'm going to be offering some extra tools, and courses, and programs to help you lighten up for the holidays. So if you're in Be Bold you'll be getting all the information about what that looks like and how to attend. So just stay tuned. If you're not in Be Bold and you want to join us go to jodymoore.com/membership.

Now, I want to talk to you about how to help your kids feel their feelings today because this is something I get questions on a lot, something that I realized I've never really done a podcast in this direct of a way about before. And something I feel so called to try to get out into the world. I think if we can help our children understand better what to do with emotions and how to feel their feelings, that I think that will serve that generation and us so well.

I think that kind of as human species we're ready to evolve to that next level of us where we understand what to do with emotions that is healthy. I think about just even in my lifetime, the sort of evolution we've seen in our understanding as human beings. I feel like we in my lifetime gained a lot of knowledge, and skills, and insight about how to be physically healthier.

When I was a baby in the 70s, I think that it was common for people to smoke, maybe not members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, but otherwise I think most people or a lot of people anyway smoked. Even I remember being in high school and a lot of my friends smoked and they even had a place where you could step outside, we called it smokers' alley. But it was a place that the school had approved where kids could step outside in between classes or something to have a little smoke, if they needed a smoke break.

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

There used to be times on airplanes when they would turn the smoking light on or off, so people knew when it was okay to smoke. There were smoking sections of restaurants and hotels.

Well, we understand today how detrimental smoking is, not only to the smoker but to everybody around in the form of secondhand smoke. And so not that there aren't still people who smoke, of course you could still buy cigarettes. But we've come a long way in terms of understanding how detrimental that is and how important it is to take care of our health. And that's just one example. We know that about exercise and food, and we just know a lot more, even in my short lifetime about how to be physically healthier. And I think we're continuing to learn.

But I want you to think about that in terms of our mental and emotional health. And that I think that for my generation anyway, those of us that are raising kids right now or have recently maybe raised kids, or have little kids, that our opportunity is to advance in terms of our mental and emotional health. We have a lot more room to grow I should say in that area, than we do with regards to our physical health at this point.

And so I'd like to think of the world, it just keeps getting better. Our knowledge keeps advancing. Our skills keep increasing. We get to build on what the generation before us figured out. And then we get to go figure out something else and pass it along to the next generation. And that is what I feel the mental and emotional tools, and knowledge that we're gaining will be sort of our gift to that generation.

So in order to teach your kids how to feel their feelings, I highly recommend that you're practicing feeling your feelings. Because maybe that goes without saying, but it's pretty tough to teach your kids and tell your kids to do something that you're not at least trying to do. It doesn't mean you have to be perfect at it. Maybe they're even going to be better at it than we are.

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

But I certainly think we should be trying because first of all, the best way to teach something is to demonstrate it and model it. So if we're telling them, "Listen, feelings are for feeling and you can just process and allow them," but we don't do that, people tend to believe what we do and not what we say, especially our kids. So I think it's important that we understand it first and foremost.

I also think that as you practice it and you experience it yourself, then you will find the words and the way to teach and explain it to your kids even better. I'm going to give you suggestions today about some of the words and ways, but you'll probably do a much better job of figuring out how to explain it to your kids than I would. So I want you to understand it, and I want you to practice it.

Okay, so I'm going to give you a few things that I just want to make sure you understand and then I'm going to talk to you about how do I talk to my kids. And I'm going to talk to you about how I talk to my young kids, my seven year old and my four year old. And also how I talk to my teenagers, my little bit older kids because of course it's going to be different.

So first thing is that you have to understand that thoughts create feelings. Thoughts create feelings. Now, that's three simple words, if you've been listening to me for a while you've heard me say it many times.

But I still have moments, in fact I had one just today driving down the street, when I started thinking about how thoughts create feelings and my head sort of explodes a little bit. Because while I fully understand that, there's still a little part of me that thinks that feelings and emotions are important relevant information about what's happening outside of me, what's happening in the world. And feelings are not important information about what's happening in the world, they are important information about what's happening internally for me, what's happening in my head.

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

So it doesn't mean that you shouldn't be thinking what you're thinking, in fact no feeling is off limits. We're going to talk more about that in a minute. But just the idea that thoughts create feelings is actually layered with complication when you allow space for it.

