

285: Optimizing for Empowerment



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Jody Moore

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I'm Jody Moore and this is Better Than Happy, episode 285: Optimizing for Empowerment.

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.

Hello everyone. Happy New Year. I'm recording this a few weeks in advance but I know this episode is coming out on January 1st. And I tend to want to put a lot of pressure on myself, that's such a significant day. We have to say something really profound.

I actually do have a message to share with you that I think is really profound that it was based on insight I've had over the last four to six months as a coach. Just sort of a way of teaching and explaining the concepts that I use to empower people that I find a lot of people having that light bulb, oh now I see what you mean kind of experience.

And so I wanted to start out the New Year sharing that with you because I am so excited for 2021 and not maybe for the same reasons that most people are. I mean of course I'm excited for us to move through some of the challenges we've had over the last year. But I'm not really waiting around for any of that to create a phenomenal year in 2021. I've already done it in my mind actually. I've already experienced the joy and success that I want to have personally and professionally this year. And so I'm going to be sharing that with you guys.

But the first thing is we have to optimize for empowerment. What does that even mean? That's just a term I made up. So let me explain what I mean by that. The more empowered we are as human beings the more amazing our lives become on an external level, if you will, in terms of the results, tangible results that we have. But also the more amazing we feel the more amazing our entire experience of being alive becomes.

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So those of you that are fellow coaches know that our goal in coaching, at least if you're trained in the way I was, our goal is to empower people. It's not to tell people what to do or what results they should be seeking in their lives, or how they should feel at any given time, or even to make people happier. It's to empower people because when you are empowered you literally get to create any experience you want and you will create the kind of experience that elevates you to your highest self, feels the most alive and coincidentally also contributes the most in the world.

So as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints like I am, and I know many of you are. We talk about the principle of agency. And we believe that part of God's plan for us was that we came here to Earth and we have the ability to choose. And I think that my understanding of agency has grown a little bit but I think I still have a long ways to go. I think in the last year I've become more and more aware of how important agency is.

And while I never really understood it intellectually and like I said I still barely do, I think I always knew it internally and I think all humans do. This is why we don't like to be told what to do. This is why we don't like to feel stuck and trapped. This is why we push back whenever we feel we have to do something, that's what resentment is.

It's an indicator that we are not owning our agency fully, or we feel that our agency is being infringed upon in some way, which it never is. But when we think that's the case, when our agency feels threatened we feel all kinds of negative emotions in response to that. So empowerment is the opposite of that.

Empowerment is understanding and owning your agency. It's really stepping into your agency, which is actually kind of scary to do as well, it can be if you don't fully understand it because some of us shy away from owning our agency. Because suddenly as soon as we own our agency we

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have to own the responsibility and the accountability for our entire life experience.

So my goal today is to teach you how you optimize your life for empowerment. I don't want you to optimize it for happiness because that actually would be really boring, that's why this podcast is called Better Than Happy because what's better than happy is empowerment. Happiness all day long, think about the ride, It's A Small World, which I love that ride.

But we took our kids to Disneyland last year right before the Covid shutdown and they had never been to Disneyland. And so first thing I said, "We have to go on Small World first, especially because the line wasn't very long yet. And that line gets long and that is not a ride that you're going to be happy you stood in a line for a long time for so let's just go right now." So we went on Small World and my kids were like, "Mom, what is this? It's kind of creepy, all the dolls dancing and the song on repeat." I'm like, "Yeah, but it's happy."

So I want you to imagine if your life was like riding Small World all day long, just a happy song on repeat, everybody smiling, and dancing, and bright colors, that would get annoying, it really would. Or at the least it would get very boring. So we're not trying to optimize for happiness. We need the peaks and valleys of life to really have the optimal experience. We're trying to optimize for empowerment. So how do we do that? I'm going to dive into how and it's going to help I think reinforce what I mean by this concept.

