

## 281. Spiritual Maturity with Jennifer Finlayson-Fife



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Jody Moore**

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I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy* episode 281: Spiritual Maturity with Jennifer Finlayson-Fife.

Did you know that you can live a life that's even better than happy? My name is Jody Moore. I'm a master certified life coach and a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. And if you're willing to go with me I can show you how. Let's go.

Hey everybody, welcome to episode 281 of the podcast. Today's episode is so good. You're going to love it. And it's not bragging for me to say that because the goodness comes from my guest today, Dr. Jennifer Finlayson-Fife. If you aren't familiar with her I don't know where you've been. But I'm happy to get to introduce you to her. Most of you probably already have heard from her, but she's one of my most favorite people to listen to and learn from because she's brilliant. She has really valuable insight I think on all the things that she speaks about.

Her specialty is in relationships and sexuality. She's a member of the church, the LDS Church. She wrote her dissertation on women, LDS women and sexuality. And so when I first found her that is the topic that I heard her speaking about the most. And really just had some mind blowing insight that she offered on that subject. I'm so grateful to her for that.

And since then I've heard her speak about a whole bunch of other subjects related to relationships and related to the culture we have in our church. And how to just sort of evolve ourselves in terms of our interpretation of doctrine and our own relationship with God and our own spiritual development. So we had a really insightful conversation I think about topics such as obedience, modesty and spiritual maturity in general. So I cannot wait for you to hear my conversation.

Before we cut to that I want to make sure that you have bought yourself your Christmas gift this year or told Santa to get you your annual pass to Be Bold. If you're not in there already, I don't know what's the matter, you

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need to get in there. It's the best 400 or so dollars you will spend on yourself for an entire year of personal development. So there's a lot of information about what we do in there on the page [jodymoore.com/membership](http://jodymoore.com/membership).

There are videos there that walk you through what the program is like. There are different clients there talking about what it's been like for them, some of the progress that they've made and just a lot more information. So I don't want to take up podcast time with that, go check that out. But if you're going to buy the annual Christmas gift pass that we sell at the end of the year every year, this year we're giving a bonus of a Take Tuesday book with it. We compiled all the best of my Take Tuesday emails into a book. And you'll get that as a free bonus with the Christmas gift.

So go to [jodymoore.com/gift](http://jodymoore.com/gift) to get in on that or to purchase it for someone else. It's the perfect Christmas gift in my opinion.

Alright, let's go to my conversation with Dr. Finlayson-Fife, here we go.

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**Jody Moore:** Alright, well, let's get into it. I wanted to begin by just thanking you because I listen to you off and on, I listened to you tons when I first found you, kind of binged on you. And then I listen to you off and on now still. And one of the things I appreciate so much about what you do, you as a fellow member of the church are speaking to topics that are sometimes controversial and certainly emotionally charged for people.

And I appreciate so much your courage in being able to speak to those topics and to share what you've learned through your experience, through yourself personally. And your education and expertise in a way that I'm sure you must get some people misinterpreting or you have to get some negative backlash because I know I do. And I feel like you push the boundary a little bit, even more than I do. And again I don't mean to say that I sense any way that you're trying to push boundaries.

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I think you're genuinely trying to help people and that requires courage. And I just am so appreciative because sometimes I listen to you and I realize, I can feel that you're coming from a place of genuine love and that you have a strong testimony of the gospel and that your hope is that people love God and draw closer to him. It requires courage to say the things that you say. So I just want to begin with a thank you there. How do you handle any of the negative feedback that you get?

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** Well, to be honest I mean I do get negative feedback sometimes. But I don't get as much as you might think. And I don't know why exactly. I don't know if it's that people can feel my honest intention. And so even if they think I'm misguided, they don't think I'm out to kind of create harm. And also when I do get negative feedback, sometimes it is because I haven't been thorough enough in my kind of explanation of my position or they've only heard one aspect of my position.

But the other thing is that I really believe so strongly in the importance of integrity, not just for the benefit of others, but also for your own mental health and happiness. But there is no peace of mind with cowardice. And it's just how the world works, it is what God and goodness expects of us, is that we have to live honestly. And that's how you find real strength of character, that's how you find real peace of mind.