So here's what sort of prompted and triggered this aha moment for me is our gyms are open again here in Spokane. They've been closed due to the pandemic. But they are open again, they've actually been open for a little while but I have been hesitant to go back to the gym. But I finally decided I think it's safe, I think I can take the proper precautions and I want to start going to the gym, especially because our days are getting shorter and our weather is getting colder. And I want to be in a good habit of exercising before the bleakness of winter hits.

And so when I go to the gym I like to go to classes. And the system at our gym, at the gym I go to anyway right now is that they can only take 10 people in the class at a time for social distancing reasons. And so they have you register for the class. And once it's full then it says it's full and you can't get in. So I registered to attend a class tomorrow morning and then I realized that I could actually attend a class this evening and would work out better with my schedule. And then tomorrow morning I might just go for a jog or a walk or something.

And so I cancelled the class for tomorrow morning, I got onto the app on my phone and I hit cancel booking. And a message popped up that said, "Your booking has been cancelled, please check with your local gym for the cancellation policy." And so when I read that it made me realize, oh, it could be that there is a penalty to cancelling my booking less than 24 hours before that class. They might charge me money. They have my card on file. They charge me my gym membership every month. And this cancellation policy makes me think maybe there is a fee for that.

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

So for a moment I thought I should call the gym, and I should look into this, and I should figure it out so that I know for the future if I'm going to book and cancel, what's the penalty? And then I had this thought, or maybe not.

Maybe I don't even want to know because they could charge my card that cancellation fee and I wouldn't even know unless I go look at my bank statement. And I would save myself having to do thought work about it. Because if I find out they're going to charge me a fee then I might have a thought like that's not fair, that's not right. I don't think I should have to pay that fee. I don't want to pay that fee. And then I'd have all the negative emotion that would create.

And I can do thought work around it and decide it's totally fair and feel peaceful about it. Or I could just not even know about it and as long as my account doesn't become overdrawn, or it's not an amount that I can't somehow pay off, then I don't have the thought work and the negative emotion around it.

Now, I know that sounds like a really irresponsible way to think about it. And I'm not telling you that's what I would do or what I think you should do, is let's just turn a blind eye to everything so we don't have to do thought work. I just was playing with the idea that isn't it fascinating that I could get charged a late fee or excuse me, a cancellation fee and not feel any negative emotion about it, if I don't know about it, because I would never have a thought about it. So that charging of that fee wouldn't be the thing that would make me feel irritated. I won't feel that if I don't know about it.

So again, these are just things that I play with in my head because I'm a little bit of a crazy person. But this idea that – I was like, yeah, because thoughts create feelings, cancellation fees don't create feelings, thoughts do. My brain is so powerful, I can create any feeling I want to because my thoughts always create it. So in other words, the irritation that feels so necessary and justified is just a made up thing in my head.

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

So again, if you're new to me and you're thinking this sounds nice, Jody, so just walk around in ignorance and feel good. That's not what I'm saying. I just want to use this to illustrate the point that thoughts create feelings.

Now, the next thing that I want to make sure you understand, which piggybacks off of thoughts create feelings is that if it's true that it's just our brains creating it. Which by the way, I should say, except in the case of a chemical or a hormonal imbalance, in which case I highly recommend you seek clinical help for that. But I'm talking about all the other times, all the other feelings that we feel. And when I say feelings, I mean emotions, not sensations like hot, cold, hunger. I mean feelings, like happy, frustrated, mad, sad, joyful, compassionate, curious.

Then this means that feelings are not emergencies, negative feelings even are not emergencies or fires to be put out. Negative emotions are not sicknesses, they're not problems. They're not indicators that something is wrong. They're certainly not a sign that you need to change something. So that includes things outside of you and your internal thoughts.

Negative emotions don't mean there's something in the world that you need to fix or change. And they also don't mean you should be thinking a different thought. They just are indicators. They're not demands to be met. They're not something that you need to escape in some way, even though our brains think so. We don't need to get onto Instagram quickly because we're feeling anxious or restless.

We don't need to eat something because we're feeling stressed. We don't need to escape them. They just are vibrations or sensations in the body that indicate that we're thinking something. They're also not something that we should push away or numb in some way. They're not these big crises, fires, problems that we tend to think they are, negative feelings. They're not any of those things. What they are is just information that the body feeds us about what's happening in your mind. That's it.

