

303. Effective Boundary Setting



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With Your Host

Jody Moore

[Better Than Happy](#) with Jody Moore

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I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy*, episode 303: Effective Boundary Setting.

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 everybody, welcome to episode 303. We're going to talk about boundaries today. Before we do that there's so many things happening that I just have to keep you in the know about because I get people all the time go, "I didn't know. I missed it. You didn't tell me." So listen up, I'm telling you right now. Don't say I didn't tell you. I want to tell you about a couple of things.

First I want to tell you about an amazing workshop that's going to be happening in just a few weeks. It is called Train Your Brain. And I created it to be spring cleaning for your mind. So I have this idea because a couple of weeks ago I cleaned out the mud room in my house. I was like, "Listen, we've got coats everywhere, shoes, boots, ski clothes that need to get put away because we're not going to be skiing for another year." We've got shoes that don't fit kids, coats that I bought that a kid hasn't even worn a single time. So things like that.

I'm like, "We've got to do something about this." We've got stuff up in the closet that I've just shoved up there because I didn't know where to put it. I didn't want to figure it out. So we did spring cleaning in the mud room, took everything out, sorted it, donated what we weren't using, got rid of the junk and then reorganized it and put it away. Amazing. I want to help you do that for your brain because it's that time of year when your brain needs a clean out too. My brain needs cleaning out, a good deep spring clean. And that's what Train Your Brain is going to be.

So we're going to be together for five days. I'm going to be live on Zoom, you all know how to use Zoom now. So thanks Covid for that little gift. But

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we're going to be live on Zoom. I'm going to be teaching you content and majority of the time we're going to be interacting because I teach you a lot here on the podcast. That's fun but it's nowhere near as impactful as you either coming on with your question or hearing other people come on with their questions. And we do some Q&A and what I call coaching. And it's life changing.

So make sure you don't miss Train Your Brain, it's only \$19. Now, listen, all of you who are in Be Bold you're already going to get it. We're going to post the replays every day that the event's going on, which by the way it's May 24th through the 28th, so Monday through Friday. And every day in Be Bold you'll automatically get the replay. If you're not in Be Bold though it's only 19 bucks, you can come live or if you can't be there live you will also be getting all the replays and you're going to keep those forever. So if you're busy that week that's fine, still sign up.

But anyway that's going to be an amazing week. So go to jodymoore.com/brain and please invite your friends and family who could use a little spring cleaning on their brains. It's super fun to do with someone else because you're going to – I promise, your mind's going to be blown and you're going to want to be able to talk to someone about it. So invite anyone that you think might be interested, especially if they like this podcast they're going to love it. Okay, that's number one.

Number two, I am in the midst of finalizing the most amazing business coaching program I think on the planet. Okay, there's probably one out there that's better than mine. But this one's going to be pretty darned good. I'm so proud of it. I'm so excited about it. I'm so passionate about helping other people who want to build successful businesses. Maybe you have a business already. Maybe you're a photographer. Maybe you're a coach of some sort. Maybe you don't have a business but you want to start a business.

Maybe you have a direct sales or MLM type business, whatever it is we can get you up and running or we can take you to the next level. There's going

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to be all kinds of options in this program but you're not going to want to miss it once it goes live. It's not going live till the end of summer. But I'm just kind of teasing it a little bit right now because you're going to want to get on the interest list so that you don't miss out. And you do that at jodymoore.com/business. Okay, that's what I've got for you today. There's more coming but I don't want to overwhelm you.

So let's talk about boundaries. Let's talk about how to set effective boundaries. So I teach a lot about relationships. And I was realizing the other day that I sort of have an imbalance of talking to people about stopping trying to control all the people around them and being upset and thinking people should be different versus the opposite side of having boundaries. And I am a believer that you should have boundaries which is I shouldn't say the opposite side. It's not in opposition to stopping controlling people. It's just people think of it that way.

And so a lot of times when I put content out there about what if we just let everyone be themselves, what if we stop trying to control them? The most common point of confusion I would say is that people are like, "But what about if that person is really mistreating me?" Or what if – I get sometimes angry people actually saying, "You're telling people they should just allow others to walk on them, or mistreat them, or take advantage of them?" And I'm like, "No, I'm not a believer in that at all and that's not the message I'm trying to send."

But I just want to make sure I do a thorough job of covering boundaries because to me that's where boundaries come in. So the way I'm going to teach this to you today is kind of in two parts. So I want you to think of it this way. The first part that in my mind is the main part of setting boundaries is something that you do with yourself. I mean you can get help from a friend or a coach or somebody.

