

## 369: How to Help Your Missionary with Jennie Dildine



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 369: How to Help Your Missionary with Jennie Dildine.

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.

You guys, I'm so excited for you to hear what Jennie has to say. Jennie is the coach for missionaries pre, during and post. She has so much experience and she's doing such important work on the planet. So, I asked her if she would come on and share a little bit about that with us today.

Before we get into my conversation with her I want to make sure to all my entrepreneur friends, all my mompreneurs especially whether you're a mom of little kids, adult kids, whatever, doesn't matter. If you're a mom you understand that you don't want to give up any time with your family. You don't want to sacrifice what matters most which is your relationships for your business. But you kind of have this little secret desire to build your business, start a business, grow a business, scale a business. I'm going to help you on a free webinar called Success Secrets for Mompreneurs.

And I'm going to give you the three most important things that you need to know, the three things that I think are the reason I have been able to achieve what I think is pretty extraordinary success in my business. While a lot of people who are so much smarter than me, so much more organized, so much more focused, and self-disciplined, and all the things that you'd think would be necessary, I lack severely in all those categories.

So how did I do it? I'm going to tell you on this free webinar, [jodymoore.com/mompreneur](http://jodymoore.com/mompreneur), that is a made up word, M-O-M-P-R-E-N-E-U-R. And you can register. There's two time slots, pick the one you like best, sign up and get the replay if you can't come live. But try to come live. It's better live. So don't miss that. It's happening here soon.

And then the other thing I want tell you before I turn it over to my conversation with Jennie Dildine is that Jennie has created a really

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awesome tool that you're going to want, that will go along with what she's going to teach today. And after we did our interview she said, "Oh no, I forgot to tell them to go and grab the tool." It's a free mini training that will really help you to not only have that, I hope I'll be ready for a mission, but the certainty that you're ready for your missionary and the certainty for you as a mom, a parent that you've done right by your missionary in preparing them to go out.

So, it's a totally free mini training. You just go to [jenniedildine.com/onetool](http://jenniedildine.com/onetool), the word, one. So let me spell it for you, it's Jennie with an I-E, J-E-N-N-I-E D-I-L-D-I-N-E.com/O-N-E-T-O-O-L. And you want to grab that if you like what you hear from Jennie. Alright, here we go.

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Jody: Miss Jennie Dildine, I'm so excited to talk with you today.

Jennie: This is so fun, thanks for having me.

Jody: Yes. Thanks for coming on the show. So, we're going to be talking to all the missionary parents especially missionary moms today, right?

Jennie: Yeah, that's right.

Jody: I'm excited, this is a much needed topic. Seriously, my son is, he'll be 16 in June. And I'm already freaking out about him leaving for college, or a mission. I'm like, "You can just stay here, you'll be fine, just stay here."

Jennie: Yeah, it's a big transition. It was a huge transition for me when my oldest son left.

Jody: So, I want to hear all about that and all of the wisdom you have for the moms. But we should just do a basic introduction first about you.

Jennie: Yeah, okay, yeah. I am Jennie Dildine, I call myself the LDS Mission Coach. I have been coaching for about two and a half years now. I'm certified through The Life Coach School. I came to coaching through you actually. It was a funny story that goes along with this podcast is my

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oldest son had left on his mission. And it was actually the same time that my youngest daughter started kindergarten and I was like, “I don’t know who I am. What’s going on?”

Jody: That’s a lot of big change, yeah.

Jennie: A lot of big change, I was crying in the bathroom one day.

Jody: Okay, so you’d been a stay at home mom up to this point?

Jennie: Yeah. And I didn’t know what to do with my life because it just all felt like I didn’t have control over it and all these things were happening. And children were leaving and anyway, he’s like, “I wonder if you should hire a life coach.”

Jody: Wait. This is your husband that said this?

Jennie: Yes.

Jody: Okay, I like him.

Jennie: I know, I don’t even think he knew what that meant and so I immediately got on and searched on podcasts. I was like, life coach and up you came, your podcast.

Jody: Wow, that was lucky.

Jennie: Yeah, that is fun because in a matter of moments my life changed just by understanding the tools that we teach as coaches. And so, it helped me understand how to better parent my missionary son, how to better parent my college aged kids, just all around. The model has been hugely influential. And I also just realized that I could really help with these tools with missionaries and so that’s where I decided to put my focus.