So one of the things I've been teaching to my clients and to the coaches that I work with in my advanced coach certification program is it's helpful I think to think of ourselves on a continuum when it comes to empowerment, or disempowerment. So by a continuum think about a straight line and you have extremes on either end and the extremes are where we have problems. The extremes on either end of that continuum are where we become disempowered. In the very middle of that continuum is optimization for empowerment.

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So I want to talk about the two extremes. I want to talk about why we end up there, what it looks like. And then I'm going to talk to you about how to get yourself as close as possible to the middle. Now, I also want to say that this isn't just a box that you check. It's not like, good, now I'm empowered, done with that. It's a constant focus. It's something I personally am constantly working towards to keep myself as close to the middle as possible. But I lean towards one end or the other. I watch myself go back and forth.

But I have tools now and knowledge to know how to get myself back to the middle, and that's again what we do with coaching in Be Bold as well. So on one end of the continuum, let's just call it the far right, we have lack of awareness. So this is where a lot of people are when they first find me, they are operating a little bit more unconsciously. They think that things outside of them create their feelings. I also sometimes call this blame.

So we blame circumstances for how we feel. We say things like, "2020 was such a stressful year. The shutdown with Covid, and the economy, and the social unrest, and the election, and everything just has been so hard." That's far right side of the continuum talk because it's crediting the challenge that we have for things happening outside of us. The things happening outside of us didn't create our challenge, or our stress, or our anxiety, our own thoughts created that.

Now, Covid happened and shut down a lot of our businesses in our lives as we knew them. And then we had thoughts, and then we felt something negative and it's okay if you did. But that's what really happened, it wasn't that anything outside of you caused you to feel that way because if the things outside of you caused you to feel that way everyone would feel the same.

I just talked to my little brother Ben, I call him little brother Ben but he is – how old is he now? 36, he's an adult man, Ben, but he's 10 years younger than me. So he'll always be little brother Ben to me. Anyway Ben has a

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really optimistic way of viewing the world and he always has since he was little as far as I can recall. And we were just talking about this past year. And he was sharing with me that his oldest child just started back to in person school.

He's in kindergarten and he's been doing it online. And they just decided this past week to send him to the classroom for lots of reasons. And Ben was describing to me how magical it was. I know Ben won't mind me sharing that, as a result of everything happening with Covid. He was let go from his job so he's at home right now with his two little boys and his wife is working via Zoom. But he said, "I had this moment where my other son and I were walking my kindergartener to school and it was a beautiful day."

He lives in San Diego so it was a beautiful 72 degree day, December 9th or whatever it was. And he's like, "We just walked him to school and I thought this is magical, me being able to be here with my boys, walk him to just starting out school which is an exciting time for the kids and the parents, the little brother excited to walk with him. Us having this moment would never have happened had Covid not happened." And he said, "I just felt this overwhelming sense of joy."

So I know, people don't want to hear that, they're like, "That must be nice but I'm struggling." But my point is that Covid didn't make anyone feel anything stressful, even getting laid off from a job doesn't make you feel stressful. In that moment the way Ben was thinking about everything caused him to feel love, and peace, and abundance, and happiness.

So when we're on the far right side of the continuum we don't have the awareness. We still think that things outside of us are the problem, or the reason for our emotions, or the reason for our results. And we blame those things and that completely disempowers us because we can't control many circumstances in the world and in our lives. And then we get frustrated and we just spin on how if that person were different, or if the world were

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different, or if the weather were different, or if the money were different then we would feel better.

We spin and spin in a disempowered place, that's the far right side of the continuum. So a lot of people come to me, they're in that space. And remember, a continuum by nature means that you can be on the really extreme end of it or you can just be sort of leaning towards it. There's a variety of levels of it. But they come along and I teach them that we create our emotions, we create our results, we create our reality in the world and that's so empowering.