But what I mean is it's something that you do in your head or on paper, whatever you figure out for yourself what your boundaries are and you make some decisions and some commitments to yourself about your

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boundaries. And you get your head in the right place and you start feeling the way you want to feel as you set those boundaries. In my mind that is 80-100% of boundary setting. The other 20% which is where most people focus and they think it's the majority of the boundary and I just don't see it that way.

The other 20% is you having a conversation maybe informing this other person about your boundary. The reason I say that the first part is 80-100% is because it's not always necessary to have a conversation and inform other people of your boundaries.

I was just downtown this morning in Spokane, downtown is the most interesting part of Spokane, it's beautiful, and fun, and amazing but there's a lot more diversity downtown. And so it's possible when I'm downtown that somebody might just start yelling at me and swearing at me, just like some mental illness walking around downtown. So that could happen.

Even though I know that's a possibility I don't walk around downtown going up to everyone that crosses my paths going, "Just so you know, if you start swearing or yelling at me I'm going to walk away, or I'm going to remove myself, or I'm going to protect myself." Even though that is a boundary I have. If somebody started yelling at me, or swearing at me, or I felt like I was in danger I would remove myself from the situation. That is a boundary I just sort of – we probably instinctually all have that boundary. We would try to remove ourselves from danger or get help.

But I don't have to walk up to every person and tell them that. So there are situations even in your life, even in your own personal life and your relationships with people you know where you may not need to communicate that boundary. You can just start enforcing your boundary for yourself. And we'll talk more about that in this episode in a little bit here. But just know that the majority of the work happens with you getting your head in the right place and making some decisions and some commitments.

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I'm also though like I said, going to talk about when to have a conversation. Now, the way I want to go through this is I decided for me the easiest way to approach it would be to talk about misconceptions I think a lot of people have around boundaries. And when I say misconceptions I just mean sometimes people teach boundaries this way and I happen to think that it at times doesn't work for people. That's not to say my way is the right way and their way is wrong, it's just for me and my clients this way of thinking about it is far more effective and empowering.

So if a different way is more effective and empowering for you, do it. I'm your biggest fan. But I want to teach you what might feel like a slightly different way of thinking about and setting up boundaries.

So misconception number one that my clients come to me with is they say, "I think I need to set a boundary because I am fed up with this person." Now, again not to say that it's wrong to decide you need a boundary then. But what I want to add to it is you don't have to be fed up to decide to set a boundary. And in fact when my client is really upset, and angry, and frustrated with that other person we always begin with cleaning up those emotions.

Ideally boundaries are not set from anger, and angst, and irritation, and resentment. I'm not going to say never. There might be times when you just can't get out of that. I'm just saying, in many cases it's very available and way more effective for you to set a boundary from a more empowering emotion because the emotion of fear, anger, resentment, frustration is disempowering and it doesn't feel very good. It's not our most favorite way to feel. And when we set a boundary from those emotions we're trying to control another person.

Now, again there are extreme situations. If I'm walking downtown and someone starts chasing me with a knife or a gun, I'm going to feel fear. And I'm going to try to enforce my boundary of getting away from that person and it's okay. But what I'm saying is, again, most of the situations in most of your lives do not require or even have to be from those negative emotions.

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So here's what I find is the easiest to get to is instead of let's say frustration and resentment we can get to compassion or even just confusion. The opposite of judgment in my opinion is compassion.

Judgment says, "They shouldn't do that. Don't they know people don't do that?" You shouldn't lie to your sister. If I have a sister that's lying to me that might be like you shouldn't lie. You shouldn't do that with kids. That's not the right way to raise kids. You shouldn't give money to that person who's addicted to drugs, you shouldn't, whatever it is. Our judgments, people shouldn't do that, not really a very useful place to set a boundary from.

You shouldn't invite your family to dinner, mother-in-law, every Sunday, you should give them space. You should know they need personal time. What? Why are we going to go into it thinking that? Of course she should invite you every Sunday. You know what I like to think if I'm in a situation like that? I like to think of course they want to hang out with me every Sunday because I'm super fun. Who wouldn't want to be with me every Sunday? She's not doing anything wrong. I don't need to set a boundary to try to control her. I need to clean up my own resentment.

