

367: Our Addiction to Problems with Dr. John Delony



Full Episode Transcript

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 367: Our Addiction to Problems with Dr. John Delony.

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.

Hey there friends, I am so excited to introduce you to Dr. John Delony today, if you have not heard him which you maybe have because he's a very big deal. But before we dive in I want to make sure and remember to invite you to a webinar that I created specifically for women who are in the thick of raising kids or maybe your kids are older but you're still a mom and you want to build a thriving business or maybe you're just, maybe I'll start a podcast of my own one day or something.

My webinar that I created is Success Secrets for Mompreneurs. I'm going to be giving away my best tips. I've you've ever thought, gosh, I wish I could just pick Jody's brain a little bit about how she did what she's done in her business then this is your chance. And you don't have to be a mom by the way, you don't even have to be a woman to come. But that's who I always have in mind when I'm creating this stuff, that's going to be some specific stuff for what if you have kids in the background interrupting like I just had one interrupt.

Success Secrets for Mompreneurs totally free, limited time offering, so make sure you don't miss it. You can head to jodymoore.com/mompreneur if you want to join me for that.

Alright, I first heard John Delony speak in, what year was it? I don't know. It was kind of the end of the pandemic so I think it was 2021 when we were still deciding, are we safe to get together yet or not? And Jake and I went to a conference put on by Dave Ramsey's organization, EntreLeadership. And that was the first time I had heard Dr. John Delony speak. And he was an

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amazing speaker. He's kind of like a speaking rockstar on the stage. He has the best messages.

And when his team actually reached out asking if he could come on the podcast I was so flattered that they would want him to come on our show. I immediately said yes. I want to read you – well, first of all I want to tell you that when he first came on the show, often I will ask guests on the show, I'll say, "What would be a win for you? Are we trying to promote your book or what are we trying to do here because I want my guests to achieve whatever their goals are as they contribute their time and their message to us?"

And Dr. John Delony said, "I just want to help people. That will be a huge win for me if one of your listeners or some of your listeners got some help and some relief from what we talk about today. That's it, that's all I care about." So that tells you something about him right there. But second of all, I went to the internet to find his bio so I could introduce him to you today. And I thought I would just read to you the way he's written it here because he is very well educated, and successful. And you can just hear the humility even in his bio.

He says, "What's up, good folks, Delony here. The official line is I'm a mental health expert, but all that means is I get the privilege of walking with you through the tough stuff. Before joining Ramsey Solutions in 2020, I spent over two decades in crisis response and senior leadership, and I earned two PhDs along the way. Now, I've somehow become a national bestselling author and host of The Dr. John Delony Show. Hey, I'm so grateful that you're here."

So, without further ado let's dive into my conversation with Dr. John Delony.

Jody: Alright, Dr. John Delony, so tell us if you wouldn't mind before we dive into today's topic and I have, if it's okay with you, I have that we're

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going to talk today about our culture's addiction to problems which I'm so excited to dive into. As a life coach myself I see this all the time. And I'm just excited to pick your brain. But first let's introduce you to my audience. So, I know that you're a bestselling author, mental health and wellness expert. But give us the real story of Dr. John Delony would you please.

John: The real story is I live on a few acres outside of town, and I've got some chickens, and two dogs, and two little kids, and my wife. And I was a dean of students for years and so I just worked in higher ed as a professor. I was a nerd. I was just a complete nerd and I hung out with academics. And most of my career has been spent several years working with police officers afterhours doing death notifications and crises.

So, most of my career has been spent sitting with people when the wheels have completely fallen off. When you're a dean of students it's cool because you also get the other side of the bell curve which is you get the most extraordinary remarkable students who are – you can tell when they're 19, this person's going to change the world. I'm going to be nice to them because I'm probably going to be working for them someday. Most of your day is spent with when folks have, you know, with just the toughest stuff you could deal with.

So that's where I've spent most of my career with and walking into a room and saying, "How can I help people in here by a little bit more at peace and a little bit more well?"

