

353: Spiritual Awakening



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With Your Host

Jody Moore

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I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy*, episode 353: Spiritual Awakening.

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 the podcast, thank you so much for joining me today. If you listened to last week's episode that came out on Friday April 15th, I talked a little bit about Wellness Week that's coming up the middle, latter part of May I should say. And I just want to apologize because I told everyone, go to this page and sign up for it and the page wasn't ready yet. That's totally my bad.

So as of the time that this podcast airs it should be ready to go. And if it's not for some reason we do have on that page, a place where you can be notified when it's ready. But I think it's ready now.

And I really, really want to encourage you to join me for Wellness Week especially if you've been listening to the podcast and have never actually heard these things that I teach you here applied in real life. I'm telling you, it will blow your mind. I know this because it blew my mind the first time I heard it and it blows everybody's minds the first time they hear the tools that I teach you here on the podcast applied in real life situations over, and over, and over again.

And you start to see how the solution to any problem is more simple than we think it is. And it's actually not at all what we think the solution would be. And the way to find the solution is not at all the approach that most of us have been taught our entire lives. It's actually way easier. And I'm calling it Wellness Week because I'm going to be teaching it for five days. It'll be a five day week, a work week, not a seven day week. And just 90 minutes per day. And you can come live or you can sign up and listen to them on replay. We'll release the replays every day.

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And I'm going to be focusing on the five pillars of wellness that have been identified by the world of psychology, especially positive psychology. Those are emotional wellness, social wellness, intellectual wellness, spiritual wellness and physical wellness. And I'm going to talk to you just a little bit about the work that I do as a life coach in helping people understand themselves, become more self-aware. Become more intentional about their decisions and about their attitudes, and their behaviors, and about what they're creating in their lives with regards to those five areas.

And you'll have the chance to interact with me. You can ask questions. You can come on the call. It's just a really, really powerful five day \$19 experience. Honestly, you can't beat it. So go to jodymoore.com/wellness and you can register for that.

Okay, so today we're going to talk about spiritual awakening I'm calling it. I kind of wrestled with what to call, I always wrestle with what to call podcasts, and courses, and everything else. Titles are something that I need someone to coach me around because my thought is I'm not good at them. But anyway, I decided to call this spiritual awakening because originally I was going to call it spiritual maturity but I've probably somewhere in the past done a podcast with that title already.

I'm going to talk about it a little differently today. And the other reason I didn't want to call it spiritual maturity is because I feel when we use the word 'mature' or 'immature' there's judgment behind those words. There is this idea that if you're at least over age 18 or so you should be mature. That if you're a 47 year old woman like I am and you're immature that that's not a good thing. And I don't want you to think of what I'm going to teach you today with any sort of judgment like that.

I don't want you to think that I'm saying it's better if you're more spiritually awake or spiritually asleep. I don't think the judgment behind it is useful or necessary. I think that we're all on our own journey when it comes to our spirituality. And that journey is not going to look the same for any two people really. It's going to have at least slight differences. And that it's okay

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for you to be on whatever part of this journey you're on. So, I want you to think of it as more a spiritual awakening.

And I think some people will go their whole lives without having a spiritual awakening and not be any worse off because of it. I do think that's possibly true. I don't think everyone necessarily needs to. I think for some people being a little bit less awake spiritually works just fine for them. And for other people they're going to have a spiritual awakening and I personally would love to see us get away from the term 'faith crisis'. And this isn't about a faith crisis, even anything of the sort.

But I just think maybe we could find some more useful words that are less filled with judgment you might say. So, I'm going to frame these things in the context of one of the things we believe, those of you who are members of the LDS church like I am. But I hope that I'm going to teach this in a way that you can adapt it to whatever your beliefs are. But I am going to talk about God or whatever divine power you believe in. I think it will be easy for me to teach you what I want to around the concept of God or some kind of divine higher power.