So, at first I started working with returned missionaries because I feel like we work our whole lives to prepare our kids to go on missions and then once they get home we’re like, “Good luck.”

Jody: That’s it, what do I do now?

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Jennie: Yeah. but then as I worked with returned missionaries I really saw the need to have these tools given to missionaries before they left, just how lifechanging and mission changing those are. And so that's where I've been doing all of my work is with missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Jody: And sometimes you get to work with some while they're on their missions too.

Jennie: Yes, I have, I have. And it's been, some missionaries have done a complete 180, they were ready to throw in the towel and go home. And we start chatting and it's changed everything for them, just like you changed my life in a few matter of moments.

Jody: Just like other people change mine, that's called paying it forward, that's what we do.

Jennie: That's right.

Jody: So how many kids do you have? And tell us their ages and everything.

Jennie: So, I have five kids. And my oldest son served in the Louisiana, Baton Rouge mission and he's now married. He got married last summer, so that's super fun. My second son, I have another son, he served in the Australian, Melbourne mission for seven months and some of these moms will be able to relate to this is then he came home from COVID. So, when all of those masses and missionaries came home on airplanes from the Philippines, and Australia, and everywhere, he was one of those.

And he was home actually for five months and then he ended up going back out to serve out in the New England area, in the Manchester mission. And he's actually getting married this summer, so [crosstalk].

Jody: Oh my gosh, that's right, you did tell me you had another wedding. That's exciting.

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Jennie: Yeah, so that's super fun. And then I have a son in high school. He's a junior and then I have a daughter who's a freshman. And then my 'baby', she's 10. She's fifth grade.

Jody: Okay, fun. I think that's helpful for people just to see that you have experience in these areas. I know you're an amazing coach. We had Caleb Price on a little while ago. And you're the coach that he referenced, that you really inspired him, changed his life and then inspired him to go on and become a coach.

Jennie: Yeah. He's doing great things, I love, so fun. I actually met with him again today, we were chatting today.

Jody: Fun.

Jennie: Yeah, he's a good guy.

Jody: Okay. So, there's so many things in my head that I think I'm going to be worried about with my kids when they leave. Obviously this is applicable when kids go to college too but a mission is such a unique experience.

Jennie: It really is, yeah.

Jody: I'm sort of wondering if we don't frame this around, there's so much emphasis put on preparing for a mission. With both the youth and the adults, we're supposed to be preparing our kids, they're supposed to be preparing themselves. And there's a lot of emphasis on spiritual preparation which is awesome and necessary. And there's even some talk around financial preparation. What I feel like is lacking is the mental and emotional preparation which might be one of the hardest parts of serving a mission, would you agree?

Jennie: 100%, this is what I have learned with all of the clients that I have worked with is that this mental and emotional piece is what's missing from mission preparedness. The hard part of the mission is not getting a door slammed in your face or the fact that you might have to sleep on a mattress on the floor, or that your shoes are going to wear out. That's not the

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hardest part of the mission. The hardest part of the mission is the stuff that happens in your head and the stuff that happens in your heart, that mental and emotional piece.

And I don't feel like we've equipped our missionaries to know how to handle that piece of it.

Jody: Right. Tell us more detail about what that's like both for your kids and maybe some of these, I guess we would call them your missionaries that you've worked with, your clients. What are the mental and emotional challenges that they're facing?

Jennie: Yeah. So, on the mission I see a lot of perfectionism. There's just a pressure there with goals and with things they are trying to teach and these goals they're trying to reach, and the number of contacts that they're trying to make. So, what I start to see is a lot of perfectionism and anxiety, a lot of anxiety. And then what compounds that is these missionaries start to believe that because they're feeling this pressure, because they're feeling the stress, because they're feeling the anxiety, that there's something wrong with them and that is the worst part.

It's what you and I call a model on a model. We just have the model where we're feeling anxious, where we're feeling sad, where we're feeling overwhelmed. But then we judge that and make it mean that there's something wrong with us, or that we're a bad missionary, or that we must not be spiritual enough. That's one of the biggest things that I see. Their worth starts to go down. They think there's something wrong.

