

343: Facts Are Benign



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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 343: Facts Are Benign.

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 343. How we doing? How's February going? Mine's trucking along slowly but surely. We have a countdown on our fridge because we're going to Disneyland again. We were just at Disneyland it feels like over thanksgiving. But we told our kids that we would go right before spring break. We heard that's supposed to be a good time to go, a not too busy time. And so, we have a countdown on the fridge to Disneyland.

I'm excited to go to Disneyland but I'm even more excited to enjoy some California sunshine. So hopefully we will get some while we're there.

I want to talk to you today about this topic and I'll tell you why. I mentioned this before but we recently did a weeklong program called Train Your Brain. And on the first day I talk a lot about facts versus thoughts. And as you guys who have been listening to the podcast know, I talk about that a lot here on the podcast. But I sort of broke it down on that first day of Train Your Brain.

And then we spend most of the time on Train Your Brain actually doing coaching. But it was so powerful what happened that day because I told myself we're just going to keep it simple and we're going to keep the focus on the difference between facts and thoughts. And sometimes a part of me when I keep things simple, worries that people are going to be bored and they're going to go, "We already know that. We've heard that before." And you do know that, you have heard that before if you've been around here for very long.

But I'm telling you, all we know that but we don't really know the difference always. We don't recognize in our own brains and our own selves the

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difference between facts and thoughts and the power of it is mind blowing. I'm telling you, you don't even have to do some of the more advanced things I teach about questioning your thoughts, and then choosing a new one, and redirecting and all of that.

You don't have to do any of that at times when you just recognize that what you have been viewing as a fact, or just the way the world is, or the way you are is actually not just the way the world is, it's your interpretation of the way the world is. That knowledge will change your life, it will change your experience, it will change you.

And another thing that I'm in the midst of doing right now is teaching a group of amazing, brilliant coaches in my advanced certification coach program. And we have been talking about this as well that our job as coaches, and this is just simply based on the way that I coach, the way that we all were trained at The Life Coach School is we don't view our jobs as to give you advice. We think that would be very pretentious of us to claim that we know what you should do, that we could possibly advise you as to what you should do as coaches.

As humans we think we know what everyone should do but as coaches we understand the truth that we don't. We just view our jobs as being the mirror for you with everything outside of your parents. The actual mirror is the mirror for your parents. If you want to see what you look like, what your clothes look like, what your hair looks like, you step in front of the mirror and the mirror shows you what you look like physically. Our job as coaches is to show you the rest of you, to show you yourself emotionally and mentally, and then you've got to do whatever you want with that.

I like that analogy anyway of the mirror because the mirror is neutral. When I stand in front of the mirror, the mirror doesn't say to me, "You look chubby in those pants." I just see myself in the mirror, it just shows me myself. And then I get to decide do I look chubby in these pants or not. The mirror doesn't say, "You look gorgeous today." I just look in the mirror and then I decide if I'm going to think I look gorgeous today. The mirror couldn't care

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less. The mirror doesn't hold back either. It's not hiding things because it's afraid I might not like that part. It just shows me what's true.

And that's what we're trying to do as coaches. And so, one of the easiest ways to do that, that I want to teach you so that you can coach yourself is to notice the difference between facts and thoughts. Now, a lot of you who either have been listening to this podcast, or maybe you're in Be Bold, or maybe you've worked with a coach before. You're able to identify a lot of your thoughts. In fact, it's not uncommon for clients to come to me and to say, "Okay, this is what's going on and I know this is a thought. And I know this is just a thought. And I know this is a thought."

And that's all great and fine but there's almost always some thoughts in there that you don't realize are just thoughts. This is true for me too when I'm getting coached. I can identify 80/90% of my thoughts even. But there is that little 10% that I don't even realize until someone points out to me, I'm thinking of it as just the way the world is and it's actually just a thought. And again, this is what we try to do as coaches.

I have been teaching my advanced certification coaches that it's sort of like I don't need a mirror to see most of me. I can just look down and I can see that I'm wearing black jeans, and I'm wearing a grey sweater, and I have brown nail polish on. I can see 80% of me, maybe even 90% of me without a mirror. But there are parts of me I can't see without looking in a mirror or a camera of some sort.

I cannot see my eyelashes if I don't look in a mirror other than the tiny little periphery maybe I get out of them. I can't see my nose without looking in a mirror unless I go cross-eyed and then I can see a tiny portion of it. But most of my face I cannot see without looking in a mirror. And that's the part as coaches we're trying to identify and point out to you. Yes, you're aware that this is a thought, and that's a thought, and this is a thought but did you know about this?