She can do whatever she wants. She can invite me every Sunday. I hear this from the mother-in-laws too, "My daughter should not ask me to watch her kids so often." Of course she should, do you know why? You're the most amazing grandma ever and you're the best babysitter and her kids love being with you. She should ask you over and over again. It's just that if we don't have a boundary of knowing how to say no then we get ourselves into trouble and we wish they wouldn't ask. Are you with me?

So I don't have to be resentful or angry that they're doing what they're doing. I can be either curious or sometimes I'm confused. Sometimes I'm just like, "I wouldn't do that. It doesn't seem like that is going to serve them best in the end." But they can, they can do whatever they want. So we don't have to be angry. We don't have to judge their behavior. But again you can even set a boundary around something that in your mind doesn't feel like a

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moral right or wrong thing. It's just something that you prefer not to have in your life.

For example, maybe you have a friend who is always late. You can just decide I have a boundary that I wait this long for my friend and then if she doesn't come I don't wait around for her anymore. Or whatever boundary you want to set. And again maybe you communicate it to your friend but maybe not. Maybe you just go, "You weren't there so I left, so sorry. I love you. I'm sad that you weren't there but that's just what I do. I don't wait around longer than this amount of time."

So you don't have to be angry to set a boundary. A boundary is just a decision that you make about what you will do to make sure that you're taking care of you. That's it. What am I going to do? Because I can't control all the people outside of me, so if somebody behaves in a way I don't care for or they don't behave in the way that I prefer they behave. What will I do that is legal, and moral, and ethical, and feels like maybe my highest self, that will allow me to still have as much as possible of what I want for myself and my life? That's it. That's a boundary.

So we don't have to be mad at them for doing what they want to do. We just need to shift into a more empowered place of it's okay, they can do what they want. I'm going to do what I want. That's misconception number one. You don't have to be angry. You don't have to be fed up. This isn't about trying to control other people because we're mad at them. Let's go to number two.

Number two misconception is that other people should honor our boundary. And once I set a boundary then they will follow it. They will respect it. They will uphold it. I hate to tell you friends but that's not going to be the case many times. Let's say your sister asks you to watch her kids often. And you have decided you don't want to watch her kids as often as you have been. This is actually typically why we have to do this work with ourselves of sitting down and deciding what's my boundary and how am I going to uphold it for myself, is because we haven't had a boundary.

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Maybe we didn't realize we needed one, or maybe we just didn't have the courage to do it, or we didn't know how to say no, or whatever. There are all kinds of reasons why. But usually when a boundary is necessary is because somebody's been violating what we didn't even consciously realize was a boundary of ours. And I should say we've been allowing that. So if my sister keeps asking me to watch her kids over and over again and I don't know how to say no, I'm not very great that so I do it.

I decide wait, I think I might need a boundary here. A boundary could be as simple as if my sister asked me to watch her kids and I don't want to I say no. Again I don't necessarily have to sit down with my sister and go, "Just so you know I'm going to start saying no more often." Although if it feels kind and respectful for me to go, "Hey, going forward I'm not going to be as available because it's just too much of a toll on me emotionally." You can if that feels kind but you don't have to. So that doesn't mean that my sister's going to stop asking me to watch her kids.

That doesn't mean that the person will stop violating my boundary. Maybe I have a boundary with a spouse which is like, "Hey, you've been lying about this thing. And if you lie again this is what I do to protect myself." At some point a boundary actually can become severing the relationship. It might be like if that happens again I'm done. I don't really want to be married to someone that I can't trust.

It might be if you behave in this way, if you have a spouse who gets very angry, and upset, and is emotionally or physically violent or something. I highly recommend that you have a boundary of when you get upset and I feel unsafe I leave. Maybe you leave for a little while. Maybe you leave for overnight. Maybe you leave permanently. I don't know. But I've got to create a safe environment for myself. So if you choose to get upset I will leave and remove myself from the situation.

So if that's a boundary then a lot of times my clients say, "Well, I set this boundary and he is not honoring it. He still gets mad. He still gets violent. He gets angry." I'm like, "Yeah, that's his habit." We should probably expect

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that people are at least some of the time going to keep doing what they've been doing. Hopefully if we share our request with them and we do it from compassion or at least confusion.

I don't know why you get so angry, I'm a little confused by it but this is what I'm going to do. Hopefully their knowing that will influence them to try to monitor themselves. But we're not going to count on that. We're not going to a 100% expect that. I certainly don't think you need to be angry, or frustrated, or disappointed if it doesn't happen. You just need to uphold your boundary.