You may deal with people's invalidation but you earn your self-respect and sanity in a way, the ability to kind of better track what's real and what's important, and what matters in life. And so it's a 100% worth it to lose some invalidation. And I understand I'm maybe wrong about things. I'm certainly still learning things as I go. And I understand that my own perspectives will evolve and change as they continue to do. So it's not so much about getting everything right as it is about earnestness.

And also that some people are in a different place in their development and thinking than I am and that's okay. And I think that's – I just know some of the things I say that I would have 20 years ago been a little stressed by.

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And so I can have an appreciation for my younger self too and that's okay, that there are some perspectives that maybe feel frightening. But I think the thing that I really always care about is that people are honest with themselves in sorting out what they believe is true even if they come to a different perspective than me.

**Jody Moore:** Yeah. I love that. I want to dive a little deeper into integrity. And I want to talk about spiritual maturity and a few other things that I have heard you talk about before. But first I was also interested in just hearing how you view your role as a therapist and a coach. And then you being a disciple of Christ. And at what times do those things intersect? And in what way does it sometimes feel appropriate to you to separate them? How do you navigate, you're a whole person, you are who you are and I think certainly our belief systems inform what we do professionally as well.

But certainly when it comes to mental health and self-help there seems to be a strong intersection between our religious beliefs. How do you navigate that?

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** I'll just say a little bit about the question. I mean I think for me at least what it means to me to be a disciple of Christ is very much aligned with what it means to be a therapist for me. I mean, now, that's different than I'm imparting a particular theology or belief system in the sense that I'm not trying to get people to believe in my faith per se, or to follow the tenants of my faith. But I am very much asking people to live up to their highest conscience and their highest selves, because I think that it's essential for people for peace of mind.

And I trust people deserve to be where they are in their questions and their pursuits and what they're trying to sort out. I just want to help people be honest with themselves and not indulgent. And because people have to live with their choices and so I won't be silent if I think they are doing something in an indulgent or a self-deluding way.

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**Jody Moore:** What do you mean by indulgent?

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** I mean it can be indulgent when we deceive ourselves into the view or the perspective that we prefer that reinforces us, that justifies it us, that allows us to... Indulgent as in kind of like allowing the part of us that wants to not deal with something that's inconvenient. Or deal with someone else's perspective, and so we can use an idea that will allow us to make a choice that's not really coming from our best or strongest self.

And I feel like my job is to help people to the best of my ability, which is not perfect by any stretch, to be as honest with themselves as they can. They have to live with their choices for a long time. And so I think I have a responsibility to help people make choices that they know came from the best in them. I can't control that of course and sometimes people would rather fire me than keep listening to me and that's fine. I mean that's okay too actually.

And I could be wrong, so I'm not saying I'm getting it right and I always know. But I'm using sort of my moral compass to offer and live up to my responsibility to them in sorting out their moral compass.

**Jody Moore:** Yeah. I love that. So it sort of leads into this topic that I first heard this term from you. So I don't know where it came from originally. But this idea of spiritual maturity, when I first found you years ago and I was listening to episodes where you were talking about sexuality and you used that word 'spiritual maturity'. It just jumped out at me so much as a powerful way to think about us navigating the way we think about church doctrine or anything else that we're taught by leaders. So maybe would you mind speaking to how you define that, what you mean by that?

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** Well, let me start with what I think a lot of times people think spirituality means. And then I'll see if I can articulate what I think I think it means. I think what a lot of people often will refer to, I know

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when I was a younger person I would say someone is very spiritual when they were kind of doing all of the things that one would expect, the tenants of one's faith. So I know that you and I are both LDS. But someone's spiritual if they're going to the temple, reading the scriptures, obeying the Sabbath, that kind of thing.

And so that defined their spirituality was the depth of their compliance, the consistency of their compliance. I think compliance has real value in the sense that it's – I think of it as the guardrails. They're sort of a way of minimizing harm. Not being sexual before marriage, not drinking alcohol, these are sort of minimal realities that kind of allow you the space in which to safely engage moral development and moral question. And that doesn't mean that if you challenge any of those that means you're lost or gone forever or anything like that.