And the experience that I've had with that for myself, which I never saw coming is when your missionary calls home, you know they can call home now. And they're just in tears every week. You don't expect that when you send them out. And it's just a very big mental and emotional toll. And so, if we can empower these kids ahead of time to understand how to feel anxiety, where anxiety comes from and that it's okay to feel it. You're not lacking the spirit. You're not sinning. You're not doing anything wrong. But we can work with this, let's work with this, you're a human.

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Then we just empower them to create the mission experience that they want, instead of being at the mercy of the mission, they get to create whatever they want.

Jody: Do you think, Jennie, that we do a poor job of setting the expectation for missionaries. And I want to come back, I think you're right, it's important that we talk about the missionary, but the parents experience when your child calls home crying, we'll talk about that in a minute. But I want to begin with, do you think that we do a poor job setting the expectation for these young people that it's almost like we hear the return missionary who's talking about these amazing.

Of course, when you give your talk in church you're going to share the stories that stood out as amazing and lifechanging ideally. And I feel like we get that and we so desperately in some cases, I'm kind of unusual, I'm like, "You don't really need to go on a mission, just stay with me." But I think normal people want their young men especially to serve a mission. And so, in an attempt to not talk them out of going we don't talk about the part where it's going to be really challenging.

Jennie: Yes, that's right. In fact, it's funny you mention that, I was working with a sister missionary who was getting ready to go home and then we kept working with each other after she came home. She was just brutally honest with me. She was so conflicted about her homecoming talk because her mission was so hard. She really felt like it had torn her down. And I said, "Listen, you need to get up there and be honest about that. People need to hear that."

And of course, with the tools that I've taught her, she understands now that there is 50/50, there was also some joy there. There was also some happiness. But I agree with you, I don't know that we talk about it enough. And I think that we talk about it like missions are hard, what to do or why.

Jody: What does that mean?

Jennie: And that's one of the things I say is, "I teach you the how of doing hard things." The mission is hard. You actually become a new version of



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you. When you come home you'll have new thoughts, new feelings and you've had experiences you've never had before. That is a hard process for any of us. We just need to give these kids more skills on how to manage that and how to navigate that while they're out.

Jody: I think it's helpful to tell them that too. You're about to do a really amazing and noble thing and you're going to sacrifice and it's awesome that you've chosen to do it. And it's going to be like you said, 50/50. There's going to be things about it that are amazing, and lifechanging, and transformative even if some of them you don't recognize till after the fact. And there's going to be so many things about this that are going to be painful and hard. And you're going to feel like you want to quit and that's okay.

Jennie: Right. That's the key piece is when they get out there they don't think it's okay. They're like, "Yeah, it's going to be hard." But then they think there's something wrong with them or with their experience when it doesn't go that way.

Jody: Yeah. I remember my dad telling me this about getting married. He's like, "When you get married there's good days and bad days. And there's good years and hard years." I am so glad he told me that because otherwise I think during some of the hard years I would have thought, something's wrong or I'm in the wrong marriage or what have you. And because he told me that I was like, "Okay, this is how it goes when you're married." So, I just think even just as parents, just including that in the conversation, really helpful.

Okay, so let's circle back to, you mentioned that as a mom when your child calls home every week in tears, saying, "I have really bad anxiety." What do they say, tell me, what does that conversation sound like?

Jennie: There is the anxiety piece but there is like I'm a bad missionary. I'm not meeting my goals. I don't know if I can handle the pressure. I don't know if I can handle the stress. I even had one mom, the companion adds a whole another level to all of this. I had one mom email me and said, "My

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daughter's really struggling on the mission because her companion flat out told her that her efforts were not acceptable before God." Nice.

Jody: Thank you, companion, that was helpful.

Jennie: Yeah. It could be any number of things, they just feel like they're not living up to what they think they should be.

Jody: I think that's interesting because it speaks a little bit too to what I worry about with the way we raise kids today. I think you look at the soccer team, everybody gets a trophy at the end. And a little bit of we're afraid to subject our kids to challenge but then they go out into the real world on a mission, or this could be in college, or this could be a job. And somebody comes along like a mission president or someone who wants to encourage, and to have goals, and say, "Let's see if we can hit these goals."

And if you make that mean, if you're not able to, if you make that mean something negative about you, that is crushing and that's such a valuable life skill to learn how to set big goals and go after big goals. And then not beat yourself up or get too discouraged when you don't hit them.