I always tell my coaches, it's sort of like, yeah, they can say I'm wearing a grey sweater and black jeans but they can't see that they have chocolate

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on their face without a mirror. My daughter's six years old right now and she eats toast with Nutella for breakfast every morning. Go ahead and judge my parenting if you want. That's probably not the best way to start out our day but that's what we do, toast with Nutella, that's what she likes. And inevitably she gets it all over her face.

And because she's pretty short and all the mirrors in our house are pretty high up, she doesn't want to be bothered to have to be able to see in a mirror so she'll just say, "Mom, do I have chocolate on my face? Did I get all the chocolate off?" She'll try to wipe it off with a napkin and inevitably she always has some chocolate on her face. She can't see it without a mirror. She can see the rest of her body. She can see a lot of herself but not the chocolate on her face.

And that's what I want to offer to you today. I want to show you the chocolate on your face and then you can do whatever you want with it. I don't care if you have chocolate on your face. I'd still think you look adorable. But if you don't want chocolate on your face when you go out the door to get on the school bus I'm going to point it out to you. And that's what we do when we stop and go, "Wait a second, is this really a fact or is this a thought or a story?" Because the truth is facts are benign.

In other words, facts aren't harmful. Sometimes I call them circumstances. Circumstances, facts, I'm going to use those words interchangeably. They don't hurt. They're not good or bad. They're not painful. They're not hard to accept. They're not hard to deal with. They just are, they're benign. And the more benign you can make the facts as you take a look at what's going on for you, the more leverage you'll get over yourself because the more awareness you'll gain over the parts that are the true source of your pain, or your stuck-ness, or your spin, or whatever else is going on.

So, what you want to do is you take any scenario that you're struggling with in your life. And you simply ask yourself, what are the facts? Now, I taught this, like I said, in Train Your Brain. And I explained that facts are just what happened, the things that we could prove, would be provable, the things that everyone would agree on, the things that ideally we could prove even

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scientifically without a shadow of a doubt and nobody would have a different interpretation of it than anyone else, those are facts.

And still I brought on probably four or five people after that and said, “Tell me the facts.” And they all started out giving me thoughts, thoughts that they thought were facts which is brilliant. I’m glad they did that because it’s such a great example of what our brains do and what I’m trying to teach you here. So, what I want to do is give you some examples of what people say to me that they think they’re just telling me the truth about what is.

And I want to point out to you that these are just thoughts. And my hope is that will enable you to do that for your own self with whatever you’re going through in your life right now, whatever you’re stuck, or struggling with, or want to see change. Now, I want to preface it by saying it’s not wrong to think these thoughts. Just because I say this is just a thought, doesn’t mean it isn’t a thought that you should think, that you might even want to think, or that might serve you in some cases. I just want you to know that it is just a thought, it’s not a fact.

So, a couple of these have again come from clients recently. And some of them I just recalled from previous coaching on others or myself. First one, I never finish anything. This is one that a client recently told me. She said, “My therapist and I sat down and we took a look and we’ve realized that I have some perfectionist tendencies or some OCD tendencies and I never finish anything.” And I said to her, “Okay, I never finish anything, is that a fact or a thought?” And she said, “That’s a fact.” That is not a fact, you guys. I never finish anything is not a fact, that’s a thought.

Now, immediately when I point that out and I say, “Wait a second, that’s not a fact, that’s just a thought.” She’s like, “Well, let me give you examples.” This is what we do, as soon as I tell someone it’s a thought, immediately they want to go to the evidence they have in their brain and prove to me that this thought is true. And again, you can keep the thought if you want to. I don’t care at all if you keep that thought. I just need to point out to you because I’m the mirror. I need to show you that that’s a thought that you’re thinking. That’s not a fact about you, you never finish anything.

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I promise, you've finished probably more things than you've not finished in reality. You've just been thinking about recently all the things that you haven't finished and noticing that. So, I finish things is a thought. I never finish anything is a thought. I mean seriously, even if we were to break it down and let's say we took a specific example like I was making a quilt and I didn't finish it. I still wouldn't make that a fact because who's to say what finished is?