So I don't mean to be simple minded, but they're valuable guardrails. But if people stay there I think that's spiritually immature in the sense that you're looking to be commanded in all things. You're looking for a kind of moral laziness, it's a little bit the fantasy that if I obey all these things I will be safe in an otherwise complex world. And I think that's a false understanding of what it is, what's being asked of us as human beings because it's a little bit of a fantasy of if I just do what God says, I'm good, I'm going to get all the good things in life.

But it's not actually pushing ourselves to live with wisdom and to be agents and moral actors in a complex world that asks us to understand, to be stretched, to know and to love people. To love people is not to necessarily feel warm feelings towards them. I mean that's an okay thing. But it's more about doing right by people, doing things that helps the development and wellbeing of the people around you and especially the people you have a direct responsibility to.

And that that process pushes your evolution as a person to be wiser, to understand how the world works, to understand what your responsibility is

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in it, to better understand who God is. I mean we all have a kind of stereotype of who God is, but we're all wrong in a sense because that's based on where we are in our development.

And so the more you live according to true principles, that is to say the more that you learn to really love others, to really know others, the more honestly you live. The more you repent as in course correct, confront your limitations, confront your self-deception. The more wisely you live, the more able you are to make good and decent choices in the face of complexity and uncertainty, that any checkbox thing will not solve or satisfy for you.

And so I think of spiritual maturity is – spiritual maturity is very much linked to our capacity to love. Spiritual maturity is very much linked to our peace with ourselves, not because we're perfect but that we live in a basic honesty with who we are and a basic understanding of who we are. And I mean we're all limited in this form, I don't think anyone except Christ would sort of be, you know, resolved in those ways, or have developed fully in those ways.

But I think that there really is a freedom, and not a freedom that has no constraints, but a real internal freedom and joy that comes as you evolve into deeper wisdom and deeper honesty in how you live. So that's hard to kind of say in one sentence, but that's the essence.

**Jody Moore:** Well, it is a complicated topic. I think of it in regards to just all the other forms of maturity that we see in basic human development. One of the things that we know about children is that they tend to be very literal. And I think one of the things I notice about us as members of the church is we have a tendency to want to be literal too. It's just easier, it's much easier than doing all these things you're describing of confronting our own selves, and taking the risk of owning our decisions. It's so much easier to say, "But in this conference talk it says this thing."



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And again I think about how we, like you said, provide guardrails, as we should especially to our younger kids and our youth. I can't tell you how many times I've heard people say, "But in the first Strength of Youth it says this." And I want to say, "But that's for the strength of youth." And not that it's not applicable, but maybe there comes a point in which...

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** Yeah, the context of that, yes.

**Jody Moore:** Yeah. And there comes a point at which what the Lord desires of us is to explore gospel principles and then decide what that means for us in our lives and how that looks on the outside in terms of your actions. And that is much harder to do, it requires, to your point, a lot of negative emotion. I think it requires fear, and courage, and confusion, indecision, yeah. And so of course I've heard you speak to that a lot around love, chastity, which I love.

But I wanted to explore a couple of other principles and get your thoughts on how we take a more spiritually mature approach to these things. The first one being the principle of modesty. I feel like there's a lot of misrepresentation or there has been. And I like to think that we're getting wiser, that we've made a lot of progress in the way we talk about that. But if you could speak to what you see can be damaging or problematic in the way we teach the principle of modesty.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** Well, one of the things that – first of all I think, you know, I talk a lot about the idea that we have kind of false traditions in our sort of Book of Mormon Reference. But that we have a lot of these ideas that get handed down as gospel, but are really culture. And one of the cultural realities that we have often mistaken, in my opinion for gospel is the idea of sort of notions around sexuality that are very gendered. So I'll be as brief as I can about this.

But basically the idea is that men are more sexual than women, that men desire, women should be desirable. Women's sexuality exists primarily as

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sort of an offering, their chastity is an offering to a man when they get married. So there's a lot of these ideas that men are really the ones who are the actors and the doers, and they're the ones whose sexually desiring women. They have a little bit of sexuality but they're kind of the silver drivers in the kind of realm of sexual desire.

And so I think that modesty and the way we talk about modesty betrays that set of assumptions because we talk to women often like that they have partial responsibility for men's thoughts and feelings. And so we kind of teach women the idea that men's sexuality is sort of lurking and ever present and slightly out of control. And so they have to kind of do part of the heavy lifting there by masking and managing their sexuality, their desirability.