So again, modify it however you choose. But I want to start from the premise that all of this isn't just a happy accident. So, whether you think it's God, or the universe. If you don't think there's any higher power, you think this is all just a really cool accident that we're all here on Earth, and that everything exists the way it does, and works the way it does. And the Earth rotates around the sun and gravity keeps us all here. And oxygen keeps us alive, and then human beings are able to reproduce other human beings, and other animals and plants do the same thing.

If you think all of that is a big accident, and I don't mean this with sarcasm or whatever, but this might not be the episode for you. You might want to just skip this one. Because I'm going to assume that for this one we agree that there's some kind of higher power, whether you like to call that higher power, God, heavenly parents, the universe, whatever, behind all of this, that has some role in orchestrating this.

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And so, I want you to ask yourself, who or what is that higher power? So again, if you're a member of the LDS church like me then we believe there is a heavenly father and a heavenly mother. And I'm just going to say, God, to sum it all up. Who is God? So, I think that there's a sort of level one way to answer that question. And I'm going to call level one the fear based way of answering this question.

The fear based way says that because there is this higher power that we should be afraid and that we are inadequate. And that because I feel afraid a lot of the times, and because I question my worth and my value, it must be true, that there is this higher power looking down on me to see if I'm doing it right or wrong. Who decides whether or not they approve of me or love me based on how well I follow the rules? This is a fear based view of God.

Now, a lot of people were offered this view when they were raised in a religion or by parents who were a member of – this can happen in any faith, including the LDS faith, who used spirituality or religion as a way to try to control you. If your parents used the scriptures, the commandments, the things we learn at church as a way to try to control you, to try to scare you into behaving, to chain you at times, to try to make you feel guilty, to make you feel like you're not good enough. That is a form of trauma I believe. And that will possibly result in you viewing God in this fear based way.

And unfortunately, this used to be a common occurrence, it really did. And it might have been a really blatant abuse of religion in the gospel, in the doctrine. Or it might have just been through more subtle undertones. It might not have been as intentional, it might have been on accident even. It might have been your parents, or leaders, or teachers thinking that they were doing right by you but actually creating fear within you when it comes to God. So, when you think about God, how do you view Him or her, or whatever you believe God is?

Is he scary? Is he disapproving? Is he disappointed in you? And whether that came from a view that someone offered you or your brain just adopted it, I think that's a fear based way. Sometimes people use the

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commandments or the doctrine of the church as a way to judge whether or not other people are doing it right. Here's the rules about how a person should be and I notice that this person, my child, or my spouse, or whoever is not following these rules. They're doing it wrong.

That is a very fear based way and a very, we might even say immature way of viewing the gospel and the commandments, the doctrine that we've been given. That is not the point of it. It's not the purpose of it. So, I think that this is offensive to our souls. I think we know it's not right. I don't even think we actually feel good when we're doing it to others. It makes God or religion like fire, it's dangerous. It can warm you but it can also burn you.

So, this is also kind of, when I think about this fear based level one, level of spirituality, it's the person with a sign on the street corner yelling, "Repent now or you're going to hell." It's the angry person trying to scare everyone around them into being 'righteous'. It's crazy because some of the things these people say are not actually all that different from things that I would say or that I believe even. But the energy behind it, the intention behind it, the lack of spirituality we might say, behind it, the fear based approach to it just feels off.

We just know there's something not right about that. There's something very judgmental about that. And there's something that's missing in all of that. This level, this fear based way of thinking about God lacks awareness of the human condition. The human condition is to (a) be afraid at times or feel you're missing out on something that you're supposed to have at least. And to (b) question our own value and worth.

That's the human condition. I'm not sure why but according to psychology, behavioral science, everything else that we know about human behavior, human beings, healthy human beings that are not suffering from mental illness or other mind altering chemicals or what have you. Healthy human beings will at times question their own value and worth, wonder whether or not they're doing it right and feel like they're missing out on something. It just is the way of it. It's going to happen at times, not all the time, but some of the time.