Jennie: Yeah. Not make it mean anything about the kind of human that you are, the kind of missionary that you are, your level of spirituality. One missionary just messaged me and was like, "I'm coming home in about six weeks and I feel burned out." And he's like, "I feel terrible, I don't want to feel burned out." And I'm like, "Except for at the end of a two year mission you're probably going to feel burn out. There's nothing wrong with that." But he's making it mean something about him.

Jody: Interesting. Instead of, yeah, that's an interesting way to think about it, Jennie. What if it's okay to feel burned out? What if you could be like, well done me, I've been working really hard and really pushing myself. It makes sense that I would be kind of burned out now. Rob Bell talks about this. He has a new audiobook called Handling Your Fire. It's about burnout because he says, your fire is the thing that lights you up, that you're passionate and excited about.

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And it's also the thing that burns you if you're not handling it correctly. But I mean even if we think about the idea of a sabbath, that every Sunday we rest. I think it's because the way that our heavenly parents created us is such, we can go hard, and we can go big, and we can work intensely. And then we need rest. And so, it might just be that you're just ready for rest now and it's okay, I love that, it's okay to feel burned out now.

Jennie: Yeah, 100%. And there's this piece too, you think about a missionary's life. They do pretty much the same thing every day. So, the brain is going to also want some novelty and some change. And the brain is naturally going to look forward to what's next after the mission? But this particular missionary is like, "There's something wrong. I shouldn't be looking to the future. I should be right where I am." And I'm like, "Well, it doesn't really help for us to be mad about that or to hate ourselves for that." It is a natural function of your brain.

Jody: That's right. Yeah, it is natural. And I think that we sometimes in this realm of spirituality that we have at church, we sort of start delegating emotions to these spiritual mystical things like the spirit or the adversary. And not that I don't think those things are real. I do think they're real. But I think if we start blaming everything on I'm not spiritual enough because I'm feeling bad or I hear people do the opposite where they're like, "I have all these maybe negative self-talk, I know that's the adversary."

I'm like, "No, that's your human brain and the adversary wants you to listen to that and stay on that course. But you have a human brain and I just think that delegating so many things to these mystical unknown places then only leaves room for us to judge, well, then it must be me. if I was more righteous, if I was doing a better job then the spirit would help me to not feel this way." That's what I think is the danger of it.

Jennie: Yeah. Here's one example I have of that is without question any preparing missionary that I work with, about two weeks before they get ready to leave they're bombarded with thoughts that I can't do this, I don't know if it's going to work out. This is going to be really hard. Which you and I both know is just your human brain trying to shut you down. And then

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they're full of doubt. And then they think, and I read this in the mama Facebook groups, the missionary mamas they're like, "Satan has a hold of my child."

And I want to be like, "No, guess what that is? Your brain is really worried about what's going to happen in the future or trying to protect you from pain. It totally makes sense that you're going to feel some doubt right before you leave."

Jody: Yeah. And I think that for some people maybe at times it's helpful for them to be like, "This is just Satan trying to prevent me from doing a good thing." Okay, if that's helpful for the missionary or whatever to think that, okay. But I find that in a lot of cases it's not, it's scary to think that Satan could get a hold of your child. I just think you have to question that thought.

Jennie: And it disempowers us when we think about it that way. I want all of my clients to be empowered, no, I get to think, and feel, and behave however I choose to.

Jody: Yes, that's right. Because it's not like you have to just – when we say it's natural for the brain, Jennie, like you're saying, it's natural for the brain to try to shut you down from doing something new, something unknown. Your brain thinks there's a lot of danger, emotional or what have you, physical or maybe danger ahead. And so, it's trying to protect you from that. This makes sense. This also doesn't mean that you can't answer that part of your brain and not be in so much fear.

If it's Satan has a hold of my brain then I'm kind of in trouble. But if it's like, this is just my brain thinking it's protective and telling me this could go wrong, and this might be scary, we don't know about this. And you're going to be homesick and you might get a companion you don't like. Whatever the things are, those are all valid things your brain is concerned about. So, the answer, how do you teach them to answer their brain? I mean that's my wording, I don't know how you like to word it.

