

## 321: Physical Pain



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With Your Host

**Jody Moore**

## 321: Physical Pain

I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy*, episode 321: Physical Pain.

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, welcome to the podcast. This is a topic that I've coached on a couple of times this week and I coach on it actually pretty regularly. It's one that I just felt prompted to talk to you about this week because we have a lot of people unfortunately in this world who are living with a great deal of physical pain. Sometimes it's a temporary state. Sometimes we know the cause, sometimes we don't. Sometimes it's a chronic ongoing thing. And it is one of the most challenging trials I think that any of us are asked to endure as human beings here on planet Earth.

And I am not a doctor. I am not even a psychiatrist or psychologist. But I have coached a lot of people in this scenario. And I have experienced of course some physical pain myself. And I've had the experience of watching some of my loved ones, especially my mother who has pretty chronic pain as a result of the cancer that has taken a toll on her body. So, I want to speak a little bit to it today. And I want to begin by mentioning that one of the things I teach is that the worst thing that could happen to any of us is a negative emotion.

What I mean by that is when a client tells me that they're worried or they have a problem they can't solve, they're worried about their child or something going on for them, or they're stressed, or anxious, or overwhelmed. I always point out to them that what we're afraid of, what we're trying to prevent, what we're trying to solve for is just negative emotion. And the way that the brain tries to solve for it is with negative emotion.

Okay, so let's say I have a child who is making choices that I think are going to be detrimental and I'm worried about the consequences of those

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choices. What I'm really worried about are the negative emotions that my child might experience as a result of those consequences. But also, the negative emotions that I will experience if I see this terrible thing happen for my child. And so, we worry and stress and get really anxious and panicked which is a negative emotion in an attempt to try to prevent that negative emotion down the road. See what I'm saying?

So, when I say to people the worst thing that could happen is negative emotion. What I'm pointing out is simply what you're trying to prevent and avoid with all of this negative emotion is negative emotion because that doesn't make sense. .If what we're really trying to prevent is negative emotion for us or our loved ones then creating a bunch of negative emotion right now is probably not the way. It's at least not necessary, and it's not useful, and it's not preventative, it's actually adding more negative emotion to our lives rather than preventing it.

So that's a really powerful concept. And really one that helps me get out of negative emotion because I remind myself, okay, well, if there's negative emotion down the road then I'll just do that. But I'm not going to do it right now when it's not even necessary. I'm just creating it and I don't want to or need to where I was creating it. But there will be times when I would want to create negative emotion for myself. And right now, is not one of those times. So, it's powerful if you can use it in that way.

But inevitably the question I get a lot of times is what people say, "Well, I get that you're saying the worst that could happen is negative emotion and I see why. But what about physical pain?" What if the worst thing that could happen is physical pain? So, here's what I want to say about that. I don't know the answer to this. I'm not claiming to have an answer that I'm trying to give you. But I just want you to ask yourself the question. Is physical pain or emotional pain worse? And I don't know that we need to define one is worse than the other.

But here's what I have observed. Physical pain when we add emotional pain on top of it is terrible. The emotions that we add on top of our physical

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pain are in fact what make it intolerable in many cases. So, pain, physical pain, not fun, not something I would wish on people, not something I would expect you to enjoy, not good. But physical pain plus depression, or guilt, or shame, or resistance that is somewhat intolerable.

Now, having said that I also want to mention that I think there is a very delicate balance that I offer to my clients when I'm coaching this and that I would want you to offer to yourself. A delicate balance of both compassion for yourself, and love for yourself, and patience with yourself when you are creating negative emotion on top of your physical pain. And also, some redirecting of your thoughts and your experience in that moment even with that physical pain.

So, what I mean is I don't expect you to be able to do this, that I'm going to offer you four things you can try. But I don't expect you to be able to do them all the time, I don't. Especially depending on your situation, how long you've been in pain, how chronic and ongoing your pain is, how severe your pain is. There will be many times when you either don't want to or can't implement any of the strategies I'm going to give you and that is okay as well.

When I say it's intolerable it's not really intolerable, it just that's how a lot of my clients describe it is intolerable. Obviously they are tolerating it. But it feels intolerable. And I want you to know that that doesn't mean you're doing it wrong. It doesn't mean you should be better at this. You have to have compassion, and openness, and acceptance for where you're at. And we're going to talk about that a little bit more. But I just want to be really clear about that.

Now, we know that our physical bodies and our emotional state or our spirits, which includes our thoughts and our feelings, our emotions are very closely linked which I think is kind of cool to consider. I think it's kind of powerful. So even if you're not in physical pain but you've just not had enough sleep or haven't been eating great, if you've eaten a bunch of junk

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food that your body doesn't respond to very well, you'll notice that it's harder to manage your thoughts and your feelings.

I don't know about you but if I go too many nights in a row without getting enough sleep I have a hard time not being grumpy, and irritable, and frustrated with everyone around me. So, our physical bodies are linked to our emotions. They determine how easy or challenging is it going to be for me to manage my thoughts and my feelings. And vice versa, if I'm feeling really worried, and stressed, and anxious, and overwhelmed, our bodies respond to that. Our bodies actually can create illness within us even as a response to the stress, the overwhelm, the anxiety. So good to know.

