

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins



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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 355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins.

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.

Okay you guys, I have another of my Business Minded students that I cannot wait to introduce you to today. Dr. Paul, I've loved getting to know him over the past eight months in Business Minded. He is a phenomenal person, you are absolutely going to fall in love with him. And he said when I invited him to come on the podcast that he wanted to teach me a model that he felt really complemented the model that I use as a coach. So those of you that have been listening for a little while know that model.

And if you don't know that model there's circumstance, thought, feeling, action, result, model, that's okay. You're not going to be lost I don't think in this episode. But I loved so much what he taught me, I was thinking about it for so long after I've been talking to so many people about it. It really just helps sort of connect some dots. And it does complement really nicely the model that I teach. So, if you like that model, if you like the things that you learn here, you're going to love what Dr. Paul has to add.

I'm so excited to introduce you to him. If you're interested in joining me for Business Minded next year when we launch it, we'll actually be launching it I should say later this summer. When I say next year I mean starting in September. So, you can get on the waitlist at jodymoore.com/business to learn more about it. And we will be doing Impact 2.0, a live conference that you won't want to miss. We'll have details about that in the very near future. So, I will without further ado introduce you here to my friend, Dr. Paul. Here we go.

Jody: Okay, Dr. Paul Jenkins, father, author, positive psychologist, what else? Coach.

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

Paul: Husband.

Jody: Husband.

Paul: Remember it was Vicki who introduced me to you.

Jody: We love Vicki then. I need to meet Vicki one day.

Paul: She just texted me and she says, “I wish I were there with you.”

Jody: Next time we’ll invite her.

Paul: And I said, “You are.”

Jody: Okay, let’s tell everyone who you are and what led you to do what you do today. I don’t even know this. I know little bits of this story but not the whole story so I was going to ask you. Then I thought no, I’ll ask him on the podcast. Tell us.

Paul: Sure. I am a professional psychologist, technically a clinical psychologist. I call myself a positivity psychologist now. And sometimes I refer to myself as a recovering psychologist.

Jody: So, what does that mean, you have a PhD?

Paul: I have a PhD in clinical psychology from BYU.

Jody: Okay, perfect.

Paul: I tell my kids I went through the 21st grade and that gives them a little appreciation for what it takes.

Jody: That’s right, yeah, that’s a lot of school, PhD, wow. Okay, you have a PhD. And then did you work as a clinical psychologist for a while?

Paul: Yes.

Jody: How many years did you do that?

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

Paul: I had a traditional clinical psychotherapy practice for about 13 years or so, 13, 15 years. I don't know. I lose track. Have you noticed that time accelerates as you get older?

Jody: Yeah. And I've never been good at keeping track of stuff like that but okay, we get the idea. You did that for a while.

Paul: I did that whole thing and then I made a huge shift and there's a lot of reasons for that, that we might get into today or we might not. But the short version is I realized that my unique skillset serves me well in clinical psychotherapy but serves me better in coaching. And you know all about coaching because that's the model that you use as well. I'd look at it as your mental health and your relationships, everything that makes up your psychological life is on a spectrum or a continuum.

And clear at the left end of that spectrum is the sick end, diagnosis, pathology, treatment, all that fun stuff. I'm more passionate about the other end of that spectrum. And to understand that, if we go to the middle first, that's health. So, you think health is the opposite of sick. But I put it in the middle because it just means not sick. So, if you look at your physical health, you can be sick and bad with a fever, throwing up. There comes a time you can get out of bed and you're not sick. But that doesn't mean that you're truly fit, thriving, prospering.

That's over here on the other end of the spectrum. So, I basically moved my practice from the left end of that over to the right end of that. And there's some overlap in the middle, because everybody's got issues, have you noticed?

Jody: Yeah, I have.

Paul: And we deal with those according to principle, some of which we'll talk about here today. But our goal is not just to get out of bed. Our goal is to really thrive. And the principles that allow us to get out of bed are the same principles that we can apply to move forward. And so that's why I moved my practice. And unfortunately, psychotherapy sounds a little like therapy for psychos. So, people won't want to sign up for that. And

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

unfortunately, it makes it inaccessible to a lot of folks. That's why I love the coaching model because there's no diagnosis required.

I fired all the insurance companies, I won't even work with them anymore. And nobody gets a diagnosis even if they deserve one because our focus is different. And it's on applying principles to move forward toward that other end of the spectrum.

Jody: Okay, so are you saying then, because this the way that I always describe when people ask the difference between coaching and therapy but you're much more qualified to answer it because you've done both.

Paul: I've done both, yeah.

Jody: Yeah, but I always describe it sort of using the graphic illustration that you gave us with this continuum. That somebody that's on the far left side, really non-functioning or at least in some area of their life may be non-functioning or maybe needs a diagnosis etc. For some of those people anyway, traditional clinical therapy is going to be awesome, and necessary, and useful.