And of course there's an extreme version of this in fundamentalist Islam where you're literally covering up women entirely to suggest that they have to completely suppress and mask their sexuality to help manage men's sexuality. The problem of course is two things, one is that it sort of delegitimizes women's sexuality and makes their desires a threat and a problem. So I have a lot of clients who have just actively suppressed their feelings then get married and then have shut it off so much they have really no reference point for their own sexual desire.

But another big problem is kind of teaching the idea that you're responsible for something that you in fact can't be responsible for. You can't control anybody's sexual thoughts and feelings. You could be completely covered up and still somebody could sexualize you, right?

**Jody Moore:** That's right.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** And so you can't control that. And any fancy that you can or should or that your sexuality is a threat, it also teaches a really poor idea about men because it's basically the idea that men aren't trustworthy, that they can't handle their sexuality and that it's partially a

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woman's responsibility even within marriage. Because a lot of my female clients are sort of thinking that they offer their sexuality as a way of keeping their husband from looking at porn.

And of course that completely obliterates any real capacity for joy and openness in a sexual relationship because it's more about doing your job as a woman than it is about love and freedom. So I mean that's clearly the problem with it in that the modesty rhetoric exposes it. Now, all that said I would say if modesty is about to not be boastful, to not take advantage with an advantage or a capacity that you have. So to be modest about our strengths, to be modest about our beauty, all those things matter. But it's out of a function of self-respect and respect for others.

It's a way of being appreciative and grateful for the good things that you have and not flaunting it and using it to kind of make yourself feel superior to others or exploit others. So I think it's perfectly appropriate to talk to our children about self-respect and respect for others. And not being flagrantly boastful about any good thing you have in your life.

And that that can apply to clothing, that you're dressing in a way that's appropriate for whatever the situation is, but not as a shame or fear of sexuality. As a respect for your body, as a respect for yourself, and as a respect to others, but not fear based, it's respect and love based.

**Jody Moore:** I love the idea that modesty could be taught in the context of all the different things that we are as humans because to just teach it about our bodies and our sexuality does then trivialize us into just sexual beings, which we are not.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** Exactly, and it's a distortion of what the truer purpose and meaning of modesty is. And absolutely and I think so much of our notions of goodness, they're too focused on sexuality. I think is something I talk about a lot too is that we tend to think of sexuality as Satan's pathway, as this scary thing that will pull us into debauchery and

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indulgence. Rather than sexuality is just a beautiful part of being a human being and who you are as a person is the issue. So how you relate to yourself and others is the issue, because your sexuality will follow suit.

So what kind of human being are you is a really important thing, that's what we need to be thinking about during the sacrament or during prayer. Of course you want to be aware of your sexuality and how you're in relationship to it. Again you want it to be self-respecting and respectful of others. But to not feel like the sexuality is the problem because it paradoxically creates more immoderation in people, either suppression or a kind of indulgent struggle around sexuality.

**Jody Moore:** That's amazing. So it sort of speaks to also the other topic that I wanted to hear your thoughts on which is obedience. I heard a podcast that you aired, I apologize, I can't remember whose podcast it was that you were on. But you did an episode on obedience. And maybe we can link to that here. I'd love to get her some exposure as well. But I loved your thoughts about the dangers of celebrating obedience over integrity.

And when I heard it I thought also agency is such an important component of our experience here on Earth according to the LDS doctrine, that that was what separated, one of the things that separated the Lord's plan from Satan's plan. So what are your thoughts on obedience and again, and how we in a more spiritually mature way think about it?

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** Right, so one of the things that we often say is obedience is the first love heaven. And some people I think have mistaken that to mean it's the highest. And I think it's now quite literally in a developmental sense, the first, if you look at the moral development of children, looking at even non-religious models like Kohlberg's model of moral development and Faulkner's, which is a more religious focus. That it starts with very much a compliance frame.

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That's what's needed with minimal psychological and emotional development, is very clear boundaries. Listen to what mom says, don't hit your sister. It's kind of like the real basics that allow this child to keep growing until they're able to move into more complex thought. So again it's a good starting place. But if we stay locked in it, it's fundamentally lazy, it's fundamentally not staying awake to what life is really asking of us. And so that's why it's not virtuous. We talk about this, and we can't be commanded in all things, that we need to be endlessly engaged in a good cause.