So, I want to give you like I said, four strategies today to try out. And this might be again that you have an injury or some kind of chronic pain due to an illness or something. Or it might even be that you are pregnant. And so, you feel tired more often. Or your body is a little bit more achier, you're just not feeling great. So, there might be a cause that's even a good thing that creates physical pain. And I think that all four of these are going to apply to you no matter what.

So, first thing is I am a fan of you seeking treatment if possible, seek a remedy if possible. If you have a headache and you can take some Advil and get rid of it and you're not allergic to Advil or something, let's do that. I am not saying let's all sit back and meditate and then you won't have pain. I'm a believer in modern medicine. I'm a believer in you continuing to seek to find a solution, a treatment, a remedy to that pain.

But many times, we can't find a solution or at least it's not going to be an immediate fix. And so, in that situation I recommend number one, that you just get good at that pain, get good at it. Maybe you get chronic headaches. When a headache comes on and again, if you've tried to seek treatment and you haven't found a way yet to get rid of those headaches. Then when the headache comes try on this thought, it's headache time. I'm going to do a headache now. I'm going to get really good at doing a headache. How do

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you do it? What do you need to do? What kind of self-care helps you to manage it?

Relax into it, open up to it, notice that is the opposite of what our brain wants to tell us naturally which is no, no, no, not a headache, not now, no, no, no, I can't do this. I don't want this again. That does not get rid of headaches. It actually just adds resistance and tightness to headaches which tends to make them even worse. And I would offer that this is probably true with any kind of physical pain, pain in your muscles, pain in your bones, pain in your body in some way, stomach pain. I've done this a lot with stomach pain.

So instead of the tightening up against it I want you to relax, open up and take deep breaths, relax into it. Get good at doing it. I've gotten really, really good at stomach aches. You don't need to send me your remedy. I appreciate the offers but so far I haven't found anything. But I just I'm pretty good at doing a stomach ache now. I know how to relax into it. I know what it feels like. I'm not as mad about it as I used to be because I got so good at it. I'm just like, oh, alright, here we go, stomach pain time. So that's number one.

Number two, stay in the present moment. This is really powerful when you're in pain and it's challenging to do. Your brain wants to go to the past and the future. And I just coached a woman who's in a lot of pain. And I noticed her head doing this, she was aware of it too. It's almost like being in her body is so uncomfortable that she can't stay in her body so she jumps back into her head. And then her head runs wild with all kinds of thoughts that then create emotional pain. So, she's still in physical pain but now she has all kinds of emotional pain as well.

And I was trying to help her just stay here in this present moment. Don't go to the past. When your brain tries to go to the past it might sound like this is unfair. This always happens to me. I've been dealing with this for so long. Remember how I used to be, remember how much healthier I used to be, remember how I used to live, remember what I used to be good at. So, it

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kind of tries to, that ego tries to hold onto that old identity of who we used to be, who we were, what we could do. And unfortunately holding onto that old identify prevents us from finding the new identity.

We're going to have to possibly find a new identity, either permanently or at least temporarily. Who is that new version of you going to be? What's she going to do now? How is she going to be the person that she wants to be or he wants to be? You're going to have to let go of the old identity. So, every time you go to the past it's just not helpful. And it also creates resistance in the body from the pain because again we're up in the head running away with thoughts instead of relaxing and being in the body.

When your brain tries to go to the future it might sound like, will I ever be able to do those things again? Will I be like this forever? Will I be in this kind of pain forever? Am I going to need surgery? Am I going to find the right doctor? Am I ever going to find the right treatment? All of these kinds of questions about the future are not really very useful because we don't really know the answers and usually the default brain answer is something that creates more emotional pain.

So instead of going to the future and then creating for yourself a bunch of maybe fear, worry, resentment, self-pity or going to the past I want you to try to stay in the present moment. I know this sounds very fluffy but I promise you it is not. And when you're in physical pain it's especially powerful. And it's not something that I've ever been able to do for long periods of time. I'm not talking about all day that you have to do this. But in moments when you need some relief from that pain and you can't find any other relief, being in the present moment will give you a little bit of relief.

So, there's lots of different exercises you can do to keep yourself in the present moment. I'll tell you, I like to just think about being in my body. And the easiest way for me to do that is to engage all my senses. Again, I'm getting out of my head. I'm getting into my body. What does it feel like to be in my body right now? What does my stomach feel like? What does my chest feel like? What does my throat feel like? What does it feel like in my

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head, in my hands, in my arms, in my toes, in my legs? I just try to get into my body and I feel my body.

Now, this is the interesting thing too about being in pain is usually there is a particular area of our body that's in pain but there are at least some areas that are not. So instead of the focus on my stomach is hurting, my knee is hurting, my back is hurting, you can go to my feet don't hurt, my hands don't hurt, my head feels calm and still, my throat doesn't hurt, I can breathe. And I'm not saying you have to do that.