It's those people that – many of the people I work with have been through therapy even at some point and then recovered enough to like you said, make it closer to the middle of the continuum and find themselves going, "But there is more, right?" I mean it's great that now I'm kind of functioning better in that area but now what? And so that's where, I'm the same way as you where that's what I'm passionate about is helping the everyday person who is 'healthy' we would say, mentally, emotionally.

But I think we all have this feeling within us, I feel like there's more though. I feel like I could be better. I feel like I could be doing more. So that's kind of the space that coaching happens in and that's what you love doing and what you're so good at.

Paul: And I'll share a model with you today that puts that into perspective too because it can always be better. But one of the reason I'm so passionate about this, and one reason I appreciate you so much. You have

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

touched a lot of lives, Jody, including my own. My life is better because you're in it.

Jody: That's so kind of you to say, thank you.

Paul: And the cool thing about coaching, I have a lot of my private clients for example who are really high functioning. They're killing it in their business. They've got great families and they know that things could be better and they hire me to coach them around that. And so, if you get clear over to that opposite end of the spectrum where we're thriving. I've found that people in that end of the spectrum routinely hire coaches.

When you look at people like elite athletes, Tiger Woods, or Donovan Mitchell or these people who are really at the top of their game, hire coaches. And they work with them and they're very coachable. So, it's these folks in the middle of the spectrum and that's most of us, where we're not sick. I mean if we're sick we'll go see the doctor. We're not really sick but we're in this area where we could really benefit from some principles that would turn on the lights for us.

And a lot of people I've found, they're not going to go to therapy because it sounds like something's wrong with them. And they're not really in a place where they're going to just go hire coaches because they know that that enhances their life. Those are the people who are underserved, and I think those are the people that you're reaching. And that's what I'm doing as well.

Jody: And that's where I was personally when I found coaching. And I almost felt bad about not being more grateful or something. I thought that I just needed to have a more positive attitude. I just needed to be better in some way because I didn't have any reason, I couldn't point to any reason why I sort of felt this little bit of lack, or less confident, or less driven, or less excited about life. I was like, "I should be so grateful. I have these two healthy kids and this husband who loves me." And we weren't rolling in the money but we're okay.

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

I'm not worried about how we're going to put food on the table. And so many people are struggling in so many ways. I don't have depression. I don't have any of these things. I should just buck up is really what I thought. And I think that guilt that we put on ourselves of course isn't useful. And that's what I love about coaching is, no, and again if we relate it to physical health, of course your body doesn't have to be sick for you to decide, maybe I want to exercise every now and then. Maybe I want to lift some weights to see if I could build some muscle.

Maybe I want to see what I'm capable of physically. You don't have to be sick to decide to work on your physical health. The same with your mental and emotional health. And then we are actually capable of so much more from that place so anyway I love all that.

Paul: Absolutely. In your model, that I think you originally got from Brooke Castillo and The Life Coaching School, that you coach on the CTFAR. You say all the time that circumstances are neutral. And this takes people off sometimes because they're like, "Well, mine aren't." They don't realize yet that it's their thinking that's creating their emotional reaction to the circumstances. And so, if we'll just start there, it is what it is. And that's a little annoying to people too depending on who's saying it and why.

But all it means is that we are where we are, we're with who we're with. We've done what we've done. It is what it is, without changing anything, here we are. And saying that circumstances are neutral does not mean that they are painless or that they are easy. It's not what we're saying. But what it means for me and in the model that I've created, I can give you a visual model of this. In fact, if you who are listening, if you want to track the visual model, I've created one for you at drpauljenkins.com/jody. Remember that.

Jody: Yes, we'll link it in the show notes too, yeah, okay.

Paul: J-O-D-Y, and put a link in the show notes because you might want to grab that visual and it will make more sense to you as we talk through this model, at least for me. I'm a visual learner.

Jody: Me too, yeah.

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

Paul: I love to have a model that I can latch onto. And so, when you consider the model, what it is, is right here in the middle. And the next assumption that we're going to make is that it could always be better or worse.

Jody: Or worse.

Paul: Well, and don't take my word for this. I just want you to run it through your own filters and see if that's true because if that's true then no matter how bad things seem right now, it could always be worse.

Jody: True, this is true, yeah.

Paul: Is that true on the other end too? That no matter how good things seem it could always be better.

Jody: That's exactly right, yeah, I love that.

Paul: Right. Now, this is an important place to start. Part of my job, Jody, as a psychologist is to illuminate the obvious which is really cool because I get paid to tell people things they already know. But there's obvious things that are completely unnoticed. Let's just go there for a second, obvious but unnoticed. Like your clothing, can you feel it now?

Jody: Now I can, yeah.

Paul: Right. Did you feel it just before I mentioned something about it?

Jody: I wasn't thinking about it, no.