The Parable of the Talents in the New Testament I think is very much this idea, that you've been given gifts and capacities and you have a responsibility to develop them and to create goodness through them. And I'm not going to say in all the specific ways you should do that. You just need to be involved in the world asserting choices and creating goodness.

So I think that one of the things I don't like about a hyper valuing of obedience, while it's a good starting point, that if we make it the ending point, I think fundamentally it's the way we language it because it's sort of putting responsibility outside of yourself rather than within yourself. And I don't really care what words you call it as long as it's clear that it's within yourself.

So what I mean by that is sometimes if we think well, God just wants me to do what I'm told and then I'm going to get blessings and I'm going to be good. That's the external reference point and it's staying childlike. If it's that I'm doing what I believe is right, even though – and I feel that God cares that I do this and that I should do this because I can feel it's the right thing. Somebody could call that obedience and that's fine with me.

But it's an integrity based choice because what it is, is I know this is the right thing for me to do even though I don't fully understand it. I don't fully know why I need to do this in the sense of I don't yet get it from the level of having done it. But I can feel that it's the right way to be.

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And so I see this with working with my clients where they're quite afraid to love more openheartedly in their marriage. They are quite afraid to let their spouse really, really matter to them. They're afraid to give their spouse the validation sexually, or emotionally, or whatever it is because they can kind of hold some control over their sense of self, over their spouse's sense of self by withholding it, but they know it's wrong. They know it's cheap, they know it's hurtful but they're terrified.

When they are like I know what I'm doing is not right, even though I don't know what right really feels like and looks like yet, I just know I can't keep doing this thing. That is integrity based. And it is a kind of calling from the divine, from the better in them to say, "Be better." So they're following that, you could say that they're obeying it I think. But to me it's like they are saying, "I must be better than this. I can't live with myself doing the other." And as they do it they get clearer, they get more solid, they get more comfortable in themselves. They develop spiritually.

And we talk a lot in our faith about how faith leads to knowledge. That's it. I feel it, it feels right, I don't fully understand it, I just know my conscience is telling me to move in that direction. I want to pretend it's not there, I maybe come up with some excuses. I mean we're all very good at denying that call. But if you're being honest with yourself and you move towards it, even though you're afraid, that's faith.

And that's why it's a virtue is your fear doesn't win out on doing what's right. And you do what's really the right thing, you grow in your ability to be wise. You see the world better, you see yourself more clearly. You have more peace in your heart. The reward of it is enormous. But it's not a reward of protection from winning life and the messiness of it. But it is a reward of greater wisdom, greater self-respect, greater ability to navigate and trust yourself in the world. So that is the reward, and a greater sense of God and goodness and how real both are.

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**Jody Moore:** So I heard it said in this really simple way once that Satan starts with putting a thought in our head and that if we don't manage that or dismiss that it can bleed into your heart, become a failing and then eventually bleed into your hands and show up in your action. And that the Lord works in the opposite, he asks us to take an action and we can feel the goodness of it as we do so and then we can come to understand like you said, the principle behind it. I like the simplicity of that.

I have found that to be true myself that sometimes, to your point, just doing what somebody that I trust has told me to do and then feeling the effects of that does lead me to an understanding of it. The danger is I think, to your point, number one, we can't just take the action and then wait to see what happens next. I think it's our job to explore and to want to understand and that, to your point, if it doesn't feel in alignment with love and God, and trust, and faith, then to listen to that message and learn from it.

And I mean we see extreme examples of this in cult situations, literally that kind of blind obedience is dangerous. And I don't think that's what we mean when we teach the principle of obedience. But sometimes the message can be misconstrued that way.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** That's right. And all God cares about is you do what he says, kind of like God's an insecure petulant person who's just obsessed with his own power. And that's kind of what the picture is rather than, no, God wants us to grow into wise agents, people that can make decisions in complexity with greater wisdom and greater freedom really internally because they've learned how to live in alignment with life's rules.