I mean, honestly, could we ever really be done or could we always make it better? Could we say that no quilt is actually ever finished because there are always improvements that could be made on it? I don't know, I'm just saying. Just notice it's just a thought. If it's a thought that serves you, that helps you be compassionate and understanding with yourself. And then it drives you to be more of the person you want to be in the world then great. I'm with you and your therapist, let's keep that diagnosis, I never finish anything. But if it doesn't, it is just a thought, you just want to be aware of it.

Here's another one that I hear some version of this pretty frequently when people are telling me about their spouses, or boyfriends, or girlfriends, or partners. They'll say things like this, "My husband is emotionally closed off." Listen, your husband is emotionally closed off is not a fact, that is your thought. I know you have tons of examples you could give me and maybe even other members of the family would agree, and maybe even your husband would agree and say, "I am pretty emotionally closed off." It doesn't matter, that doesn't make it a fact.

We can't prove it scientifically. We can't give him a blood test to see if that's true. Some other people might say, "Compared to this person I know he's actually very emotionally available." I mean what does it mean to be emotionally closed off? We could never define that in a way that everyone would hands down, without argument, agree on. And your husband's behavior, certainly subjective and changing from one moment to the next. So again, you can keep thinking it if you want to. I'm not trying to tell you you're wrong.

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I'm not trying to tell you your husband is emotionally available. I'm just saying, my husband is emotionally closed off is just a thought. How does it feel? How do you show up around your husband when you're feeling that way and thinking that? And what result are you creating for yourself in your life from that thought?

Okay, here's another one I get a lot. People will tell me about themselves when I start coaching them often. They'll give me some background like, "You need to understand these things about me as sort of like the premise of what I'm going to tell you my problem is." They might say something like this, "I'm just not a planner. I'm not good at planning." And I'll stop and say, "Whoa, I am not a planner, I'm not good at planning. That's a thought, that's not a fact." And then they'll kind of laugh and go, "Okay, yeah, I know that's a thought."

Seriously, 95% I bet of your description of yourself that you would give to me or anybody else would be thoughts, maybe even 99%. So little of who you are is actually a fact, most of it is a story, a series of stories and thoughts that you've believed about yourself, that you've observed in yourself and then you continue to make them true. You just are a person, you're a human being. I mean I'd give you that as a fact. Much beyond that is just thoughts. It's totally fine to have thoughts.

We're always going to have thoughts about ourselves and our spouses etc. But you've got to know that they're just thoughts and you've got to know that they're powerful. They're creating the way you feel about yourself, and who you're becoming, and who you're showing up as because your brain wants to be right about what you think more than it wants you to develop a healthy habit and change something in your life for the better. It wants to be right about what you think about you.

I hear a lot of thoughts about children that people don't recognize they're thoughts. They're like, "Okay, well, I have four kids", for example they may say, "I have four children and these are their ages." And in my head I'm thinking, okay, that's a fact, their ages are facts although some people would debate that even. Some people think that age is just a thought, but I

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would give age as a fact. And then they would say, “And this child is this way, and this one’s this way. And then this one, he is our most difficult child, he stirs up a lot of drama in the family.”

And I’ll say, “Wait a second, that’s a thought. You think you’re telling me about your family. You think you’re telling me about your children. You’re telling me your thoughts about your family and your thoughts about your children.” Again, I don’t have any judgment, I’m the mirror here just showing you yourself. I’m not telling you, you shouldn’t think that about your child, or that you shouldn’t think that about your family. I’m just saying those are thoughts that you’re thinking.

The good news about this is that thoughts are optional. I’m not talking about going all the way to thoughts you don’t believe but thoughts are optional and they’re creating your experience of your family right now. There’s no such thing as a difficult child, did you know that? There’s no such thing as a child that just stirs up a lot of drama, that’s really hard for everyone in the family to deal with. That’s your story. It’s okay to have the story. It’s also okay not to have that story.

Okay, sometimes people will tell me about a medical diagnosis and they want to make that the fact. And this is one where sometimes we’ll play with it. So, let’s say you get diagnosed with bipolar disorder, let’s say a psychologist says, “You have bipolar disorder.” Psychiatrist, psychologist, whoever. Now what I would say is a fact is a doctor gave me this diagnosis. But I still wouldn’t say you have bipolar disorder is the fact. I just wouldn’t, I mean not necessarily because did you know sometimes doctors change their diagnosis? Sometimes they’re wrong.