Paul: You didn't notice it. So, you can feel it. I mean all of your neurons are firing. But you don't notice it until it's called to your attention. Or the fact that we're speaking English, did you notice?

Jody: Not until you said that, right.

Paul: And now that I've mentioned, it's like yeah, that's totally obvious. The processes that are going on in our minds. So, let's go back to your model

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

for a minute. It is what it is, circumstances are neutral. Now, what's the next step? T.

Jody: Thoughts, yeah.

Paul: And on the T line what we're thinking is in this realm. It's obvious once it's called to your attention. But until that time it's unnoticed. And that's the beauty of coaching, because we call it to our attention. But it goes farther than this because there are two processes. Now, this is my expertise, this is my wheelhouse. The thinking, the T line, and when it comes to the T line there are two processes that are going on all the time. You can't turn them off any more than you can turn off gravity.

You ever get up in the morning and think, no, I wonder if gravity's on today? It tends to be. And so that's how these principles are but they're unnoticed. Once they're called to your attention it puts you into a position of choice. When I was first introduced to you, Jody, I was thinking, she's teaching the same things I am.

Jody: We're all teaching the same thing in slightly different ways, yeah.

Paul: Because it comes back to principle, these natural laws like gravity that are always on. And the more aware we are of them the more control we experience. And so, one of those is metacognition and that's just a fancy cycle babble term. If you break it down, cognition means thinking, metacognition is a higher level, it's thinking about thinking. Be careful with it because you can hurt yourself. But notice that you can do it.

Now, as we think about our thinking, let me just share with you a quick little experience that I had because this will illustrate some of the processes that are going on, on the T line. Everything that we're talking about here goes on that T line which affects how we feel, which determines how we show up, and that creates our results. That's the model. I was speaking at a conference in Orlando. And while I'm waiting for my turn to present I get to listen to Jeanne Robertson. I don't know if you've ever encountered her.

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

If you look her up on YouTube, funniest G rated family friendly comedienne on the planet, 6'2, thick southern accent. She's a hoot. Now, we just lost Jeanne last year, she passed away but she had this wonderful career of just making people smile. And I'm on the front row with Jeanne. I get a text message. Now, do the math, if you're on the front row with a humorist or a comedienne you don't get out your cellphone and start scrolling through your texts. I'd seen her do this, she'll call you out. You become part of the show.

So, I didn't pull my phone out but I got a little notification on my Fitbit. And I looked down, the little truncated, the short version. It was from my sister. It said, "I wanted you to know that Talen had an accident last night. He was on his annual volunteer first responder Timp weekend. Now, Timp is a mountain right next to me. He worked as a first responder up there and he slipped and fell off a 30 foot ... Now what does ... mean?"

Jody: Your brain starts making it up.

Paul: It totally does. And just notice that, okay, just notice it and your brain's supposed to do this. It's how you're designed. But it also means there's more, you just don't get it here. I wasn't going to pull out my phone. I didn't want to have that conversation with Jeanne. And so, I waited till she was done but my mind was so caught up in this now. And I'm thinking about how my dad lost his father to an accident when he was only five. A good friend of mine crashed his plane in Utah Lake about 10 years ago leaving his wife and family without a husband and father.

And now I'm getting this text about my nephew. So, you can imagine how I'm feeling because of those thoughts. When Jeanne finished up I slipped out to the hall because I've got a call to make. But first I opened my text messages because I want to see what the ... was. And as I open this message, I'll pick up where we left off, he slipped and fell off a 30 foot waterfall and broke both of his ankles and seriously injured his knee that he could use your prayers. Okay, now, did you experience some shifts in your feelings as I shared that with you?

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

Jody: Yeah. I'm still worried about Talen, is he okay?

Paul: Yeah, and he's doing good now, okay. But the first thing that I felt was relief. And why? And did you feel a little relief too when I shared the rest of the message with you?

Jody: Yeah.

Paul: You see, because my brain was creating this story or scenario that he's been killed, I've got to go home early for a funeral. When I found out he'd broke his ankles, I'm like, phew. So, let's look at what just happened. The two processes I want to share with you, the first one is evaluation, meaning judgment. And if you're following along on the visual model, remember you can get that at drpauljenkins.com/jody. That's the one that I'm referring to. Evaluation means judgment of what it is. And you can't turn it off. So, notice this, you're constantly judging.

Jody: And we do this, correct me if I'm wrong but isn't this where we bring our past experience, things that we've learned, things that we know, many things that we don't even remember are in our heads? And we so quickly assess situations and miraculous how we do this.

Paul: It's amazing and it's exactly what your brain is designed to do. And I want you to notice that you can't turn it off. I don't know, maybe there's some yogi in India somewhere that has mastered turning it off.

Jody: I think Byron Katie can turn it off but I can't.

Paul: Maybe Byron Katie. And I can't either.