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So, if we take that human condition that we have and we put it onto God and we say, “This must mean God is disappointed in me. Or this must mean God thinks I married the wrong person, or God thinks I should be living a different life.” It’s a very fear based level one spiritually immature way of understanding God.

Now, some of you might be thinking, I don’t think I ever went through that phase. I don’t think I’ve ever been afraid of God or viewed him as angry, or punitive, or I don’t think I’ve been through that phase. That might be. That could be true. I don’t know that everybody goes through this phase but a lot of people do. A lot of people do. Again, sometimes it’s offered to you by people outside of you, sometimes your brain just picks it up and thinks it’s useful. No judgment if you’re in that phase. This is just about awareness.

This is going to be a spiritual awakening. I’m just sort of nudging you like, hey, maybe we want to wake up from this nap. So, let’s talk about level two and by the way there are going to be three levels I’m going to talk about today. And I’m not here to say they go necessarily sequential. I think this is complicated dynamic stuff so please don’t think I’m trying to claim to be the expert on this. This is just what I’ve noticed in the coaching that I do.

So, level two I’m going to call external answers. We answer the question about who is God for example, externally. We look outside of ourselves for the answer. So, it might be this is what I was taught. This is what people told me, or who other people told me God is and who He isn’t. And this is even what I read in the scriptures. This is what the scriptures say right here in this verse, in this chapter, it says right here, God is this. Now, again there’s nothing wrong with this. This isn’t wrong per se.

It’s a level up from fear hopefully. I mean you can find fear based answers outside of you or in the scriptures. But it’s still not fully spiritually awake. We’re still a little bit snoozing because we’re simply doing the work to find it externally. And it might be this general authority, or church leader, or prophet, or whatever said this thing in conference, in general conference. A general conference is a big conference we have twice a year. Leaders of

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our church speak and they try to clarify doctrine and really provide us uplifting messages.

So, we can take something that someone said and go, “See, it says right here, God is this way or this is the way that we’re supposed to interpret the scriptures, or this is the way we’re meant to live.” I’m not saying this is wrong. I’m just saying it’s not very spiritually awake. Sometimes it sounds like this, I hear people say this. “We teach this all the time at church.” Or, “We say, people say this all the time at church.” Or, “In our church we believe this. We teach this. We say this. Everybody thinks this.”

See how I’m getting the answers from outside of me? I’m getting answers to questions or my understanding of whatever spiritual principle, in this case I’ve been using the example of God from outside of me. It can be kind of scary this part, this level of spirituality because what if somebody says it in a way that I don’t care for? What if they say it in a way that doesn’t feel right or true to me, now what? Does that mean that I belong to a church that I don’t believe in? It’s kind of scary this level.

I’ve had people, I’m not even joking about this. I’ve had people send me scriptures saying, “Well, Jody, you taught this on your podcast but in this verse of this scripture right here it says this thing.” The example that stands out the most in my mind is, I did a podcast years ago on sex in marriage, intimacy in marriage. And I said that neither the husband nor the wife owes anybody anything, that we don’t have ownership over one another’s bodies. And somebody sent me a scripture probably from the Old Testament that said something about the wife owing her husband something.

I wish I would have saved that email, dang it. I couldn’t find it. It was years ago. But it was a scripture that if you’re going to interpret it literally it sounds like the wife owes her husband sex whenever he wants it. And I said, I mean I’m just curious, if we were to interpret scriptures literally, there’s all kinds of things. I think isn’t there a scripture that says when your brother dies you have to marry his wife?

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And there's just a lot of things in scriptures that if we're going to take one verse out of context and then interpret it literally and try to make it true for today's society, we're going to have some problems on our hands. So, this is again a spiritually sort of sleepy snoozy less awake level when we start pulling scriptures or a verse from a conference talk and we make it a one size fits all. This is always true and this is a literal interpretation of what this means.