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

Feelings, all of them, but we're going to talk about the negative ones a lot today, are just information that your body feeds you in order to inform you about what's happening in your brain. Now, they're powerful, don't get me wrong. I think it's fascinating to notice how the mind and body are so connected and how they can create such powerful reactions within us. So at their most extreme, really strong emotions, especially negative ones can create diarrhea for us. They can affect our digestive system. They can even make us vomit.

I was watching a TV show the other day and the guy on the show witnessed somebody get killed. And then he ran over to the sink and he threw up. And I thought – now, this was a fictional show, but that can happen. When we have really extreme thoughts about what we observe in the world it can create a vibration in our body that's so strong it can cause us to vomit. So I get it, they're strong, they're powerful, they're not usually creating diarrhea or vomiting, but they can, at the same time it's just information.

So when you start viewing that information as interesting, and I'm not saying we don't want to pay attention to it. But sometimes it's useful, sometimes it's relevant, sometimes it's just brain chatter. And it's not anything we need to do anything about other than process.

So in other words, feelings, even the negative ones are just part of the human condition. They're part of being a human being. And they're an amazing part, the fact that we have these emotions is sort of like this internal compass that naturally tries to steer us in a useful way as people in the world. But we just want to be onto ourselves and we want to question them because a lot of times they are just what I call brain chatter.

So most of them, let's talk about what most of them feel like. We have really extreme ones like I talked about that can create diarrhea, or vomiting, or other extreme things like that. But most of the time they're not quite that extreme. Usually what they feel like, and I know this because I ask my

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

clients over and over again as I help them feel their feelings. I say, “What does it feel like?” And often they describe it as a heaviness or tightness. Often it’s in their chest or in their throat.

Think about feelings like fear, anxiety, sadness, frustration, there are some differences, slight differences in how they feel. But most of them have some component that the main thing people describe to me is a heaviness or a tightness in the chest or the throat, maybe down in the abdomen as well. Maybe there’s something happening down there that’s like a queasiness or an unsettled type of feeling. That’s it.

So I get it, people tell me this, they’re like, “It’s just really heavy, tight in my chest, like it’s sort of hard to get air, it’s sort of hard to breathe.” And what I say to them is, “Oh, sort of like when you’re exercising?” Because I had this realization myself the other day, I was out jogging and I realized that when I jog, especially if I’m jogging up a hill, there’s moments when it’s sort of hard to get air in my lungs, having a harder time breathing. It’s like a tightness, a heaviness.

My lungs are constricted and they’re not bringing in as much air as my heart needs to beat that fast. But I don’t freak out about that. I don’t think oh no, I need someone to solve for this. I just know that the reason why is because I’m jogging up a hill. And maybe I go a little slower. I want to make sure that I’m not going to pass out or something. But it’s not a big deal. It’s not a big problem for it to be a little bit harder for me to get air for a while. Now, again, I’m not talking about extreme situations where you’re having a panic attack and you do need to figure out some intervention.

But I think if you apply what I’m giving you here today you’ll avoid escalating to that point in many cases. So it’s just a little bit harder to get some air because we’re experiencing a negative emotion, because we’re human beings and because we’re thinking thoughts in the brain.

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

So understanding all that now, I want to offer to you that the healthiest thing that we can do for ourselves is to just feel those feelings, to just process them, to just open up to them and allow them. Rather than turn into crazy people trying to control the world outside of us, rather than push them away or resist them, or eat food to cover them up, or whatever else we're doing. We could just, at times anyway, open up to them, allow them and learn how to feel them or process them. We don't have to be mad at them. We don't have to be in a hurry to get rid of them.

I can always tell me when my clients think that they're processing and allowing emotion, but they're not because they'll say, "I've been doing it but it's just not going away." Part of allowing it is that we're not in a hurry to get rid of it. It can stay as long as necessary if we're really allowing it, because it's not a problem. It's kind of inconvenient, it's not my favorite thing but I can handle it as long as necessary, as long as my brain needs to keep thinking those thoughts, I can keep feeling this feeling.

So let's get around to now how we do this with kids. I hope that gives you a good kind of base understanding though, especially if you're brand new to me of what I teach about feelings and emotions, because you're going to need to understand that. Now we're going to talk about how do we explain that in a way that our kids can understand and relate to.