So I know this sounds strange. It might sound strange to your head a little bit when I say don't expect that people are going to do what you want them to do. But I find it to be so empowering. And I like to expect that they might do what I want them to do and they might not. And I'm going to choose how I want to feel. I don't want to set myself up for frustration, and anger, and resentment, and disappointment because then I have to punish me by feeling that way.

So when I expect that they might or they might not then I'm not taken off guard and I'm not super angry. I'm just like okay I kind of thought maybe that might happen. I hoped it wouldn't but I knew it might. So this isn't shocking. This isn't front headline news. They tend to do this, that's why I had to do this boundary work. So what do I do now? Yeah, I remove myself just like I said I would. Have a plan for what you're going to do. Expect that if you haven't been upholding that boundary it's going to feel weird.

If every time my sister asked me to watch her kids I say yes, then the first time I say no I'm going to be uncomfortable. And she's going to be like, "What?" She might be mad even. She might get really mad at me. But listen, what's the alternative? You allow people to do what they want at your own expense and then you're mad at you and you're mad at her. Or you take care of yourself and you honor yourself. And you do your work to know that you don't have to be mad at her. Remember, we're going to be compassionate or at least confused.

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And her emotions about you are up to her to manage. And it can be, “I’m so sorry, I love you. I don’t want you to be mad. I hope you’re not mad.” But in the end if they want to be mad it’s up to them. Are you with me? So this sort of got ahead of myself and bled into number three a little but I’ll just expand on it. The number three – so misconception number one was that you’ve got to be fed up to set a boundary. Number two was that other people should honor the boundary.

And then number three was that I should be really mad if they don’t honor it. See how I got ahead of myself? But listen, you really don’t have to be. I promise you that other people you guys, they have good reasons for what they do, just like we have good reasons for what we do. And I really do think that everyone’s doing the best they can it’s just sometimes our best is really bad. It’s true. So that person doesn’t know better. They don’t know how to do better or just in that moment they weren’t capable of doing better or they don’t think they’re doing anything wrong in the first place.

So we don’t have to be mad because if being mad controlled them, if it made us more influential in getting them to behave how we want then I might be a fan. But I haven’t found that to be the case. In fact I’ve found it to be the opposite. I’ve found that it only pushes people further away and makes them more committed to their side and we become more committed to ours and we create even more drama and more problem. So you don’t have to be mad.

It can just be like, “Okay, well, this thing has gone on, now you’re upset, you’re yelling at me, you’re angry. I’m going to go ahead and get the kids in the car and we’re going to go to my mom’s for a while and we’ll be back later tonight or we’ll be back tomorrow. And I love you. I’m so sorry. This is not me trying to punish you. I just need to make sure I protect us.”

That can be what it sounds like and what it looks like. It’s so much more fun, not just fun though, these aren’t fun situations. That’s not the right word. Just so much more peaceful, so much more empowering to stay

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calm in a situation like this. Okay, let's talk about number four. This one, are you ready?

The number four and this is the final misconception then we'll talk about the conversation. The final misconception I want to talk to you about is that a lot of people think, well, it's just going to make my life so much easier to have boundaries. Be careful because it will make your life better. It is the more empowering, more mature, more in control of your own reality way to live but it's not necessarily easier especially in the beginning. It will in fact be harder.

And I want you to know that because when it feels hard I hope that you'll hear me in your head and you'll go, "Yeah, Jody told me this was going to be harder at first. And it's not going to feel like it's making my life easier necessarily because my brain's going to go, "This is so hard. You know what? It's not a big deal. We should just say yes. We should just deal with it. We should just let this person be late. It's just so uncomfortable." Your brain's going to try to talk you out of it.

I'm telling you that might give you relief in that moment but it's the long term pain of the resentment, and the lack of authenticity, and the lack of control in your own life that is not worth it. Even though in some ways it will make your life harder, in the beginning it's a 100% worth it. It's the discomfort of being empowered and taking responsibility for your emotions, and your relationships, and your wellbeing versus the discomfort of being a victim, and resenting, and blaming, and trying to control other people. I would choose the former all day long.

I would choose the discomfort of empowered, confident, driving my life versus the other. So it will feel harder in the beginning. That's okay, you can do it. Come on in and let me coach you through it if you want. It'll be much easier if I can go through it with you and help you get set up. Or those of you in Be Bold come onto a call or just write in to ask a coach and we can kind of help you get your head in the right place and help you think

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about what your boundary even should be. And how you're going to uphold it and how you're going to think about it if the other person doesn't honor it.