Jody: Fantastic. And now today you are with Ramsey Solutions, yeah?

John: Yeah. Then a couple of years ago my career took a sideways turn.

Jody: How did that happen?

John: I was speaking to about 1,000 folks, parents and students at a summer orientation program, they just run people through. And there's about 1,000 people in the room and Dave Ramsey's executive vice-president was dropping off her daughter. And she said, "I'm hiring that guy."

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And I didn't know anything about money and I was just a mental health guy. And she said, "We're going to figure it out because I want that guy on the team." So that's really how that got started, just kind of sideways. I wish it was more complicated.

Jody: That's fantastic.

John: That's 100% how that happened though.

Jody: That's fantastic. I think that's how actually most amazing things happen is you're just doing what feels right, and good, and contributing, and then it turns out you're in the right place at the right time.

John: Exactly right, yeah.

Jody: And so, with Ramsey Solutions your focus is still on mental health problem solving. Because I think some of us here, Dave Ramsey we immediately think money and how to get out of debt. But I feel like his organization has really expanded to include the whole realm of wellness.

John: Well, he said for 30 years, when you're struggling with your money, 20% of that is math problems, the other 80% is what's going on in your marriage, what's going on in your trauma history, what's going on in your life that is making money become such an issue for you. And so he and I joke, he's like, "Man, I tell people to go get a therapist, for 20 years I finally just went and hired my own." And so, he's been doing mental health and relationships for a long time.

Jody: Yeah, right. And the money's just a symptom like anything else, yeah. Okay, fantastic. Well, let's talk about our culture's addiction to problems. So, are we addicted to problems? Let's start there.

John: Caustically so, pathologically so, yeah, absolutely.

Jody: Okay. What do you mean by that?

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John: Well, we have a culture that ultimately, and I don't say this in a negative way, this is just a factual way. Our culture gears towards how can we monetize a particular interaction, or action, or exchange? We've taken what I would call normal human connection and we have in many ways pathologized what I would say is very normal human behaviors. We've turned those into a series of diagnostics. And then we have outsourced friendship to any number of professional services.

And so, I think we have a culture that leans towards how can I professionalize or monetize something? And man, there is no better trigger for me to go buy something or to go numb from something or for me to go hide, than something that's going to kill me or end my family legacy, or whatever other fires, and demons, and dragons that the sales folks can drum up. And you take that on top of – and that's not a bad thing. I want people to buy the tires that I make at my tire shop. Or I want people to buy my coaching service. That's all fantastic.

It's when the ecosystem, I think the media shifted, which is the best way to get eyeballs is to tap into what I think is an evolutionary mechanism, it's ancient brain wiring which is if you're alone on the planes of Nebraska and you hear a twig snap. Your body's better off assuming that's a bear that's going to kill you than assuming it's just a little frog because if you're wrong on the frog, no harm, no foul. If you're wrong on the bear you're dead. And so, it's better to go war and go that was just a frog, than to be a bear.

So, we've got this ancient brain wiring and then, and talk about an economy of clicks and attention now. So, I think over the last 25/35 years we've just received a cascade of negativity because that's what gets our attention because we're hardwired to stay alive. And then nothing makes me run to buy more meat, or buy another freezer, or toilet paper, or bullets or whatever my thing is until there's a face on the screen saying, "It's all coming down. It's all coming down." So that carries over into our personal relationships.

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Nobody wants to hear from that person at work that's like, "You know what? it was a good weekend, my air conditioner's working, and the kids are healthy, and the dog didn't poop on the floor." Nobody wants that person. They want to hear the other person that goes, "Hey, did you hear about Bitcoin?" They want the silicious stuff. And so, then you find yourselves in a cultural mess, we're bathing in toxicity.

Jody: So, the examples that are coming to my mind as you talk about this, I want to bring up and correct me if I'm misunderstanding what you're saying. But I think we have first of all the news, the way that we get our news, the way that the news organizations are broadcasting to us is playing to that fear based part of our brains. And I got my bachelor's degree in journalism so I'm by no means an expert on this topic but I did take a couple of classes about how to write a headline and things.