Jody: We don't need to.

Paul: There's a scripture in the New Testament says, "Judge not." And I'm like, crap, I suck at that, damn it. Because we're constantly judging. So just notice that you're doing it, you judge yourself. You judge the economy, you judge the pandemic, you judge your family, you're judging me. That's fine, I'm judging you and we just do it. So, the word 'evaluation' implies comparison with some standard.

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

Jody: But I like the word ‘evaluation’ because when I hear judgment I tend to think negative but evaluation also might be, we judge things as being positive or good. Evaluation, I like that word, I think it’s [crosstalk].

Paul: Right. I ask my audiences sometimes when I’m speaking, “Am I a tall man?” And they’re like, “Yeah.” And then I say, “Would it help if I showed you a picture?” And I put up a picture of me with Marc.

Jody: Who’s very tall because he’s a basketball...

Paul: Do you remember, big Marc?

Jody: Yeah.

Paul: I’m 6’2.

Jody: Yeah, you are tall.

Paul: Marc, 7’4 and I’m a shrimp next to him. And it just calls to our mind, my judgment or my evaluation of that depends on who or what I compare it to. So again, we’re illuminating the obvious. You already know that you do this but now I’m calling it to your attention that when you evaluate or judge, you have to have some standard of comparison. And if you don’t have one, you’ll make one up. And you’ve got a really good imagination. So, notice how your brain does this. So, when we ask ourselves, how am I doing in my business, as a mom, in my church calling, how am I doing?

We have an answer to that. I just want you to see that you’ve got an answer to that. How is your marriage? How are your kids doing? Do you see how you’ve got answers to all these things? And I’m not here to tell you how to think. I don’t have that kind of authority. But I do want you to see that you are thinking and that the first process that I’m sharing with you here today, again, all this goes on the T line. The first process is evaluation and you can’t turn it off, so just notice that you’re doing it.

Jody: Okay, brilliant. So that means – I just want to ask you about this because what I think it is, that that means that I’m neither right nor wrong. And that’s the way I always talk about the thought line is it’s not true, it’s

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

just a thought. It's also not, not true. It's a thought. When you say evaluation, is Dr. Paul tall? Yes and no.

Paul: Compared to whom or what.

Jody: And so, I think sometimes when I teach that thoughts are not facts, they're just thoughts. What you're saying here is it's an evaluation and we're not saying it's right or wrong. We're just saying it's your brain's way of assessing what's going on based on something, it's comparing it to, or something it just made up that it's comparing it to. That's just good to know, yeah?

Paul: Yeah. And your brain's doing exactly what it's supposed to.

Jody: Exactly, yes.

Paul: I love that you say that all the time because you're designed this way. There's nothing wrong with you. So, notice when we go to the evaluation mode, what are we judging, what are we evaluating? We're evaluating what it is, the circumstances which are neutral because they could always be better, they could always be worse. But what look what happens to our feelings. When we compare what we've got to something better, how do we feel about what we've got?

Jody: Bad.

Paul: Right. Go back to the example that I shared about my nephew. Two broken ankles, that's on the C line, those are the circumstances. Can you imagine anything better than that?

Jody: Yeah, a lot. That's why when you said you felt relief, I was like, a little but I also feel a little like, ow, that sounds terrible.

Paul: Right. Because you can imagine no injury, no accident, everything goes just like I planned it to because that's how my life rolls. That's la la land but we can imagine it. That's the point. Now, when we take two broken ankles and we compare it to something much better like no injuries at all, then how do we feel about two broken ankles?

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

Jody: Relieved, yeah.

Paul: Well, you're getting ahead of me a little bit.

Jody: I'm on the other part, sorry.

Paul: When we compare it to no injuries we feel like this sucks. I'm sorry, can I say sucks on your podcast?

Jody: Yeah, I'm game.

Paul: And it really does. This is why I appreciate that you said, you're not wrong about this. You're not right about it or wrong, it is just what it is. But notice when we compare what we've got to something better, we feel worse about what we got. This is pretty simple. But can you imagine anything worse than two broken ankles?

Jody: Yes.

Paul: Yeah. And I helped you with this because I told you where my brain went. So, when we take two broken ankles and we compare it to something far worse like the death of a young father on Timp in August, then how do we feel about two broken ankles?

Jody: Then we feel relieved, yeah.

Paul: I'll take it, sign me up for that. So, notice that the circumstance, two broken ankles doesn't carry any emotional value until we do this, the evaluation, the judgment. And how we evaluate it matters because that determines how we feel. That's the F line.

Jody: So good. I love this, Dr. Paul.

Paul: I knew you would, Jody.

Jody: Now, I'm excited though to learn the second part, the creation part. Are we going to talk about that now?

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

Paul: Well, because we're not done yet. We are creative beings. And I know you resonate with this because I think it's in our divine nature.