This level of spirituality is sort of more letter of the law versus spirit of the law. Sometimes that's the wording we use to describe it. It tends to be black or white, all or nothing. It tends to be either I'm good or I'm bad. Either he's righteous or he's evil. I just had this experience actually where I went to a conference, there was a lot of language at this conference. There was some things taught that those of us who are members the church don't necessarily live our lives that way.

And I had some people telling me that they were really unsettled by that. And I said, "Now, don't forget", this is a business conference where we went to learn marketing. So did you get any good marketing tips?" And you don't have to put yourself in any environment you're not comfortable in, totally fine to do that. But notice the amount of judgment that goes into people shouldn't talk that way or they shouldn't believe that way. And it must not be a good thing.

I'm like, "What are you talking about? There's so much goodness here." I'm taking all the goodness. And I'm bringing a different perspective. I'm going to bring an example of how to market without the effort. So just be careful. It's a little bit less spiritually awake to have this all or nothing mentality about things. Now, there is a bit of a safety in this kind of spirituality, in this level of spirituality. There's safety in just believing that we know.

There's sort of a security behind, if I don't know the answer I can just go look it up and find it or do some research on churchofjesuschrist.org and find the answer. There is a sense of safety and security in that. And if there are wrong answers then that means there are right answers and our brains like that. Our brains like there to be right and wrong. But I do believe it's an

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oversimplification of what are really complex topics when it comes to the kinds of questions that religion is meant to answer, that the gospel tries to answer.

Now, I want to point out that while the first type of spirituality, I described that fear based spirituality tends to not be useful. I can't think of a single time when it would be useful. This level of spirituality, you may have a very positive view of God and it might serve you just fine. You might view God in a really useful way. When I say useful, you have to check it out and decide, is this useful? Is this the way I want to understand God? But I do think that there's a third level that is sort of awesome and frightening to explore.

And in this third level of spiritual awakening, we start to literally wake up. And instead of being in a fear based place and thinking, I'd better live this way or else I'm going to be in trouble. Or instead of looking for answers outside of me in what other people say and what other people teach, even in what the scriptures say, I'm going to look for answers internally. I'm going to seek to understand God the way He wants me to know Him. That's what I mean by internally.

I'm going to go on a journey of exploring and understanding who God is. And who I am in relation to Him, and who everybody else is as well, who we all are and what this is all about. Now, in order to go through that process, we still need the scriptures. We still might even use some conference talks and things. Please don't say, "Jody Moore's saying we shouldn't read our scriptures." I'm not saying that. I'm saying, when you read your scriptures don't look for literal interpretations and try to oversimplify things.

Open yourself up to the process that the spirit can take you through of understanding what that story you're reading in the Bible or in the Book of Mormon, or wherever you're reading it, means for you right now at this point in your life. How that applies to you, what it means for you personally. That's something that nobody else can answer for you. Nobody else can tell you, including your spouse, or your mother, or anybody who you think

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knows you really well, still cannot answer the question of, what does this mean for me in my life better than you can.

The spirit can speak to you and take you through a process. Now, this process feels scary. It does, it feels scary because it means we have to be willing to not know some things. We have to hold space for unanswered questions. We have to let go of what we thought we knew even, of what we thought God was. Most of us have a view of God that is a lot like some other authority figure in our lives. So maybe it was your father, or your mother, or a teacher, or a mentor.

And again, maybe that person was kind and loving and still held you accountable and had high expectations for you. And maybe that is a positive thing, okay, that's alright. I'm not saying you have to let go of it altogether. I'm just saying, open yourself up to that's the story I created and I might be right about some of it.

But I want to know who God is and what He is like, and how He feels about me. And how He feels about me right now and how He feels about me at any time in my life, and what He desires of me, and what He thinks I'm capable of, and what He wants to offer to me. I mean those are some tough questions to answer. Those require an opening up in an uncomfortable space.

The other thing that I think this particular journey requires is stillness. And by stillness I mean quieting the noise. And I don't know about you but I do not like to quiet the noise because I don't have to. I have AirPods, two sets of them just in case one is missing or not charged fully. So, I can put my AirPods in and I do all day long. And I have music, or an audiobook, or a podcast, or something in my ears. And that's not a bad thing but sometimes I need to quiet it and allow the spirit to speak to me.