And the objective is to get people to read your article or watch your station, listen to your story. And I'm always curious, I think that it's tempting to point the finger at the newspaper or the journalist for example and say, yeah, they're using, like you said, that fear based part of our brains as sort of clickbait to draw us in to get us to read. And what effects is that having on us overall? But my question is always, is it do we blame the journalist or do we note that that's how we as human beings operate?

It's true, as a journalist, if I put a story out there that isn't compelling, isn't interesting, doesn't pique someone's attention they're not going to read my story. And I think that we all have an ethical responsibility to ask ourselves, at what cost am I getting someone to read this story? But I think, and as a marketer myself and you and I both sell books, and courses, and things. And I'm always asking myself that question, I don't want to ever cross an ethical line into creating more harm than good in the name of getting clicks, or attention, or purchases, or what have you.

But I think that there's – I don't know, I'd be interested in your thoughts on this.

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John: That's a great question.

Jody: Yeah. Let me pause, let me have you speak to that actually and then I'll give you the other example that comes to my mind.

John: So, I love that question. I don't think the ethical answer is in that particular part of the problem. I think it's bigger. So, when you were talking the analogy that comes to mind is hot water coming out of my shower is incredible. My friends in Houston that got just smashed by water in their home from Hurricane Harvey was not good. The water's the same, water was the same. It was the volume and the intensity with which it came upon us.

And so, I think we're missing two really important things. Maybe I'm naïve here, you would know more about this than me. But when I'm selling something, when I'm writing something, I want to put something in the world that's going to help somebody live a better life, or drive a safer car, or a faster car, or a shinier car. I want the world to be better. And what I found in higher ed and I think there's some parallels to the journalism world, it became less about the just story that's got to be told.

And it's more, I have to get five publications to make payroll, or I'm going to lose my job. And so, my job is to write five stories, not to find the one, or two, or three that are important to be told right now. And I'm going to tell five stories and then I'm going to start getting dinged, and the same as the higher ed when you write research articles, I'm going to get dinged the fewer people who get eyeballs on this thing. And so, I'm incentivized to make the findings of my study a little bit more dramatic than they actually are or to be a little bit more sensational.

As a journalist I'm going to be enticed for my own personal, to keep my job. And so, I think it's less about wanting to get a story out there. I think that's incredible, the incentives have changed. And there's just so much, it's not like a Sunday paper that you can consume. And here's the second thing I think is really important. I would read the paper and then talk to the guy

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sitting next to me which was my dad, or my mom, or my friend. We've lost that.

And so, there was an iron sharpens iron effect of I would consume news and then immediately take that to a human. And if you look back on trauma studies the cornerstone of healing for trauma is being with other people. Now I just consume podcast, after podcast, after news update and I'm on my own just study dosing. And by the way, the computers know which articles they think I'm going to like before I even do. So, it creates a user bias. And then it just continues to dump it into my soul.

And so, I think it's a multi-tiered problem but for you as a journalist, I think as a consumer, let me put it this way. I can't control what the journalists do. The only person I can control in the world is me. And I control the use of the off switch and so I'm taking responsibility to turn that thing off.

Jody: Yeah, that's exactly right. And when you say we've lost that part where we would read the article then sit and talk about it with family or friends, is that do you think due to just technology and the bombarding, and the easy access to continued input so we don't have any – like you said, if we don't turn it off there's no processing. There's no discussion connection time around it.

John: So, if you look at human communication, a vast amount of human communication is non-verbal. It is body positioning, and eye crinkles, and shoulders up or down. And I mean we're just primed for however many years of being in communication with one another. This idea that I can hear your voice and your thoughts for hours on end and not see you is brand new. That's never existed before. And so, I'm consuming all of this info. I'm not connecting with you. I'm just getting bombarded with data but I'm not having a connection.