Jody: Yeah, I do too.

Paul: And we can't turn it off any more than we can turn off evaluation or gravity. It's going to happen. We have to create something. Now, I've got a whole section in my book about the creation process and how we go about doing that. But I think the important thing to notice here is that we can't turn it off. Meaning we have to create something. The only question is what are we going to create? What if I gave you an assignment to just take a half hour? I'm going to limit you to a half hour, go out there and somehow make your life worse. You're chuckling, why?

Jody: Yeah. It would be fun during the half hour anyway. I could just go spend all my money and eat a bunch of junk food. For a half an hour it might be fun, I would really regret it later. But is that what you mean?

Paul: Well, and sometimes would we ever do it on purpose, I mean make our life worse? Sometimes we go engage in things that seemed fun in the moment and then we learn later, well, that, you know.

Jody: That was a bad idea.

Paul: Maybe, I can evaluate that a little differently. But look at how quickly your brain came up with half a dozen ways to pull that off. And it wouldn't even take a half hour to spend all your money, punch your husband in the face, rob a bank, abuse a child. There are so many ways to make your life worse. Now, you wouldn't do that on purpose. But here's what I've noticed. We have the ability to do that and that's good news. Some people are like, "What?"

Jody: What is he talking about?

Paul: Yeah, how was that good news? Look, if you can make a mess and you know you can, you can make, period. Now, what you make, that's where choice kicks in. We don't always get to choose what it is. Sometimes

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

that just drops in our lap. But that becomes the starting point for our creation mode. And I've put that on the top part of this visual diagram. So, in creation mode we're going to use the T line again, the thinking and we're going to invite our creative imagination to come up with some alternatives for us.

Now, you have the ability to imagine something worse. That's good news in evaluation because if you can compare what you've got to something worse, you're going to feel better about what you've got. But when we get to creation mode, what do you want to create, something worse or something better?

Jody: No, something better, yeah.

Paul: Right. Now, this, again, I'm illuminating the obvious. You're like, "Well, duh, Dr. Paul, of course I want something better." That's important because everything that's created has to be imagined first. Things don't just poof into existence. I mean I'm even looking at this dry erase marker on my desk. It didn't just appear, somebody thunk it. Somebody thought this thing out, it was in their imagination.

So, creation has to be geared on imagination. It's a mental or a spiritual creation that happens first and then with that template in our mind we can go out and move the elements around to actually create something. So, when we think about the imagination of when we create something it doesn't exist yet. We haven't created it yet. So, what is to be is still in that realm of imagination. And we don't know what's coming. Jody, how are you doing next week?

Jody: I have no idea.

Paul: You don't know. You've got something to do with it, don't forget that. But you don't know. And so, all you can do is imagine it. So, let's go to the feelings next. This is where it just gets really fun.

Jody: I love it.

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

Paul: When we imagine, or predict, or expect, or create a story about what's coming is even worse than what we've already got, how do we feel?

Jody: Scared, bad.

Paul: This is anxiety. Yeah, you said scared. Anxiety, apprehensive, fearful. And you're always right about how you feel. How you feel is a 100% consistent with the way your mind is doing, the T line, you know that. In creation mode we create anxiety when we predict that what's coming is worse. Pretty simple. Now, ultimately how do we feel when we predict, or expect, or anticipate that what's coming is even better than what we've already got, how do we feel?

Jody: Excitement.

Paul: Boom. And this is hope. So, when you look at the entire model, we've got the two processes that are going on. So really what we're doing is we're doing a deeper dive into the T line. Because our thinking can be categorized as evaluation thinking where we're judging and checking out how we're doing. And creation where we're predicting what is to be and that's an important element of actually being able to go create it.

Jody: That is brilliant.

Paul: So, we've got gratitude, depression in evaluation mode. And we've got anxiety or hope in creation mode. It just gives us an additional...

Jody: That's so good. I love it so much.

Paul: Can you see, can you sink your teeth into that, Jody?

Jody: Yeah, but I have some questions I want you to speak to if you don't mind, if you have a few more minutes.

Paul: Yeah, please. Absolutely.

Jody: So, these two like you said, automated types of thinking that we can't turn off. I love in the beginning you said the more – I can't remember the exact words you said. But the more aware we are of them the more

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

control we have I think was the way you said it. So, you're just illuminating it for us which automatically gives us more control, meaning those systems are still going to happen but we can decide how they're going to play out. Whether we're going to compare what we're currently experiencing to that it could be worse or that it could be better for example.

So can you give us maybe one or two practical examples of, maybe we could do one for each. Or we kind of talked about with your nephew in evaluation mode. Is there one we could talk about for creation? What's an example of how you've used this or seen people use this tool?