Jennie: Yeah. So, I honestly, most of the work I do is understanding that that's okay that your brain is giving you those thoughts. There's nothing

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wrong. It's sort of like I am having the thought that the mission's going to be really hard and that's okay. I'm having the thought, I don't know if I really want to do this and that's okay.

Jody: I love that you're saying, I'm having the thought the mission's going to be hard. I'm having the thought, I'm not sure I want to do this because when we take that little phrase out then we're just at the effect of the thought. This is going to be hard, I'm not sure I want to do it. It makes it like there's this external reality that we're worried about instead of I am creating a reality right now which we will always be the creators of the reality. The mission isn't hard. Our brains struggle with it which is okay, which is normal.

So, I love even just putting in front of it, I am having the thought I'm not sure I want to go and it's okay that I have that thought.

Jennie: And it's okay that I feel doubt right now.

Jody: It's okay that I feel doubt.

Jennie: I am Christlike, it doesn't make me less valiant. It doesn't make me less worthy. None of those, yeah.

Jody: Right, that's exactly right, I love that so much. And again, what I was thinking too is that you can answer that with, and also it might be amazing and it might not be hard in the ways I think it's going to be hard. Maybe it will be hard in different ways and maybe it will be amazing in ways I can't anticipate. Maybe this will be a fantastic experience, or maybe it won't be scary, or maybe it won't be. You know what I mean? We like to call it equal airtime. When COVID first hit and everybody's brains were panicking of we're all going to get sick and die.

Can give equal airtime to the opposite too, I might be fine, it might be that nobody that I know is really that impacted by it or it might be that we all give equal airtime to the positive story as the brain will already offer you up the negative.

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Jennie: And yeah, a lot of that work I do, that 50/50 rule. Embracing that because we have this duality in our brains, a higher brain and a lower brain everything we experience is going to have that duality. We're going to have some highs and some lows. And we're going to have everything in between. And as long as we have the tools to manage all of it, we're good.

Jody: And it doesn't mean you're making a wrong choice either. Again, we see this with entrepreneurs a lot, a mom especially who decides, maybe I'm going to build this coaching practice like you and I have done. And they start down the path and they're like, "I don't know, I'm just feeling really bad that I'm not spending enough time with my kids. Or I'm feeling really overwhelmed or I'm feeling really afraid that people aren't going to want to hire me."

And then if we make that mean this is the Lord telling me no, which it may be. But I think that that's actually few and far between. I think most of the times it's just our human brain saying, this is a lot of work, this is scary, this is just like a missionary. And it may not mean that you're on the wrong track. It may be that you just have a human brain that's coming with you.

Jennie: Yeah. And it goes with you on the mission and it goes with you when you get home, yeah.

Jody: Yes, that's right. Okay, so back to the parents. Can you help me because when my son leaves and he calls home crying every week, that is going to be terribly hard for me, Jennie.

Jennie: The way I like to think about this is I have a few things that come to mind and one of them is the difference that you talk about a little bit is the difference between clean pain and dirty pain. And I think we can do some clean parenting or we can do some dirty parenting. And when we talk about clean pain, when we're on that call it can sort of sound like, this isn't what I was expecting from the mission. I wasn't really expecting this. And we're a little bit like, "I'm a little disappointed that it didn't work out this certain way."

Dirty pain to me the definition, the thought that we have with dirty pain is there is something wrong. There's something that we need to fix.

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Jody: Something wrong externally that I should try to manipulate or I should at least be really mad and worried about.

Jennie: Yeah, or overwhelmed, or whatever. And so, if we can just understand our kids are on their own journey. Your missionary, this is a little bit personal but I'll share it here is when my kids left on missions I never prayed that they would have a good experience. I prayed that they would have the exact experience that they needed to become more like our heavenly parents.

Jody: That's so good.

Jennie: And I don't know what that journey is. I don't know it. And so, if my kid is there crying on the phone, I'm just like, well, this isn't what I expected, but it must be part of their journey.

Jody: That's so amazing. It reminds me when I lived in California there was a woman in our ward and our kids went to the same school. And this was when I only, I don't know how many kids I had at the time, But my oldest kids were in first and second grade. So, my kids were a lot younger. There's so many parents who step in and makes sure their kid gets the right teacher and move them out of this class if this teacher, if we hear anything negative about this teacher or what have you. And I remember her saying, "Yeah, I don't do that."