And my response, and actually I can connect to more people via social media, electronic communication. The example I use a lot is I can text my wife 100 times, I love you, I love you, I love you. Her brain gets that, her

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frontal lobe understands the data but her body does not. Telling her I love her is me showing up on time and cleaning up my clothes on the floor, and holding her, and letting her feel my body and say, "I love you." That's a totally different proposition.

And so, we've outsourced all of our human connection online and we just, again, we're transmitting great amounts of data, it's incredible for saying, "Hey, are you going to be there on time? I'll be there. I'm going to be a little bit late. Hey, check out this paper, somebody in India just published it, I can get it right now." That stuff's incredible. What it's not a substitute for is actual human connection and saying, "What do you think about this? Am I reading this the right way?" Totally different propositions there.

Jody: That's good, I love that. Let's talk about if you wouldn't mind, I want to talk about our addiction to problems, that's kind of like a more global scale if you will, or at least within Western United States culture. But what about on a personal level? I feel like individuals as well, it's really easy personally and I'm a mom, I've got four kids. And a lot of my audience is a conservative Christian base, family values. I think even then in the midst of your own life it's easy to be addicted to problems and not realize it. Do you agree? Do you see that?

John: Yeah, 100%. I mean I think part of it is, again it goes back to our wiring. That's what we're consuming all day is problem, after problem, after problem. And I think the science is really clear that you over time become what you consume. I wish that wasn't the case. It just is the truth. I remember I used to listen to nothing, just a steady diet of bananas, heavy metal as a kid. And my dad used to be like, "Why are you so angry? We're pretty good parents."

And I was like, "You don't understand." You know what I mean? And now that I've got kids, I put on one of the old heavy metal CDs a couple of weeks ago and I was like, "What was I doing?" You know what I mean? It was just preposterous. And so, I think we're consuming a lot of it but also especially, and again, I'm a Christian myself. In the faith community there

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has become what I think is very dangerous, a dangerous, oh yeah, well, hold my drink. And I can out problem you. You think that's bad, well, check out this one. Oh yeah, well, check out that one.

And we've completely sucked the joy out of our faith. We've completely sucked the joy of just human existence. And we've pathologized things that yeah, so public schools aren't perfect. In fact, there's some things that are annoying. It's always, always been annoying. And there's new challenges that I prefer my kid to not know. Only in the last 25 years or 30 years have we out – it's not the school's job to teach my kid about my faith, it's mine. It's not my school's job to teach my kids about sexuality and intimacy, it's mine. That's me and my wife's job.

And somehow we've outsourced them. Here's what I love, I love, and I'm just using public school because it's easy. I've got crushed on social media a few weeks ago by suggesting people [crosstalk] take their kids to public school. Here's the thing, you know what I really want? I want my kids to experience different ideas, and different religions, and different people, and while they're in my home still. So that they come to me and say, "What do you think about this? Or I heard this, or Billy heard that."

I remember when we lived in Texas we lived in a community, it was across the street from a major research university. So, lots of faculties up there. And so, the elementary school was phenomenal, it was great. But I remember my son came home, he was four, four, Hank was four. And he said, "Dad, so and so", who's dad is the chair of the physics department at this university said, "That God's just a bunch of gases. Is that true?" I am so grateful that he didn't go to Google for that because he would have got a whole host of answers.

I'm grateful he came to me. And he would not have had that interaction. Where I ran into those questions was when I was 24, working somewhere. And I went back to my empty apartment and I was completely disoriented. And then I went to the internet which was new at the time and I lost everything. So, I want my kid around these things as long as they're safe, I

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want them to be around kids that do life and have different parents. That's an important thing. But as our Christian community we have really double downed on look how bad everything is, look how bad everything is, look how bad everything is.

Man, if you go back and read the text, man, it's always been wrong. It's always been a mess.

Jody: That's right.

John: And that's just the way out of it is to connect with one another.

Jody: Well, in many ways it's actually better now than it was in the past. And in some ways it's worse and harder but you're right, it's always been.

John: I think it's in finitely – I mean it's way better, it's way better.