Paul: I gave you a quick example when I said the half hour assignment, go make your life worse. You'd never do that on purpose. But what if we steer that a different direction. And when you said earlier that until we see it as a choice it's not. We're going to roll with whatever our programming is. So, it's important to have that illuminated so that it comes to your awareness and you do this really skillfully, Jody, when you say, "Well, that's a thought." It is, I thought that was just reality. No, it's a thought.

And seeing it as a thought implies that maybe I could think something else. I have had so many clients say, "Well, I guess I just need to think differently about this." And I'm like, "Or not."

Jody: That's right. That's right.

Paul: Just see that you are. I don't want to tell you how to think but let's take that example. And I like to use one that I call BB-8. Do you remember Star Wars, there is this little droid called BB-8?

Jody: I know BB-8 so well, are you kidding me, we're a huge Star Wars family, yes.

Paul: You're tracking it. And so, I use that to trigger, it's almost a little brain hack, so that we can become more intentional about creation mode. I do gratitude exercises for the evaluation piece and I'll come back to that. But let's go with BB-8 for a minute. How sure are you that eight o'clock is coming?

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

Jody: I'm very confident it's coming.

Paul: Pretty darned sure, yeah. How sure are you that you'll be around for eight o'clock?

Jody: I mean I feel pretty confident but I could be wrong.

Paul: Yeah. Well, you have a pretty good track record, you've made it to every eight o'clock so far your whole life.

Jody: Yeah, almost 48 years, yeah.

Paul: And there's two every day for those who don't get up for it. So just notice this. Now, I think there's only two possibilities. I used to think there were three. I eliminated the third because I don't think it's possible for things to be exactly the same at eight o'clock as they are right now. You're pretty sure that you're going to be around for eight o'clock. There's only two possibilities. It's not even possible, I don't think, tell me if you think I'm wrong about this. But I don't think things could be exactly the same at eight o'clock as they are right now.

Jody: No, I would agree.

Paul: At the very least you're going to be a little older.

Jody: That's right.

Paul: It only goes one direction. Might be more hungry, more tired, it depends on what you did just before eight. But it's not going to be the same. And so, by your own evaluation which you can't turn off, things have to be either better or worse by your own judgment, either a little or a lot. We already know you could make things worse, [crosstalk] don't do this.

Jody: That's easy, yeah.

Paul: But what if we steer our powerful mind and imagination toward what could I do to make things better by eight? That's BB-8, better by eight. I'm not talking next week, next month or next year, eight o'clock. And notice

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

what your brain is doing when I introduce that. You're coming up with some ideas, aren't you?

Jody: Yeah.

Paul: How cool is that?

Jody: That's awesome, I love that.

Paul: And if you'll do this for five days, just intentionally better by eight, what can I do? It could be a little thing, big thing. You're the creator. I trust you to come up with whatever you're going to do. What can I do to make things better by eight? And if you'll do this for five days you get to have 10 upgrades to your life in the next five days. Now, check how that feels.

I just did a webinar this morning, Jody, I called it The Hope Class. Because there's so much negativity swirling around. And I want people to see that they can manufacture, create hope. They don't have to wait for anything in the world to change. And this is how it's done, so that BB-8 is just a little example of how we can apply that immediately.

Jody: That's so good. I love the idea too of it being just a small incremental bite size, it's only going to be little things to make my life better by eight, it's maybe drink more water, maybe go for a walk, or get something done off my to-do. They're not going to be giant things in my mind anyway.

Paul: It could be sending a text of appreciation to your sister. It could be saying something nice to your husband.

Jody: Yeah. I mean, and then of course all of this we have compounded abilities too to do it to think, how am I going to make my life better next week or next month? And you're going to start thinking bigger. But I think what you said earlier too is key though that it doesn't mean that anything's wrong if you don't do it. It doesn't make you a better person, a more valuable person.

Because sometimes I think people take the tools that I teach and I'm sure you've experienced this too and then use it against themselves, to judge

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

themselves, to go back to evaluate and go, “See, I’m failing.” Our point isn’t to say that you should use where you could be to feel bad about where you are. But simply to then choose to create what you want in your future. And do you find, Dr. Paul, that there’s times with your clients when you’re – I mean obviously both, like you said, both thought processes happen automatically.

But do you find there’s times with clients when you’re working more in one area or the other?

Paul: Yes. And I look for the manifestation because when we’re in evaluation mode, if I go take you back to the visual model here. We’re going to come up with a standard. And if we compare ourselves to something better we’re going to feel worse about how we’re doing. And that creates depression. So, if someone’s manifesting with depression, I’m thinking, okay, we’ve got some evaluation issues going on, on the thought line. If it’s anxiety they’re predicting or expecting that things are going to get worse. That’s a creation error.

I say error, it’s really a choice. But when it creates a negative pole either depression or anxiety, I know which mode we’re in. But here’s one of the rubs, because you and I both work with a lot of very productive creative people. And in creation mode we’re constantly focusing on what’s better. And we have a culture within the church too that it’s always striving to become better. That’s a great thing to work on in creation mode.