Now, I do find that I feel like the spirit speaks to me through music, or through other people's teachings, or words at times. So, there's that. But just make sure that you're allowing space for the spirit. I think that's important.

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The other thing I want to say about this level three of having your spirituality defined with you and the Lord is that unfortunately I find that it's most available to me when I'm going through something really hard in life. I wish that wasn't the case. I wish I could make progress when things are smooth sailing but I just don't. Maybe it's because I'm not humble enough. Maybe it's because I'm not seeking enough, I'm not open enough.

But when something really challenging is going on with myself or someone in my family, or I'm struggling in some way that is when I feel, it's almost like I have a wound, I have been cut open. And now I'm open, and vulnerable, and available to really have some spiritual progress, to really understand and connect more with God. Now, it doesn't have to be major trials though.

I think this kind of spiritual awakening can happen in small incremental ways, especially if you're open to it, especially if you have a regular practice of listening, of being still. Maybe it's through meditation. Maybe it's through prayer. Maybe it's journaling. A spiritual practice, it can happen in small incremental ways as well. So this internal spiritual awakening allows room for you to know God, and for you to know yourself better. For Him to reveal Himself to you.

Here is the other thing I want to say about this third level. It doesn't require validation from others. It doesn't require, not that you can't share with other people what you've discovered and what you believe, you totally can of course. But you don't need other people to validate it and tell you that you're right. I mean when we truly do the work, Joseph Smith saw a vision, he didn't need other people to tell him, "Yeah, that's what that was." He made some major spiritual progress, spiritual awakening when he had that vision.

It doesn't require validation from others. It doesn't mean it won't be hard if we don't get it. But it can just be a personal experience, you don't have to share it with anyone. And if you do, it might even be rejected by others, honestly. You might run into people who still view the world more through that level two spirituality, where there are checklists and rules. And there's

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just clear right and clear wrong, and it's a one size fits all. And they may think that you're wrong. And that doesn't make you wrong, my friends, it really doesn't.

The last thing I want to say that I love about this level of spirituality, which is by the way, a level I'm still working to achieve. I think I'm in the very beginning stages of level three. I think I'm aware that it's available and I have had some experiences where I've felt it. But I'm still definitely, I have a lot of work, a lot of ways to go. But what I love about this is that it recognizes that everybody's on their own spiritual journey and that spirituality is a personal thing.

And this is true for the other people that you go to church with, or your friends, or family, or neighbors who don't go to church. And this is even true for your own children, and your spouse, the people in your immediate family. Everyone's on their own spiritual journey. And what that looks like and how it shows up on the outside, it's just not something that we can simplify. It's not a checklist of they go to church, and they, whatever else is on that checklist that you think people should be doing or shouldn't be doing.

Spirituality is just not a checklist, it is an experience. It's an internal experience at it's best. And it's one that might take our entire lifetime and beyond to really work through. I don't know. I don't know what it will be like in the next life. I don't know if we'll still be on a spiritual journey or if we'll just all understand it then. But I know that most people are on it for life in this lifetime. And I think that's the way it is meant to be.

So, this is my own theory and philosophy. I am offering it to you really for your own self-reflection. I want you to challenge yourself to work to have your spirituality be an internal process, to open yourself up to allowing God to reveal Himself to you. And you can do that through scripture study and all of those other things as well. But remember that you're participating in a spiritual practice, you're going to church, whatever else it is that you're doing, you're doing that in order to have an internal experience, not in order to find the answers outside of you.

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Alright, thanks so much for joining me today you guys. Don't forget to sign up at jodymoore.com/wellness because spiritual wellness is one of the pillars, we're going to dive into a little bit more. And I'm going to coach you on it there. So, I will see you there. Thanks for joining me. Have a great one. 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.