**Jody Moore:** Yeah. And I don't believe that he will override our agency, and therefore the intentionality behind it does matter. To your point, it's not just like I did this thing, I checked the box, where is my blessing? The blessings, they're given to us by God but they're somewhat created internally. So I think about...

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**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** [inaudible] about that idea, that blessings are predicated upon the principles of, okay, I'm not doing it, but upon which the [inaudible].

**Jody Moore:** Yeah, I know the one you mean. If I take a class online and my intention is just to get the answers so I can turn in the assignment and get the grade, that's one way to go about it. I might achieve the grade or the credits. But if my intention is to learn what they're trying to teach me then it changes. And even though I might still be able to get an A in that class it doesn't mean I learned what they were teaching.

And so I think that's how God blesses us is that if I don't at some point decide to understand why is this a commandment? Why does the prophet counsel us to do this, why has God commanded us to do this? Then he can't possibly force that upon me, that knowledge just by taking the action.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** That's right.

**Jody Moore:** Yeah. So I think we have to make space for ourselves and here's the challenging part, we have to allow space for our spouses, and our children, and all the people we love to also navigate their own spiritual maturity. Which means sometimes they're going to make choices we wish they wouldn't make. Sometimes they're going to say, "I don't know if I believe in a lot of chastity mom, I kind of want to sleep with my boyfriend", or whatever it is.

I don't think – of course we're there to guide people in all of that but I don't think that God's plan was ever that none of us ever even make mistakes or poor choices as we navigate our maturity.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** No, exactly right. In fact you have to, that's why we need the atonement because mistake making is essential to this process. You can't – it's not like the atonement is the backup plan if you screw up. It's like no, it's part of development is to make mistakes. And of course there are some guideposts so you don't just have to pay dearly for

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that process. It's not the absence of mistakes that's the issue, it's about the more you can borrow wisdom the easier it will go for you.

So there's value in borrowing wisdom, but you do have to get out there and roll up your sleeves and be willing to try things and take positions. I remember when I was working a lot with Dr. David Schnarch who I've done quite a bit of training with and he recently passed away. But one of the things that he said to me was, "Take a position." Because I would sometimes with clients get stuck between it could be this or it could be that. And I don't want to get it wrong.

And so he was saying, "You are limiting your effectiveness by not asserting a choice, take the risk of going with what you most think because only then can you find out the flaws in your position if you take it. If you straddle you never move." And so that's very helpful, okay, you take the position and if it's right you quickly can feel that it's right and if it's wrong it reveals itself to you so you can self-correct and take a clearer position or a better position.

**Jody Moore:** So you have to be willing to be wrong is what you're saying.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** That's right. And that's also faith when my ego is not – that's humility. My ego is not as important as me sorting out what is true and best. I'm willing to be wrong in the effort to do it, that's why perfectionism is a false positive. It's like a false virtue because...

**Jody Moore:** And there's no progression in it.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** Yeah, and there's terror of finding out that you're human. I mean that's just not going to help you much. It's more courageous to say, "I am human and I will make mistakes and I can hold onto my essential value anyway because that's what is required for me to develop as a person."

**Jody Moore:** Yeah. And I also love what you said about that obedience is a great shortcut sometimes. I think about even just when I was first starting

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my business, my coaching practice. And I didn't know anything about how to build a business. And so obedience for me was the best way, to listen to others who have done this, who gave me advice. But not too far into it and even as I listened to them I had to start making my own decisions about the nuances of it and that no one person can give me a template that's going to exactly fit for me.

And so I think to your point, but we're not anti-obedience by any means, but not at the expense of integrity.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** [inaudible].

**Jody Moore:** Yes, not in a way that limits our own progression and spiritual maturity in the end.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** That's right. And I think about it in terms of if you have a medical concern, I would never want to have to learn everything that is needed. I mean I would die probably before, you know, if I had cancer or something like that. You need to borrow wisdom, you need to in some level trust those that have thought about it a lot more.

But in the case of my dad he was given a cancer diagnosis maybe eight years ago. And they said, "This is the only treatment we have, it will give him at most a year. That's all we have." And I mean thankfully they were honest, they didn't say, "There was much else they could choose from." But because we knew there was sort of limits, I had a brother who just researched, and researched, and researched and found out that they were doing a stage 2 trial in a different. Anyway it ended up prolonging my dad's life for another six years.