So I have two boys who are both my emotional children, I have two boys and two girls. And my boys are just more emotional than my girls, which is, I know often it's the opposite. But that's how it is in our family. And so I'm going to use them as the example, because my one child is in first grade, he's seven years old, Oliver. And my other child is 14 years old and he's a freshman in high school. And so the way I talk to them is different because they're at different developmental stages as kids.

So with Oliver, my seven year old, I use this trick that I learned from my sister, Natalie Clay, who's also a coach. And that is to talk about an animal. And by the way if you have the Family Home Evening lessons, those are in

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

the bonus content of Be Bold. And I guide you through several lessons that help you to teach this to your kids. One of them is where we talk about the monkey in your brain. And I give you coloring pages and things like that to give your kids if you want to go grab that.

But the monkey in the brain, and with my Oliver we use monkey. But you could use whatever animal your kid chooses. And we just talk about that monkey gets really upset sometimes. And he gets overactive, and he gets worried about things. And it's okay, we love him. So we don't dislike the monkey, we don't hate the monkey, we're not mad at the monkey. We're just like, okay, little monkey, it's okay, just settle down. So it's sort of my way of helping my seven year old, Oliver have distance between his thoughts and his own experience of them.

Now, we don't really go in and find the thoughts, it's just my way of saying, "This is just your brain, it's just because of sentences in your brain. It's because of thoughts that you're feeling this feeling." And that's a powerful thing to understand you guys, because it helps you calm down a little bit. Otherwise we think there's something outside of me I have to fix. But when you realize, no, this is just in my head, this is just my sentences in my brain, then you realize I don't have to panic and try to control everything.

So with Oliver, that's how we talk about it, "That silly monkey again, he just gets so worked up sometimes and we can just love him. We just need to hug him. It's okay for him to be upset."

Now, with my older son, Isaac, I don't use the monkey analogy, I just tell him about his brain. I just say, "Oh yeah, that's just your brain." That's what brains do. Brains get upset. Brains think that we should be worried, and scared, and nervous, and they don't want us to have to do new things, or meet new people, or have experiences that are hard. That's what your brain is supposed to do, but I constantly talk about the brain to him. So I'm like, "This is just your brain."

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

So I'm still giving the credit for the emotion to him internally, but I'm not telling him, "So you should think something different." I'm just like, "Yeah, it's totally normal, my brain does that too in different ways and about different things. But that's what human brains do."

Then if they're in the thick of emotion I like to, like I said, use either the animal or the brain to explain to my kids what emotions even are, what's going on for them. Right away that starts to demystify and make it less scary. Now, it's important that you do your work as the parent to get to peace about your kids having negative emotion.

I talk a lot about that on here but it is okay, just like we talked about earlier. It doesn't mean something's wrong, it doesn't mean there's an emergency. It doesn't mean that they're sick, they don't have the flu. They don't have coronavirus. They're just a human being experiencing frustration, or fear, or anxiety. So I say that to them as I'm teaching them about their brains either through the monkey or just the brain. And I say, "It's totally normal, it's part of being a human."

And I say things like, "I feel that emotion too." Or, "I think thoughts that make me feel that way a lot too." Or with Oliver I'll say, "I have a monkey in my brain too. And he gets upset when you leave your toys out and I tell him, 'Settle down, it's fine that Oliver left his toys out. We don't need to freak out about this. We'll just talk to him.'" So I give them examples of how I have, of course, around different circumstances, but I have similar thoughts to them.

Now, the other thing I do is if they're crying at all, and this happens with my older kids sometimes, and my younger kids. If they're genuinely crying, I'm not talking about like sometimes my younger kids will start having a little bit of a tantrum, or sort of trying to generate crying to get some sympathy or attention. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about true emotion, when I can see that they're fighting back tears and they're trying to push down

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

emotion, they're trying not to cry, especially because these are my boys, boys think they shouldn't cry. I totally encourage crying.

I say, "Just cry, if you want to cry, it's totally fine." Because crying is part of how we process emotion. So when we try to fight back tears, and we try to push down the crying, we actually are intensifying it. So I encourage crying if it's true crying, I say, "You know what, just let yourself cry, it's totally fine, nothing wrong with crying. It's nothing to be ashamed of. It's not weakness; it's just part of how your body processes what you're feeling. And part of how your brain wrestles with what you're thinking is through tears, so just allow the crying."

So that's the first thing I do, explain what's going on for them. I try to make it really safe to feel negative emotion. I even encourage crying.