Jody: I mean, yeah, I look at what we all experienced over the last couple of years with the pandemic. And don't get me wrong, that was challenging. And for some people that was devastating. But on a grander scale I can't help but think about my grandparents and great grandparents living through depressions and world wars. And I'm like, "We're asked to stay home."

John: I remember thinking it. So, either way you fall on that, just sit back for a second. Either way you fall on it, one of my operating, modes of operating for my life is to always have somebody. So, if I needed to talk to somebody who works with coaches I would call you. You know why? Because I don't know anything about working with coaches. And so, when COVID kicked off, I'm not an epidemiologist, I'm not a virologist, I don't know. But I've been in higher ed a long time, I know some scientists and so I called them.

And so, the way they explained, they said it was more incredible, the scientific community behind closed doors rallying together in nine months to a year and creating this thing together. I'm talking about vaccine, it's really controversial. They said it's more impressive than landing on the moon. And if you believe the vaccine was a complete and total hoax, the

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fact that you could isolate in your home, connect with a network of people, not connect but transmit information with people worldwide is incredible.

And you weren't subject to some tyrant who was forcing false info down your throat because you'd have to get – either place you fall inside of this thing, what happened in the last two years was miraculous on the grand scheme of the scale of the world. And so, it's sitting back and going, "Okay, I don't like what's happening or I do like what's happening. Can we just stop and say it's incredible what we're able to do right now?"

And I think it's dangerous that one person can push one button and now we've got a big problem. And that's never existed before either. So, it's like the world's bar belled, it's mostly greater except if it goes south, it goes really south. But I do think you're right. Man, what happens to our energy if we spend it focusing on finding beauty even in the mess?

Jody: It reminds me of a theory that I have which is that we are designed to solve problems. Our brains are amazing problem solvers. And that's an awesome thing and an obviously really useful thing. But the question is are you focusing just on the problem or too much on the problem or are you going to focus more or at least half on the solution and the benefits? And that's what you're describing. We can look back at the last two years and talk about how hard it was or we can talk about how miraculous it's been.

I remember being in this meeting once with a bunch of parents and someone was teaching us about social media and the dangers that that can cause for our kids. The idea was to inform us as parents so we can better raise kids in this world of cellphones, and social media and things. And so, there is a lot of fear. And there was a lot of stories of things, the kids who have been hurt. And that's all real. I'm not saying we don't need to know that, we do need to know that. We need to inform ourselves.

But by the end of that meeting, I was so scared to let my kids leave the house even. And I remember thinking, there's something off here to me. I get that we need to understand this but I don't think that I need to be more

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paralyzed as a mother. And then towards the very end of the meeting this guy in the front row raised his hand. He said, "I just want to mention that I work in the field of IT and I go to these huge conventions every year with rooms chocked full of IT experts, the best of the best who are all working diligently to circumvent these issues.

And there's amazing things happen and there's good people who care about this. It's not David and Goliath here." And I was like, thank you for saying that. You're right, we forget to go. And also, isn't this amazing what we can do, and what we're capable of, and how good human beings are?

John: Yes, and yes, and yes, and yes. And our brains are, they're problem solving machines and they are also prediction machines. And they are out always ahead of us predicting is this car, are we all going at safe miles an hour? Is that person's shoulders threatening? Is this person in a posture of welcome or hostility? And so, when we walk into a room and we know that we get social capital for having the worst problems in the room, from having the worst challenges. Did you hear about this? Oh my gosh, can you believe it?

That if that's how we garner community then our brains are going to lean us all the time towards that. If you ask me what the most important finding over the last 100 years in the psychological literature, I would point to, there's some neat things happening recently. But overall, I would point to Martin Seligman's work which is the idea that pessimism is a learned behavior which makes it over time, it makes it a choice. And I can double down and focus on the number of mothers I've hugged whether a child or loved one has passed away in the next room, I can't count, I don't know, a lot.