And that's why people love what I'm teaching them. And they say, "This is so freeing, and sometimes this can be challenging to implement but when I do I find so much relief." And what they're talking about is that they become empowered. Now, sometimes what happens after you listen to me for a while, or work with me for a little bit, and you understand that you're the creator of all of your experiences, is then you start heading towards the far left side of that continuum. And what the far left side looks like is shame.

The far right side is lack of awareness, the far left side is lack of acceptance which is also shame. Lack of acceptance for yourself, for the reality that you've created, for the emotions that you've created, for the way that you're thinking, for the way you're showing up in the world. So lack of acceptance or shame is also completely disempowering, just as much as lack of awareness.

Because if we now start judging ourselves, instead of judging the world now, instead of judging other people, instead of judging the weather, we start judging ourselves. We start saying, "I shouldn't think this. I know Jody that this is a thought and I know I shouldn't think it. I know I shouldn't feel this way. I know this is just me. I know I'm creating it and I shouldn't do that but."

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And they tell me, “I don’t know how to stop. I don’t know how to not think it. I don’t know how to feel different. I don’t know how to create a different result.” If you find yourself thinking that or saying that it means that you’ve gone now to the left side and you’re completely disempowered once again. What we want is to land in the middle. In the middle is complete awareness with complete acceptance.

So in other words I feel frustrated because I’m thinking the thought, and then name the thought, if you can identify the thought, not just I know it’s my thoughts. But I feel frustrated because I’m thinking the thought the kids shouldn’t leave their stuff all over the kitchen. And it’s okay that I’m thinking that thought. And it’s okay that I’m feeling frustrated. That is when you become completely empowered.

Now, the reason why we don’t do this is, well, a couple of reasons. Let me start with the left side first, let me start with the lack of acceptance and the shame side. And then I’ll speak a little bit more to the right side why we are sometimes unable to do that. But the reason we’re unable to do it on the left side is because our brains think that the best way to change ourselves is to judge ourselves, to notice what is wrong, and what should be different, and what could be better. And that if we can criticize ourselves enough then we’ll be motivated to be better.

And if that worked I’d help you, I’d help you criticize and judge yourself all day long. But that does not work. We’ve seen time and time again, and I can give you examples for everything from trying to stop yelling at your kids, trying to stop fighting with your spouse, trying to stop overeating, trying to stop overspending, whatever it is that you’re trying to stop doing in your action line, or trying to not be frustrated, trying to not judge others, trying to not gossip, trying to not judge yourself, trying to, whatever it is you’re trying to change.

I just want you to pause and ask yourself, when I’m really critical and harsh with myself, do I see change? Now, this is tricky to answer because I know

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some of you are like, “Yes, sometimes I do Jody.” If I tell myself you were so lazy yesterday, you’ve got to get more done today, then I suddenly get up and moving and I get a lot more done. But here’s what really happens. First of all I do think you can motivate yourself by fear and shame to a certain extent. I think you can get some movement out of yourself.

If somebody yells at me and threatens me I do move. I do get away from them or take the action necessary to try to prevent harm. We are motivated by fear to a certain extent but it’s not the kind of motivation that’s going to create the ultimate result that you want. It’s going to create a short term jump versus what I want for you which is a long term legitimate authentic change. So you can shame yourself, punish yourself to get moving. But you can’t punish yourself to evolve to a better version of you. That just doesn’t work.

So when I tell clients, “Listen, what if you just decide not to beat yourself up after you do that thing that you did that you don’t want to keep doing, like overeating, or yelling at your kids.” Let’s use yelling at your kids as an example. So clients will say to me, “I don’t want to yell at them, I don’t think that’s good for them. I don’t think that’s good parenting and I feel so terrible after I do it, I just think I’m such a bad mom.” And I say, “What if we drop that part, the part where you feel terrible, the part where you tell yourself you’re such a bad mom.”