The second thing I do is I sit with them and we process it together. And it sounds like this. With my seven year old I say something like, "What does it feel like buddy?" And I should say that we actually name it first. So I'll say, "It seems like you're really anxious. It seems like you're nervous. Or it seems like you're sad." So often I will offer an emotion that I think they might be feeling. And he might say, "No, I don't feel sad, I just feel worried," or something. He might give me a different one, that's fine. I go with whatever he picks.

But I like to offer one because especially with my seven year old, he's not really thinking in terms of emotion usually. So I name the one I think it is. Now, remember, emotions are just one word, you guys, so if it's more than one word you probably are grabbing thoughts. We don't want to go into thought land right now with the kids. We don't want to try to change their thoughts. We don't want to talk them out of feeling what they're feeling. We don't want to tell them not to feel it. That's the opposite of what we want to do.

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

We want to help them feel it, so we stay in feeling land, which is one word descriptors. So I'll say, "Seems like you're feeling scared." And then I say, "Take a deep breath and let's just be scared right now. Let's just do some fear."

Somebody recently said to me, "When you say that you do fear with your kids, it sounds weird, it's like a coachy thing to say." And I was like, "Yeah, but I purposely say it that way because when we say, "I am afraid," it feels scary. But you are not fear. You are not your emotions. You're just feeling fear."

And we could do that, we could just feel some fear, just like sometimes we bake cookies, sometimes we do fear. I think that's a gift I can give my kids, is to do it with them, alongside them anyway. I might not be feeling fear but I'm probably feeling sadness or something about their fear. So I say, "Take a deep breath and let's just do some fear right now."

Then I ask them, "What does it feel like in your body?" And my seven year old will say, "I don't know." He's usually crying though, so it's like, "I don't know." It sounds more like that. And I say, "Well, when I feel fear, my stomach feels queasy and my chest feels heavy." And maybe he just nods his head. Maybe he says, "No, it feels like this and he gives me something different." Doesn't matter, what matters is that we're in the body now, I'm helping him focus on what he's feeling. I'm encouraging him to take breaths.

I'm telling him things like, "Just relax your shoulders, relax your forehead, relax your eyebrows, stop scrunching up or you're going to need Botox in no time." I might make a joke along the way. "And we take a deep breath, let's just do some fear, there it is, right in your belly or right in your chest. That's just fear, buddy."

And again if it seems appropriate and my child's comfortable I might put my hand on his heart and be like, "Oh, feel how your heart is beating so fast

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

right now.” Or I’ll say something like, “It’s beating so strong, I can feel it. Can you feel that? That’s because of fear. And it’s just your monkey, remember, he’s just jumping up and down in your head and he’s making your body respond this way, but it’s okay. It’s totally fine.”

So notice we’re not in thought land at all, I’m not asking him, “What is he scared of,” yet. We’ll get to that, but first I just help him feel it, and then he stops crying every time. Because when you process emotion it runs through your body. Now, if he starts crying again, that means he’s thinking thoughts again now. And then we just do it again. I say, “Oh, the monkey’s not done yet. Alright, let’s do it again. Let’s do it again. Get in your body. Tell me what your tummy feels like. Tell me what your chest feels like. What does your heart feel like? What’s happening in your throat?”

It doesn’t matter if they can describe it well or not, they might just say, “I don’t know. I don’t know.” They might not answer you. They might just stare at the floor. It doesn’t matter, you’re still there helping them get in their bodies and feel it.

Now, with my 14 year old, my older son, or my daughters, not that my daughters are without emotion ever, but I basically say the same thing except I leave the monkey part out. But I say, “Well, it seems like you’re feeling nervous. Is that what it is, do you think, nervous?” And he might correct me if it’s something different. He might say, “No, I’m just worried.” And he’ll usually go into thoughts, and he’ll start giving me thoughts. Like, okay, so that’s fear, or that’s sadness, or that’s disappointment.

So I kind of help him name it if necessary, if he can’t, until we get to the one word emotion. We get out of thought land, we get into emotion land. And then I do the same thing, I say, “Well, okay, just take a deep breath, it’s totally fine that you’re feeling that. I feel disappointed all the time, welcome to being a human. Let’s get good at it. It’ll serve you well in life to get good at disappointment.”