And being able to be in that moment and still say and listen to the gratitude. I mean it's the darkest moments of somebody's life and yet where can we find a pinhole of light here? Where can we find the next lit step out of here? That's the gift. That's the moment. And so, we can over time, it's not going to make everything perfect, hundreds of thousands, if not a million people

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have passed away last year, it's been brutal for all of us. We've all been locked away. My kids' lost two years of their lives basically. It's been a mess.

And what does dwelling on that get us other than more drama, and more cortisol, and more adrenalin, and more pain, and more hurt. Okay, it's cool, there's a period [inaudible], healing and this magic question. What are we going to do now, what are we going to do next? What does joy look like moving forward?

Jody: I love that so much. So again, back to a kind of individual level because that's what we have control over, is ourselves individually. I mean are you saying that awareness is a big part of the solution? Where do we begin individually if we realize, okay, I can see this addiction to problems, what do I do about that for my own life or to contribute positively?

John: I think it's cornerstone to acknowledge the reality, own the problem. And understand that dwelling in the mud is not helpful, it doesn't serve any healing purpose. There is a season for grief. And I think we have just tossed that out with the bathwater too, a season of sadness, a season of mourning and loss. We've just thrown that away too. What we've made it, done as a culture is we've tried to dump – well, that's a whole other conversation. I don't want to open any more cans of worms on your show.

Yes, you've got to look in the mirror and say, here's reality. I've got to take ownership of my thoughts. I've got to take ownership of the words coming out of my mouth. Yes, there is negativity, yes, there is ugliness, and yes, gas prices are crazy and my spouse is abusive. All those things are true and I've got to own those things. I have to own it. And then I have to ask myself what happens next? And that's a brave scary question that most of us were not trained to ask, which is what do we do now?

And if you walk into a room and there's an active shooter situation, okay, the worst possible thing is happening right now. And then there's a period. And the police officers, and the SWAT officers all look at each other and

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say, “Okay, what’s the game plan now?” And that’s us. And what we need to do is to stop living in the worst thing that ever happened to us, the worst things that we ever said, the worst things we’ve ever done, put a period in that sentence and begin to say, “Okay, what comes next?”

Jody: Yeah, it’s very validating to have a story that’s horrific and have people go, “What, really?” And I think like you said, our desire for connection, the way we’ve lost a lot of that, it’s easy to go down a negative place and feel connected to other people who feel the same way you do. And I do want to say, I love what you’re saying about stopping and looking in the mirror. I know, and I just want to challenge everybody listening to this. For me it’s tempting to hear a message like this and go, “Yeah, that’s right, I’m going to send this to my brother-in-law, he needs to hear this.

Or that group of people who I disagree with, I wish they could hear this because it’s just natural to look outward and see the application of it. And I think okay, if that helps us understand the concepts but the true message here that I’m taking away is it’s inward. And even in little, tiny situations, I remember coaching this woman who was frustrated that she couldn’t keep the house clean and the kids wouldn’t do their chores. And she was always upset and just couldn’t keep up.

And we were coaching about this and I was just trying to help her work through it. And then one day she came to me and she had started a direct sales type business. And next thing, all she wanted to talk about was how to motivate her team, how to be more effective at her business. And I said, “Whatever happened with the messy house?” And she said, “I don’t care about that anymore.” And it just for me was such a great example of how your brain is smart and can do amazing things. And like I said, you’re a problem solver.

Like you said, we predict things. So, are you putting that brain to work on something fun or useful that you want to contribute, or that it’s just fun for you? Or are you not and then your brain is looking around going, what is a problem I can solve? I know, the kids aren’t doing their chores, the house

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should be cleaner. Your brain is going to create something to get to work on and strategize. And I feel like we create problems if we don't have, what to me is a more useful fun problem which is how do we grow your business? How do we motivate your team?

John: Some sort of purpose to lean into, some sort of meaning making to be a part of. I really think at the core that's it, that's been it in my life. When I find myself doubling down on negativity, can we be honest too? None of us have a picture of what focusing on positive looks like. And so, we're asking ourself to do something that we've never seen in real time. And that's something that we all need to keep in mind. Our parents more than likely didn't come home and be like, "You know what? We made \$35,000 this year. The roof stayed on, the bills were paid and I didn't get a new car."