But when we are focused constantly on what’s better and then we slip down to evaluation and ask ourselves, how are we doing? We create depression with that thought because how am I doing? Well, obviously I suck. I’m not doing everything I could be.

Jody: Could be a lot better.

Paul: And you hear that phrase a lot, I’m not. I’m not. I’m not. So, in evaluation mode, I gave you a hack for creation. Let me give you one for evaluation too. It’s gratitude. It’s getting into a positive evaluation of where we are with what we have right now without changing anything. And this

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

makes creators nervous because if we are good with where we are, that feels really negative in a creation mode. So, we switch back and forth almost without noticing it sometimes.

Jody: Yeah, because people say to me all the time, “Well, if I’m just happy with where I am why would I strive to do more?”

Paul: Right. Which is a good question but usually it’s not a question, it’s a statement disguised as a question. Why would I do more? It’s like I wouldn’t.

Jody: How do you answer that?

Paul: It’s a good question. Well, go to creation mode again with me for a minute. And if I were to just offer, you have to create something, you can’t turn it off. You have to create something. Now, what do you want? Would you like something better or, or something worse? Or do you want to think about it for a minute? You see, people fear this but it’s an unfounded fear because you’re a powerful creator, you always will choose the upgrade. And it’s not because your life sucks, it’s because an upgrade is available.

Jody: And I love thinking about that we’re not stagnant beings. Like you said, at eight o’clock tonight I will either be a little more tired, or a little less tired. There is no such thing as freezing and holding still. I always think about it like we’re like ships out on the ocean. The ocean is not going to stop moving. We’re not going to stay in one place but the difference is am I going to just let the ocean toss me about and be unconscious about what my brain is doing?

Or am I going to pick up my oars and try to row a little bit? Which is to me the equivalent of noticing my thinking, managing it at times when I can. But there’s no such thing as just holding still in the middle of the ocean and the little ship that I’m in. So might as well row forward a little bit towards where I want to go.

Paul: I love this about coaching, about metacognition, thinking about our thinking. Because whether we change it or not, that’s totally a choice, that’s

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

an option. Until you see it as a choice it's not. And you'll just roll with whatever your programming is. And so being aware of it creates – I love metacognition creates a space, and in that space is where choice exists. And I think at a very fundamental level, choice is at the foundation of the great plan of happiness. The big deception out there is no choice. And you know whose plan that sounds like.

Jody: And choice is about what I love that you're saying here, I always grew up learning by agency as our ability to act in any way that we choose which it is, but it's also our ability to think in any way that we choose.

Paul: Which is more fundamental because it's our thinking that drives our feelings. It's our feelings that determine how we show up and that's what creates our results.

Jody: So that part comes first, yeah. Oh my gosh, I love it so much. Tell us the hack before we go.

Paul: Evaluation, I don't want to leave you hanging with that because gratitude is the fastest way I know to get into a positive evaluation regardless of what's going on in your life. But here's the thing. If somebody signs up for a gym membership and they show up to the gym every day, what's going to happen? We're going to get stronger. Well, you'd think, but what if they show up to the gym every day, pick up a pencil off of the front desk and do five reps with it and then head home? Okay, let's do some heavy lifting here, pick up some weight.

And so, it's gratitude but we're going to do it a little differently. So, I'm going to give you another five day exercise, just do this along with BB-8. For five days you make a list of 25 things for which you are sincerely grateful. You can't pretend, you have to actually be grateful to put it on your list. And don't repeat anything on tomorrow's list that was on today's, a whole new list, stretch a little. Here's the power up.

At least half of your list, that's 13, if you're doing the math, every day has to be about something that is kicking your trash, something difficult, painful, frustrating, annoying, whatever it is that you're telling yourself is bad, or

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

hard, or difficult in your life. Pick that. And I'm not saying you have to be grateful for that. I'm saying use that as the category where you're looking for something to be grateful for from that or because of that. A diagnosis for example. You'd think that's a bad thing. No, it's a neutral thing. How we think about it matters.

Take the diagnosis, maybe it's cancer, maybe it's diabetes, maybe it's COVID or whatever it is. And then look inside of it, peel it open and see what you can find in there for which you are grateful. Is there a relationship? Is there empathy that you've gained through this? Is there service that's been provided to you, that you're actually grateful for? Put that on your list. And that invites your brain to process this difficult, painful, hard thing in your life in a different way.

And you're going to be pleasantly surprised that it's not a bad thing. It's a neutral thing. And you get to focus on how you evaluate it. So that's called the gratitude power up. If you do the gratitude power up and the BB-8 for the same five days.

Jody: You'll be feeling pretty good at the end.

Paul: You get a whole new take on where you are.