Doctors will be the first to admit that. I think it’s still useful to have a diagnosis in many cases but even that diagnosis is a thought. It’s their best guess. It’s still an informed guess. It’s an educated guess but that doesn’t make it a fact, that makes it a guess, it makes it a thought. I was just talking to a friend today who said, “Yeah, my husband’s been diagnosed as bipolar for years and suddenly he’s gone to another expert who says, “You’re not

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bipolar.”” I mean they’re just thoughts is all I want you to know. It might be a really useful thought, it also may not, it’s just a thought.

Okay, here’s another one I hear a lot. And I think that when we get thoughts from professionals, from people in authority, from people that we trust and respect then we want to make them facts. And I just want you to know that they’re still thoughts, even though again it might be a thought that you want to keep. The fact that you got it, that someone offered you the thought who we would label a professional or an expert in some way doesn’t make it a fact.

One that I hear people share a lot that they get from therapists is, “She triggers me, or he triggers me, or that event is very triggering.” This whole word trigger is just a thought. None of us have a trigger button. A gun has a trigger button. There’s a trigger that you actually push and it releases a bullet. We don’t have triggers, human beings, we just have bodies, and brains, and we have thoughts. And somebody might do something, or say something, or you might be in a certain environment and then your brain quickly offers you a thought.

But he triggers me, she triggers me, that’s very triggering to me is a thought. Again, it might be a thought that’s really useful for you. It might really help you to have compassion and understanding for yourself, and what situations and people that you want to avoid. It might help you have compassion for the way that your brain has been wired due to trauma etc. So, I’m not saying it’s not a useful thought. I’m just saying it is just a thought.

And there are times when I would say it’s probably really serving you that thought and there are other times when it’s not. There’s times when it’s disempowering you, when it’s causing you to give up your own power, and agency over yourself and to have to try to control people or events outside of you. It’s just a thought.

Here’s another one I hear that I don’t think people always realize is just a thought. They say to me, “Well, it’s just too late. I’m too old for that, or that

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ship has sailed, or I missed the best time to do that, the best time to invest in dotcoms was in the 90s.” I mean that’s just a thought. It’s too late, that ship has sailed. I hear this a lot about people looking into life coaching. They’ll say, “I mean I feel like I’m too late. I feel like the market’s already really saturated. I feel like there’s too many coaches.”

And that’s just one example of where I hear it. But that’s the one obviously I’m the most exposed to in my world. And I say, “How does that thought feel?” Or I was just coaching someone recently who said, “I’m a health coach.” And I know the market’s totally saturated of health coaches. I was like, “Whoa, how does that thought feel?” I think this was in my business coaching program this came up. “You know that’s a thought, right?” And she laughed and was like, “Well, yeah, just people say that all the time, there’s so many health coaches.”

I’m like, “Who cares that people say it all the time? It’s not serving you because you’re a health coach trying to find clients. It’s not a useful thought for you to walk around thinking.” Or is it? Let’s question it. Let’s put it in a model. Is it going to serve you or not? I don’t know. What I do know is it’s just a thought. It’s not a fact. We hear this in real estate too. “It’s a buyer’s market, or it’s a seller’s market. The market is great right now. The market is hot right now.” I mean those are all thoughts, you guys, they are. I’m sorry but they’re not provable facts.

What is a great market, or a buyer’s market, or a seller’s market, or a hot market? What does that even mean? We all have slightly different ideas of what that means. We all have slightly different interpretations of what that means. It’s not a fact, it’s a thought. Is it a useful thought? You decide. You decide by taking a look at how it makes you feel in your specific circumstance.

And then you decide based on whether or not that feeling is going to serve you and drive you to be who you want to be, and create what you want to create in your life. And if it’s not, I give you permission to stop thinking that thought.

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Here's another one that I love knowing that this is just a thought. It's seriously, when I learned this probably seven years ago it changed my life because I used to think it and say it all the time as though it were a fact, it's this. Are you ready? I don't know. I don't know what to do next. I don't know what I want to order for dinner. I don't know how to do the thing. I don't know what I should say. I don't know, period, I don't know. It's not a fact, did you know this? This was so mind blowing for me when I learned this. It's not a fact, it's just a thought. I don't know.

And it's a thought that for me I decided not useful, almost always not useful, I mean I could see maybe – actually that's not true, there are times when I find it to be useful. For example, if somebody is asking me about somebody else's business it's useful for me to say, "I don't know." Because I don't know. I don't know what other people are thinking, or feeling, or what they should be doing, or any of that. But other than that, I can't think of very many times when I don't know serves me. So, I just tell myself, when I don't know comes up, I just remind myself, well, that's a lie.