Thinking through all of that ahead of time that's why you see this is 80% of the work, will be really empowering. But you can do it. You can do it.

So let's talk about then quickly here before we wrap up this episode, let's talk about how to have a conversation with the person that you're setting the boundary around if necessary. Like I said if you decide I don't think I need to have a conversation. I think just me knowing what I'm going to do is enough. Great.

But if you want to have a conversation because again it feels like the most loving, it feels like you being the person you want to be in that relationship, it feels like you communicating in a way that is an emotionally mature adult way to communicate in a relationship then great, do it. So I'm going to give you a few pointers.

First of all expect that it might be an uncomfortable conversation. It might be uncomfortable for you, might be uncomfortable for them. If you think it's going to be I like to just say that right out of the gate. I like to say, "Hey listen, I'm kind of nervous to tell you this and it might feel awkward for you to hear. And I hope not." But we just kind of – what do they say? Name the elephant in the room. So that can be a really useful sort of icebreaker. And prepare the person, it's sort of a cushion too for like I'm about to say something that might be hard for you to hear. So that's step number one.

Next thing is I like to communicate with them what my request is. So it might be like, "Hey listen, when you get really upset and yell at me, and criticize me or whatever, you get angry. I feel nervous. Or I don't like it. Or sometimes I don't feel safe. Or I just don't prefer it." That could be, again totally up to you what you choose to allow into your life and what helps you create wellness for yourself. So whatever the behavior is we're sort of giving them the feedback. But remember we don't have to do it from judgment, and criticism, and resentment. We want to clean all that up first.

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So I get why you do it, I know you mean well, I know that you can't help it, or I know that's just the way you deal with challenge, or I know this is your nature. Again let me give you another example. "Listen mom, when you come over every day and you don't even give me a heads up. I don't really like that. It feels like an infringement on our time and our privacy. And I get why. I love that you want to be with us. I love that you want to see the kids. I love that we live near you and we can see you any time."

So notice I'm coming from compassion which is compassion is just I understand why. And guess what? Everybody has a good reason for what they do. And if you don't know what it is ask them because I promise, they have a good reason. So we come from compassion and we describe what it is that we don't care for and why. And we just explain what the boundary's going to be.

Like, "I really need you to call first and just know that if you come over more than that, or if you ask more than that, or if you come over without calling then we're just not going to be able to let you in. I'm so sorry. I'm going to have to tell you we're busy, you'll have to try another day and you've got to call us ahead of time." That's it. You just kind of explain what you're going to do.

And again, I like to be as compassionate as possible like, "I love you, the reason I'm telling you this in fact is because I love you because I want us to be even more connected. And connection comes from me being real with you. And this is what's real for me. Maybe it's wrong to feel that way. I don't know. It's just it is where I'm at. It's how I feel." So you sort of communicate your request all the while notice I'm trying to not tell her she has to be different. I'm just simply explaining where I'm coming from and given a heads up as to what's going to happen going forward.

Again back to the spouse situation it might be like, "From now on when you get really upset, if I feel unsafe I'm going to go and leave for a little while." Or if you're to the point where you're going to leave the marriage you communicate that. And again it's because I have to own my responsibility

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to create wellbeing for myself. To keep my head and my heart in the place I want to be as a person. And it's just too hard for me to do when I'm around this type of behavior. So there you go.

Now, obviously we want to give them room to talk. We want to ask them their thoughts. We want to talk through it but overall that's what a boundary conversation sounds like. Again, they are for most of my clients, challenging conversations but can create so much connection. I've seen people over and over again improve their relationships so much by being honest and authentic and owning their own experience in the relationship.

And sometimes that happens immediately, sometimes we go through a period where the relationship feels harder because that person might not receive it very well but then eventually it can get better and in most cases it does.

So I hope that you will be brave enough to do boundary work my friend because I don't think you'll need it regularly but there will probably be times in your life when you will need it in your relationships with other people. And it really can be life changing to do. So thanks for joining me today you guys.

Please share this episode with anyone that you think could benefit, which is anybody that interacts with other human beings. But maybe there's someone specific that comes to your mind that's struggling in a relationship or maybe you just want to send it out to people and say, "I hope none of you need to do this right now but just in case I thought this would be good information to keep in your toolbox." So I would love if you would share it with others.

Thanks so much for the reviews you've been leaving on iTunes. You guys are amazing. I was just reading some the other day and they're very fun to read. And have a beautiful rest of your week. I'll see you next time. Bye bye.

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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 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.