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

So I say that and then I say, “Let’s just take a deep breath, just relax your shoulders, relax your face, relax everything, take some breaths. Let’s just do disappointment. What does it feel like in your body?” And he will also say, “I don’t know.” And I’ll say, “Here’s what it feels like to me. It feels like this. Does it feel like that to you?” And it’s basically the same process and I just help him feel it, all the while saying, “Nothing wrong with you that you’re feeling this emotion.”

Now, after we do that a time or two, and I can see that the emotion is calming a little bit then we can start talking about the thoughts. Then I can say, “What are you worried about? What are you afraid of?” And I can offer them different thoughts. I can say, “You know, I can see why you would think that, nothing wrong with thinking that, but also don’t forget this.”

So with my younger guy right now, it’s about going back to school. And I remind him of things like, “You’re going to be with your teacher who you’ve been seeing on Zoom every day. You’re going to be with your friends. I’m going to make sure you’re taken care of. You’re going to have tons of fun, it’s going to be so much better than being on Zoom all day. And at the same time it’s normal to be worried about something new and different that you don’t know what to expect.” So I’m offering him those thoughts but I’m tying it back to that monkey is just scared, he doesn’t like new things.

And again, same with my older child, might be about something different. It might be about a camp out he doesn’t want to go on or something. And I just remind him, “Yeah, it’s understandable, none of us like unknown things or new things. But don’t forget this and don’t forget that.”

And also because he’s a little older, I’ll push him sometimes, I’ll be like, “It will be good for you to do something hard. That’s what we do as humans. And I’m not going to put you in a situation where I feel like you’re unsafe. You might be surprised and you might actually have a lot of fun.”

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

So that's what we do as parents, we offer new thoughts. And I'm all for you still doing that. Just make sure that first you teach them how to feel their feelings and make it safe too.

A couple other points I want to make here before we wrap up which is that there is a difference between feeling a feeling and acting out on a feeling. So I'm not suggesting that you want to let your kids act out in ways that you feel are inappropriate. So in our home we don't really like yelling. We don't swear at each other. We don't hit one another.

We don't act out in really aggressive obnoxious ways, even if we're feeling really angry. So if I have a child doing that I might say, "Listen, if you can't control your behavior, you need to go sit in your room for a while. You're totally allowed to be angry and disappointed, but you're not allowed to hit your sister. You're not allowed to talk to people that way. We just don't do that in our home."

So it's sort of like violating an expectation that we have, there's a consequence for the behavior. But that doesn't mean that the emotion isn't okay. And I try to always preface it that way. "You're totally allowed to be disappointed. You're allowed to be," you know, I'm thinking of my four year old, Taylor, right now. "You're allowed to be disappointed that your brother got the swing before you, but you're not allowed to hit him. Did you know you can be disappointed and not hit people?"

So, again, depending on the age of the child I am teaching them slowly but surely that you can experience and allow emotions and you don't have to act out on them. And in fact when you really just get in your body and feel them, you don't feel the need to start hitting people around you.

So there's a difference between allowing an emotion and acting out on emotion. And then the final thing I'll just say is that it's normal for kids to ebb and flow through different periods of intensity with things.

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

And I don't know why, but as human beings our emotions seem to get more intense at night, or that monkey in the brain, if you will, tends to come awake at night. I think he's kind of nocturnal. As where you start to wind down the brain starts to wake-up and go, "Wait a second, we should be worried about all this stuff." Ever notice by morning things don't feel as much of a crisis as they do at night?

So those are just things to keep in mind both for yourself and for your kids. I like to remind my kids of all of this, but I think just more than anything, there's nothing wrong with feeling a negative emotion, that's true for you and it's true for your kids. You don't need to fix them. You don't need to solve it. If you offer them some different thoughts and they reject them all, that's okay.

Let them feel their feelings, because they'll probably work through it on their own and they might need to keep that feeling and keep those thoughts for a little while. They might need to wrestle with it. They might not want to be talked out of it. So when you understand that you can offer help but if they don't want it, that's perfectly fine. Teach them how to just feel their feelings. And remember, you've got to go first.

Alright, we can do this. Bring me all your questions on this topic in Be Bold, because I want to help you. You can DM me on Instagram or whatever, and tell me about your own practices. And you have some best practices that maybe I can share with others. I would love to hear those stories of how you're using this work to help your kids and we'll get it out to everybody. Alright, thanks for listening. Have an amazing rest of your week and I'll see you next week. 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.

275. Help Your Kids Feel Their Feelings

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.