None of us had that and so we have to understand that, man, we're in uncharted waters when it comes to okay, what does something positive look like? And you said, I love that you said this, and the great Bessel van der Kolk said it best, the body keeps the score here. Every time you crank up a negative story the cortisol and the adrenalin dumps in your body and it's off to the races. And you can look over time, man, and that sort of life begins to eat your inside.

This isn't a spiritual woo woo, this is a physical, it will eat your insides and you will die younger. You will be miserable. We have a purpose challenge in our culture I think. We've made our kids the sinner of our world, we've made our spouses the sinner of our world. Now we're in a season, we're making our businesses, you've got to give me everything, all my identity, my purpose, my health insurance and all that stuff, great. But we're asking work to do something it can't hold. And we're asking our kids to hold up something they can't hold.

We're asking our spouse to hold something that we can't hold. We've got to look in the mirror and say this one scary, scary question, "What do I want? What purpose am I holding here? What am I contributing?" And that's where you begin to unwind this pervasive addiction in negativity I think.

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Jody: I love that so much. Before I let you go, can you speak to, I keep hearing this term now, toxic positivity.

John: I love that, okay. Do we have enough time for me to back up real quick?

Jody: Yeah.

John: Okay. So, let's go back to before the dawn of time and there was a couple of folks who discovered tools and they were plowing a field. And one guy figured out how to make the plow a little bit thinner and a little bit sharper and yet still be strong. So, he's solving for comfort there. He's solving for less work to get a cool result. That's phenomenal. That's innovation and progress, it's beautiful and wonderful.

And all of a sudden in the last 200 years, our ability to innovate, and to come up with new stuff and technology has outpaced our ability to run with life. So, what happens is instead of solving for a problem in front of us, we began to solve for comfort. And I love, I love air conditioning in my car on a hot Tennessee day. I love it. I love the way my fishing pole can cast really far instead of just a stick and a string, I love all that stuff. And in an effort to solve for comfort we began solving for discomfort. We've pathologized discomfort, we've made it all bad.

I often had students come into my office over the years and say, "Hey, I'm really depressed, my parents are getting a divorce." And I would say, "I don't think you're depressed, I think you're sad. I think you're heartbroken." We don't have a culture of being able to sit with one another when we're sad, when we're heartbroken, when someone has died of COVID that we love, and we are just in a puddle on the floor.

When a person who we wanted so badly in office didn't get elected in, when we think there's some kind of tomfoolery at the election. We don't have a cultural sense of mourning, of just being with one another and going, "Oh." All of those hormones and chemicals stay in our body and they come out in rage. And they come out in disaster. Or they come out in, it's

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cool man. And so yes, toxic positivity is a thing and I think it's equally pathological.

It's this wallpapering over of your hurt, it's this duct taping and tiling over a rotted wood floor, and your husband's abusive. He just has bad days. He just has bad days and I probably should be quiet. I just can get him going when he's been drinking. So that toxic positivity will kill you, or get you killed. And so, what I'm asking for is a balance that starts, like we said a minute ago, it starts with looking in the mirror and owning reality.

Wallpapering over something with rage, with mindless anger, with conspiracy theories and spending hours going down YouTube rabbit holes. Or wallpapering over things with one more drink, one more texting that person at your office that you're not married to, one more hour at work on top of another hour, on top of another hour, or this mindless Pollyanna optimism. It's okay, it's all fine, it's good. It's all going to be, sometimes it's not. Sometimes they do pass away. Sometimes they do get cancer.

Sometimes it's hard and we've got to start from a place of owning reality. And then optimism is not about pretending hard stuff isn't happening. Optimism is about if I put the work in, tomorrow could be better than today. And that's what we've lost. We've bought into a narrative that is tomorrow can only be worse than today. Just look at the news, look at the economy, look at the weather. Everything points to it's probably going to be worse tomorrow and I'm just calling nonsense on that.