I also go to the painful area and I try to describe it like what does this stomach pain even feel like? It is sharp, is it fast, is it moving, is it still? All the while taking deep long slow breaths and relaxing into it, just for moments even. Another exercise that's really powerful is just breathing alone, deep long inhales and deep long exhales.

And I'm not a breathing expert but there are a lot of people who are becoming really advanced training available in breathing. And you can work with an expert in breathing techniques. It helps calm down your nervous system. It helps get you back into homeostasis at least emotionally which again we know will help the body physically.

Meditation, that's another powerful exercise, that gets you back into the present moment. There's lots of forms of meditation, lots of great apps out there nowadays, lots of people teaching meditation. That can be really powerful especially if you're in physical pain. Prayer, prayer is a form of meditation that brings you back into a present moment in your body experience, even though there's some thought involved. If you can really get still in prayer and drop into a deep kind of prayer it can be a present moment experience.

So, stay present especially when the pain gets intense, do it a little bit every day if you can.

Alright, the third thing I recommend is to not attach to the thoughts that your brain might offer you about all the other people in your life, especially if



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you're a parent, especially if you're a woman or a mom. Your brain is going to want to try to go there, at least in my experience. All the people I coach seem to have all these thoughts about their kids for example. I should be playing with my kids. I should be taking care of my kids. I want to be able to take care of the house. I want to be able to cook food for everybody.

I want to be able to do all these things for all these people in my life. Guess what? Not right now sister, now is not the time. Now is the time for rest. Now is the time for relaxing. Now is the time for letting the house just turn into whatever it turns into. Now is the time to let the kids run around and do whatever they do. Now is the time for everyone to eat cold cereal for dinner more often and get takeout. That's what this time is. It's not your time to take care of all of them. I promise you that you're doing whatever you need to do, the bare minimum is going to happen, the rest of it really doesn't matter.

It's not the time to feel bad for your spouse, or to worry about what other people are thinking, or whether they're uncomfortable around you. It's just not that time. It's coming from a good place. I'm glad that you're considerate of the people around you. But you have to take care of you right now, that's all most of us can handle when we're in physical pain. You're not in a position to be able to help the rest of them. It's okay. It's possible that them not having you there to care for their needs the way you have could be exactly what they need. It could be the exact experience they're supposed to have right now.

It could be that they're going to learn something, grow in some way, connect with one another or with some other people, or learn some independence. It could be. I don't know. That's none of our business either. I'm just saying, those other people are not yours to manage right now. You've got all you can handle with managing you. So, let's just do that. Your job is your health and your wellness. If you are pregnant you need to rest. You need time to be grumpy maybe. You do not need to clean the house. If you're in pain you need to be in pain. That's it, that's your job.

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Now, I'm going to go to the fourth thing here which kind of piggybacks on what I just said and because number four is to allow yourself your experience. Hold space for yourself to have the experience that you are having. So, you should not be handling this better than you are, I promise. That is not a useful thought. You should not have a better attitude, thinking that thought is adding suffering on top of your pain.

Sometimes I coach people who say, "Well, I'm just really insecure about this. I don't know how to be around other people. People ask me how I'm doing and I hate that question because I don't know what to say." And I say, "Well, what if you allowed yourself the truth of your experience?" It might be that what feels the most authentic to you is to say, "Thanks for asking. I'm in a lot of pain. But also, I don't want people to feel sorry for me and I don't want to be defined by this. So, I'm not really sure how to answer that question. Let's just talk about you instead, how are you doing?"

So, own the truth of your experience for your own sake, not to try to control other people around you, that's not what I'm talking about. And for some of you who are less just kind of vocal, less expressive and maybe you don't share as much in general, it might not be appropriate to share that. I'm just talking about though what's happening internally for you. If you're telling yourself that you should be fine and you should pretend to feel fine so that other people don't feel uncomfortable. Not useful. It's not your job to manage all of their emotions.

So, I just want to end by saying that if you are someone who's in a lot of pain right now, maybe ongoing, maybe temporarily, again, maybe you know why, maybe you don't. I just want you to know that I see you, that I know that is so, so challenging. And I hope that you have help in some form or another dealing with just the emotions of it all and everything. Of course, I hope you have medical help as well. But I hope you have emotional support and help.

I want you to know that this is temporary, it is, I promise you this is temporary. Even if it's not till the next life that you get relief from it, this is

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temporary. And I want you to know that you are loved. And that you are just as valuable, and complete, and amazing as you would be if you weren't in pain.

And if you were able to go do all the things that you desire to do and fulfill all of those goals, and dreams, and ideas that you have in your head, you are just as amazing sitting there resting. processing pain as if you were doing whatever are your most wildest dreams. I promise you. None of this changes your value. You just signed up for a really tough class. So, let's not resist the class. This is the class we're in so now what? Let's get good at doing it.

Alright, I love you so much and I will see you next week on another episode. 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](http://JodyMoore.com/membership).