Jody: Do you think, Dr. Paul, that doing exercises like that, because we're doing then, we're consciously thinking about things in a way that will serve us. Do you think if you do enough of that that it obviously isn't going to make you perfectly positive all the time, but does it make it easier for you to think that way by default?

Paul: Absolutely. Happiness is a choice and I've shown you today how that is very literally psychologically true. Happiness is a choice. Yeah, so is playing the piano. But you know because you play.

Jody: It doesn't mean anyone could just sit down and do it in a second.

Paul: You choose it, the choice is essential but it's not sufficient because it's also a skillset. You see people all the time wandering around trying to

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

find their happiness. You don't see people wandering around trying to find their piano skills.

Jody: I used to have a video on my homepage that was called Happiness is a Skill.

Paul: I love it.

Jody: Because I so believe it. Yes, it does require choice but also most people aren't taught how.

Paul: Just like playing the piano does.

Jody: And you've got to practice it.

Paul: You might want to hire a guide or a coach. You might want to do the reps and you will see your skillset grow as you do that. And allow yourself to really stink it up at first. I see people all the time just beating themselves up because they're like, "I know, I should think positively." Look, you're going to do whatever you've already been programmed to do. That's what's going to come naturally to you. As you make a choice, as you foresee that there is an option for how you do these two processes on the T line, thinking about in the evaluation mode or in the creation mode.

You'll see new options and then as you practice them, you get better at it. And we're not looking for perfection. This is a process, not an event. It's a journey, not a destination. And you continue to increase your skillset. I'm a blackbelt at positivity because I practice it every day and I've been doing that for 30 years. It's everything that I do. And sometimes people look at me and they're like, "I don't think like you do." And I'm like, "Well, not yet but put in the reps."

Jody: That's right.

Paul: And I love the way you said that it's a skill, it absolutely is. It's a choice and it's a skillset.

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

Jody: Dr. Paul, I love learning from you so much. And I've just got to share as we wrap up here, I have to let you go, we're out of time. But I want to make sure everybody go and get the visual first of all that Dr. Paul talked about, because it really does help a lot.

Paul: Yeah, the visual model.

Jody: The visual of the model that he described which goes so nicely with the model I teach if anybody likes that model. But also, Dr. Paul, I've gotten to work with you through our Business Mastermind.

Paul: Our mastermind group, yeah.

Jody: Business Minded Group and you just are such a delight to have in there. I'm just so honored that you would come and want to learn from me. And you contribute so much of value and you're a successful PhD psychologist with a thriving practice, coaching practice. And still, you're like, "Who's this woman that's doing this coaching business, I want to learn from her." I just love you're teachable, you're coachable and you contribute so much value to that group. And it's just been such a delight to get to know you.

Paul: Well, bringing you on my team, Jody, was the best decision that I could possibly make for my business at this point in time. Because even though we're teaching the same things, coaches need coaches.

Jody: That's right. I always have a coach.

Paul: And I already told you that my highest level VIP, pay me a lot of money clients hire a lot of coaches.

Jody: Yeah, that's right.

Paul: And they get that they need to be humble and teachable. And when I saw what you were doing, Jody, I'm like, I want to know what she knows. And I'm just so grateful that you're in my life and that we can make exchanges like this because hopefully my presence here enriches you and your audience. And I know your presence enriches me and my audience.

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

Jody: Huge. Huge value add.

Paul: As long as we're having fun we'll keep doing it.

Jody: I love it. So where can people go to learn more from you?

Paul: Well, first of all get the model, just go to drpauljenkins.com/jody. That will get you the model but it will also put you in touch with me. And the website is drpauljenkins.com is the main website. But we're doing some fun things partially based on what I've learned from you, to just enrich some lives. Enough, enough of all of the darkness, and negativity, and fear that seizes people's hearts sometimes. I think we get to live by faith or we get to live by fear. And the model I shared with you today is my psychological take on faith.

Jody: I love it. And you do a lot of work with, I know you work a lot with people in the space of parenting, marriages, family dynamics, things like that, goal achievement, all those kinds of things, right?

Paul: Absolutely. Parenting, that's an interesting one and maybe we'll have a conversation about that some time soon too. But parenting is the number one personal development program on the planet. You get auto-enrolled.

Jody: You cannot opt out.

Paul: You get multiple opportunities to practice. It shows you things about yourself you didn't want to know.

Jody: Yes, amen to that.

Paul: But we're having a lot of really great experiences with parents who are coming in through the YouTube channel. That's another place I'd encourage people to just go take a look, Live On Purpose TV on YouTube where we're putting up videos every week, several videos every week to help you with all of those things, personal development, parenting. Everything that has to do with your thinking and everything has to do with your thinking.

355: The Positivity Model with Dr. Paul Jenkins

Jody: That's right. Alright, thank you so much, Dr. Paul. Thanks for your time. We'll see you soon.

Paul: Thank you, Jody.

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.