Jody: I completely agree with you. I teach it as clean pain and dirty pain. You've got to allow clean pain. You've got to allow yourself to grieve, to be sad, even I love the word you used, that we've pathologized negative emotions. The number one request I get when I go speak to adults, parents especially is, "How do I help my anxious child?" Or if I go to speak to youth, they want me to talk about overcoming anxiety. And the first thing I always say is, "It's okay to be anxious."

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And we talk about, my kid has anxiety as though we're saying my kid has COVID, my kid has the flu. And there is a form of anxiety that requires medical intervention I do believe. But I'm just talking about the greater whole of us. And when my kids come to me and say, "Mom, I feel anxious." And by the way they label everything anxiety, like you said. I always say, "What's going on? It sounds like your nervous. It sounds like your scared. It sounds like you're disappointed." I try to give them a wider vocabulary, everything's not anxiety.

But then I say, "I'm so sorry you feel that way. You know what? It's okay, I feel anxious sometimes too. I feel sad sometimes too."

John: [Crosstalk].

Jody: Yeah. It's not a problem that we have to rush in and solve. Yes, we can understand it. Yes, there are times when we can change your focus or medicate if necessary etc. But overall anxiety is what healthy humans experience all the time.

John: Yes. I tell people, "All anxiety is, is just like the smoke alarm in your kitchen. That's it. That's all it is." If your house is on fire and that alarm's just going off, as a culture we've rushed to get on a ladder and climb up and turn the alarm off as though that's the problem. It's our body just trying to get our attention and usually it's one of a couple of things, we're disconnected, or we're not safe, or we're in a situation we don't have autonomy or control.

And our body's just saying, "Hey, things aren't okay, things aren't okay, things aren't okay." And it gets louder and then we race to pull the batteries out or we duct tape a pillow around it to try to silence it. When parents come and ask me, you're kinder than me, when a parent comes and asks me, "How do I help my kids with anxiety?" My number one thing is, "You fix your marriage and you do what you need to do to get well and whole, and create an anchored sense of not calm but of I'm in the driver's seat in this house."

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It's most of the time, I'm running into kids who are absorbing the tension from a chaotic household, or a tense household, or a fear based household and they are taking that with them everywhere. Or a disconnected mom and dad whose relationship is beginning to rattle through the hearts and minds of their kid. You are infinitely kinder than me.

Jody: Well, no, I think that we're working with different...

John: But you're super right.

Jody: We're working with different audiences too. I am not swooping in, in the crisis situations. But I am telling, what I do say is, "Your job is to not be anxious about your child having anxiety because you're just bringing more anxiety into the house."

John: You are a gift. That's so great. That's incredible. I love, yeah, when people ask me, I'm so anxious, it's like, "Well, what's your body trying to tell you?" It's not a freak out moment, it's not. Yeah, it's a gift, that's right. And if you ever don't feel anxious you should probably go see somebody for that also because that means your alarms are disfunctioning.

Jody: That's right. That is actually pathological, that is, a psychopath never feels – I don't know. But they're the ones not feeling negative emotion. It's actually normal and healthy that you would feel this.

John: Yeah. Hey, I'm so happy that you're out there, loving people like that, that's so [crosstalk].

Jody: Thank you so much and you as well. Well, everybody if you want to learn more from Dr. John Delony, he has his own show on YouTube, yeah, is that where we find your show?

John: Anywhere you get podcasts and yes it's on YouTube too.

Jody: Okay, the Dr. John Delony Show. And he's also written a couple of amazing books, Redefining Anxiety and Own Your Past, Change Your

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Future. Is there anywhere else we should be sending people for all of your goodness?

John: No, to your coaching classes.

Jody: Well, of course, obviously.

John: They sound incredible. Sign up for one.

Jody: That's so nice, thank you.

John: If you're not signing up for a class, get one.

Jody: Get in there. Alright, I so appreciate your time, Dr. John, thanks so much.

John: Hey, you're a saint. Thank you so much, I'm grateful for you.

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.