So if he had just said, "I'll just do, I will not trust what anybody else has to say", my dad would not have lived as long as he did. So it's just my point in saying on the one hand letting their knowledge inform it, it brought us up to a point. And then when it was like there isn't much more it allowed for him to just say, "Okay, well, that's it." But thankfully my brother continued to

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pursue, and pursue, and pursue and learn as much as he could and then found another option that prolonged his life. Which is another version of kind of how there's limits to that, although it still has value, real value.

**Jody Moore:** Yes. It's the combination of the listening to the expert but also not abdicating your own...

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** Responsibility in that.

**Jody Moore:** Exactly, yes.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** Exactly it, yes.

**Jody Moore:** So I just kind of want to end with, you know, Time Out for Women couldn't happen this year the way it normally does. And so they put some talks online and I was listening to some recently. And I heard Anthony Sweat speaking, who's a professor at BYU.

I thought this was really interesting, he said, "We talk about our purpose." Or I should say, "The Lord's purpose is to help us return to him." And he pointed out that it doesn't exactly make sense to think if we were all with him why would he send us here? And then think I hope to get you all back to me. It sort of misses the bigger picture which is that his purpose is to actually help us become like him. And I love thinking about all of this in that way that we are here to become like him, that is his purpose and that is one of the main reasons we're here.

And that I think part of it is just understanding our own value because we all question it. And coming to know it and embrace it as well as the value of others and our equality, all the things help us become more like him. And I don't know if you have any final thoughts.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** I think it's a beautiful point, because I agree, if the point were just being there he wouldn't have sent us [inaudible], it wouldn't have made a lot of sense.

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**Jody Moore:** That's right.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** But on the other hand, no, we're here for a purpose which is our own growth, and our own change, and our own development. And it's really valuable, although painful when you love your child. My [inaudible] Covid, my daughter's a musician and we decided – she decided that she wanted to go to boarding school. So she's in a musical boarding school that she'd always hoped to go to.

And so it was just – but she's 14, I mean living away from home, I couldn't even help her move into her dorm because of Covid. I had to literally drop her off at the parking lot, she was crying that night, she was like, "I can't find the cafeteria."

**Jody Moore:** Oh man. I don't know if I could do it.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** It was hard. And just to watch her try to get her room organized and all on her own. So she was – but my point is she has matured so much this semester and just so remarkable to see herself subject herself willingly in wanting to do this, to a lot of difficulty. To step into something that was well beyond her current capacity. And to see her grow into it and for her to become a more mature self-developed person. And that's very much a similar thing, that's how you develop capacity is you step into situations that exceed your capacity.

**Jody Moore:** That's right.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** And when you scramble and struggle, trying to figure it out and it hurts and you'll do a lot of things wrong and you'll check-in at times to just sort of remind me that I matter and I'm okay. But then you're back in the struggle and I think that's a very, very valuable process. And I think the more we can understand it and value it as such the more tolerance we have for the pain that's within it.

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**Jody Moore:** Yes, I love that. It reminds me, I coach a lot of women who are feeling like they wish they could be better mothers, so they have a lot of guilt or shame for areas where they fall short. And I love what you said about stepping into a situation that exceeds our capacity. And if our mothers come along always and fill in the gaps for us we lose that opportunity to grow. And not that we don't try but that it's a blessing that we will fall short, that we just won't always be able to, that is to our kids' benefit, not to their detriment.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** Exactly. And sometimes being a good mother is not stepping in even when every cell in your body wants to.

**Jody Moore:** That's right.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** Exactly. It's like we talk about in the psychological literature, good enough parenting, good enough mother. I love you and I'm flawed. And thankfully that child has their own agency, their own relationship with the divine, relationship to their integrity. They have so much ability to determine their path and to sort things out which not all children do and not all people do of course. So that's also hard to see a child struggle. But I think that thankfully it isn't all on us.

**Jody Moore:** Yeah, that's right, thankfully.

**Jennifer Finlayson-Fife:** [inaudible] ourselves and who we are, flawed as we are.

**Jody Moore:** Awesome. Well, thank you so much for your time Jennifer, I appreciate it, I always love listening to you and appreciate you coming on.

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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

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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.

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