Because notice they’re on the far left side of the continuum. I’m trying to help them get back to the middle. And they say, “Well, then I’ll just keep yelling forever.” And I say, “Well, what’s happening right now? You’re beating yourself up, you’re shaming yourself and you told me that you can’t stop yelling.” It seems like that’s the way to keep yelling forever. So when you make peace with it, when you recognize, okay, I yell because I feel angry and I feel angry because of my thoughts and it’s okay that I do that.

You know what? I’m a human. In some ways I’m an amazing mother, in some ways I’m a mess of a mother, yes to all of it and you embrace all of it.

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Then you aren't operating from shame and frustration already which makes it much easier to be patient with your kids when they do what they do. So we have to get you to an accepting place of where you are at.

Another example I like to think of for this and this is more of a metaphor. But think about the GPS, the navigation system in your car or on your phone. You pull up the map and you say, "Siri, give me directions to Target." Of course you already know how to get to Target, but just imagine that you're new in your town. And you say, "Give me directions to Target."

First thing Siri needs to know is where are you now? So her satellite will kick in and calculate where you are and find you. And if she can't, if you've turned off a setting or something where her satellite can't find where you are, she can't tell you how to get to Target. So the awareness that you need about where you are, the more detailed and insightful your awareness can become the easier it will be to get to the place you're trying to go. And we don't gain insight like that when we shame ourselves. Shame says hide.

When we tell ourselves I'm a terrible mom, I shouldn't be yelling at my kids, we don't want to think about yelling at our kids, we don't want to think about what's going on for us. We don't want to examine it. We're unable to even access the really subconscious thoughts and emotions driving that behavior because we shame it away. We cover it up with guilt and shame and then we lose access to it.

So Siri doesn't say, "Well, where are you now?" And you click the button saying yes, I'm right here, use my current location. And she doesn't say, "Well, that's stupid, Target is six miles away, why are you there? It's going to take you forever to get to Target now, you should be closer. You shouldn't be six miles away." No, she doesn't care, she's just like, "You're here, alright, here's the way to get to Target." That's how I want you to think about the work we're trying to do here to empower you is we can't judge where you're at.

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The more you accept where you're at and embrace where you're at with compassion, and curiosity, and kindness, and even love, the faster and easier it will be for you to change and to get to where you want to go. I promise you this is true. I've seen it over and over again in my clients but in myself as well. So that's why we end up on that left side of the continuum. Again on the right side the lack of awareness can be that we don't understand that we're the creator of our thoughts and emotions.

But even when you do understand it, I understand it very well. I've been teaching this for seven years now. And was exposed to it myself before that even, but that doesn't mean that I am no longer a human and have all the things that we have as humans with brains that block us from the awareness that we want to have.

So that is where I recommend that you have a coach that is able to show you yourself, or that you at the very least expose yourself to coaching because the more you hear other people sort of enlightened in terms of their lack of awareness, the easier it becomes to do for yourself.

But I still myself have several coaches who I rely on to show me myself. I can never completely see myself as well as somebody outside of me can because I'm in my story. I'm in my own model. And a lot of them I can take a look at and see what's really going on. But there are times when I need an outside perspective to show me what's really true. So we want to shoot for the middle, complete awareness plus complete acceptance.

And we're just trying to get as close as we can. You don't have to get all the way to the middle to make lots of progress. But you want to just kind of recognize which side am I leaning towards and what do I need to change about the way I'm thinking about all this to get myself to awareness with acceptance. That is where you will optimize for empowerment. And when you optimize for empowerment your life becomes magical, it really does.

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Alright, so that's what we're going to be doing this year, I'm excited to keep teaching you. Thank you so much for listening. Thank you for sharing. Please continue to share the podcast. I love when you share it on social media, make sure you tag me so I can give you a shout out when you share it. I'd love for you to come and interact with me on Instagram, I'm on there all the time. You can DM me. You can post in the comments. And I will see you guys soon. Have a great amazing week. Take care.

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.