Now, notice, I don't know, is a lie, is a thought. I don't know is a thought. But I don't know is just a lie, is a thought that serves me really well. So, I choose that thought, that's how I answer my brain when it says I don't know. I say, "Well, that's a lie." Because if we did know, what would we say? If we were just to take a guess, what would we pick?

If it was totally figure out-able, if I was capable of getting in and figuring it out, and learning, and deciding, and if there is no right or wrong answer. And if there is just whatever feels like the right next move to me, and I do know all the wisdom lives within me and the way that the spirit guides me is internally. And if I channeled all that and I knew exactly what the right thing was to do or say then what? That's a lot scarier to do, I'll tell you. It's a lot easier to just not know. I used to let myself off the hook all the time with I don't know.

I just let myself stay in a safe easy space. It's easier to not know than to risk a decision, and to risk committing to something, that's a lot scarier, or to go out and try something and fail. That's a lot less comfortable than just

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not knowing. But I don't know is just a thought. It's a thought that'll keep you stuck in most cases, and spinning, and not progressing forward.

Here's another thought that I just wanted to point out to you is just a thought. I miss him, I love him, I love that thing, I hate that thing, I just can't stand this thing, I'm not a fan of that. Liking things, missing things, not missing things, these are all thoughts. Again, nothing wrong with thinking these thoughts necessarily anyway, you want to chuck them out. Do I want to keep thinking that thought? Do I want to keep liking this thing? Do I want to keep not liking that thing?

Food is a good one. I can't help it, I just love chocolate. Did you know that's a thought? That's not an observation of yourself. That's not you telling me about you, that's you telling me your thought. I just love chocolate. I just hate wearing a dress. That's a thought. Again, maybe totally fine, maybe even really useful for you to keep that thought, but maybe not, it's just a thought, just saying.

Okay, the last one I want to mention. When I'm coaching clients any time they start with the word 'obviously', I know that they're probably going to give me a thought that they don't realize is a thought. Because it might be a thought that so many people in the world think and believe to be true, that now we've lost touch with the idea that it is just a thought. Again, not that it's a wrong thought, or a problem thought, it's just a thought.

So, for example people will say things like, "Well, I mean obviously I want my kids to be happy and successful. Obviously we want to focus on our health and take care of our bodies. Obviously we want to try to be on time for things. Obviously we want to respect other people. Again, many of these thoughts are thoughts that I would want to keep, if we put them into models we would see that they're really useful. But occasionally some of them may not be.

I just want you to have the skill. This would be exhausting, I'm realizing now. If you're thinking that I'm saying you should walk around all day and figure out these are all just thoughts, that's not what I'm saying at all. 95,

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98% of the time just let your brain have thoughts and let it do what it does. And even let yourself believe that those thoughts are facts.

But 3-5% of the time in the areas of your life that aren't as amazing as you wish they were. In the areas of your life where you're stuck, or worried, or stressed, or ashamed, or guilty, or overwhelmed, or not moving forward. Those are the areas where I want you to pause and go, "Okay, what are the facts here?" And then don't be easy on yourself here. Really ask yourself, is that really a fact, would everyone agree hands down, and it's very clear what we mean?

For example, it is 36 degrees outside is a fact. Do you see how benign that is? It's actually really boring. It doesn't mean anything until we add some context around it. It's cold outside is not a fact, it's a thought. It's 36 degrees outside is the fact. Get tighter with yourself in terms of separating out facts from thoughts, you guys, in those few areas where you're struggling. And I promise you, this practice alone will cause your whole world to explode in front of you in the best possible way.

It will help you see how much agency you have that you may not be exercising fully. Most of us are nowhere near fully maximizing our agency, we're barely scratching the surface because we're not embracing how much of our experience is up for grabs. So much of it is, my friends, separate out facts from thoughts. Remember, facts are benign. They are not harmful, they are not hurtful, they are not good or bad, they just are.

Alright you guys, have an amazing rest of your week and I'll see you next time. Take care. Bye bye.

Hey there, if you enjoy this podcast or even if you just find that it sort of piques your curiosity, or it makes you think, you're going to love the book that I wrote. It's called *Better Than Happy: Connecting with Divinity Through Conscious Thinking*. And it's available now at Amazon in print or kindle version. Or if you want me to read it to you, head over to audible and grab the audio version. And why not grab a copy for your sister, your best friend, or your mom while you're there too. Just saying.