She said, "I just pray that my kids will get the teacher that they need." Kind of like you're saying, they might get the 'worst' teacher or whatever, the most strict teacher, or the negative burned out, or the companion, or the mission that's again 'hard'. We've got to have some faith. That's actually why our kids are here on Earth, and why we're all here on Earth is to have challenging experiences.

Jennie: That's right. I talked to a mom once who came up to me and I was like, because this is what's funny about me, I don't come up to you and be like, "How are you?" I'm always like, "How is your missionary? What's going on with them?" Yeah. And so, I was like, "How is your missionary?" And she's like, "It's so great." He was serving in Italy. "He has got the language

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down. They're teaching people." And Italy is kind of known to be, the missions in Italy are a really hard mission.

And she's like, "They're baptizing people. He's got an amazing companion." She's like, "It's perfect, it's just what I've been praying for." And I was like, "But why?"

Jody: Why are you praying for that? I mean that's great.

Jennie: Yeah, but that's not where growth happens. That's not where transformation happens. We don't know change comes from ease.

Jody: That's fascinating. Okay, now it just made me think of something else. I want to back up and talk through with you for a minute. When you said, "I don't ask how are you, I ask, how's your missionary." Which I love that because how are you is the worst question that I ask all the time. I need a better one. Maybe I'll start asking, "How's your missionary?" But here's what I thought is that when you asked that woman, "How's your missionary", you know what you're going to learn? You're going to learn about that, how that woman is.

Jennie: Yeah.

Jody: When she told you, "He's in Italy, it's going great. He's baptizing." Now, of course her son probably called home recently and said the same thing or similar things. So, we're learning a little bit about how her missionary is. But we're also learning about her and her brain. Because it's possible too that your child might call home, the way you've positioned this with what you're praying for, for your missionaries. Your missionary could call home and say, "This is really hard, I'm really struggling, I'm not sure I'm doing a good job, etc."

And someone could ask you, "How is your missionary?" And you could say, "He's doing amazing."

Jennie: It's amazing what's happening to him out there, it's amazing.



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Jody: Right. When I ask questions like, “Tell me about your mom, tell me about your husband, tell me about your business, tell me about.” What I am finding out through those questions is not about their family member, or their job. I’m finding out about my client. I’m finding out about their brains.

Jennie: So interesting, yeah. I never even thought of that before but that’s true.

Jody: So, you and I work together in the Business Minded group. And there’s one woman in there we’ll just give a shout out to, Kym Showers. She’s amazing. Go find her on Instagram, Kym with a Y. And she is the most positive lovely person ever, right?

Jennie: Totally, yes.

Jody: Her brain, she just has such a positive brain. And she works hard at it too. I mean she is partly blessed towards positivity but she also works at it intentionally as a coach. And so, I know when I ask about her business, most likely it’s going to be amazing. And it is but that’s also because that’s how her brain operates. That’s how she views the world. That’s how she’s chosen intentionally to think about the world and she continues to choose it. So, I think that’s so important.

And I’m not talking about missionary moms. I’m not talking about walking around pretending and telling a story you don’t genuinely believe. It’s okay to think my missionary is struggling and this is really hard. We’re not saying one is better than the other. We’re just saying it’s all optional, it’s all just a story. And if your thought is, I don’t want my missionary to struggle, then when they are you’re going to feel sad.

If your thought is, I want my missionary to have the experience he or she is meant to have right now, that will serve them and serve the mission and serve the people they come in contact with. It’s just going to change things a little bit, it’s going to, like you said, clean parenting, dirty parenting. It’s going to put you in the clean space, where you’re still going to feel sad when they’re sad. You’re still going to have human emotions but you’re not going to move into, what, worry, overwhelm, anxiety about it?

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Jennie: Yeah. And we get into this mirroring. We're anxious about their anxiety, and we're sad about their sadness. And we're overwhelmed because they're overwhelmed. Instead of tapping into feelings of love and compassion and we're not very useful when we're on that rollercoaster with our missionary, we're not as useful. And one thing I will say is to maybe avoid phrases like, we need to fix this. I have also heard missionaries referred to as broken.

And we just need, if my missionary calls home crying I'm like, "It makes sense you feel this way. It's okay that you do." And come at it from just love, understanding and compassion instead of something's gone wrong that we need to fix.

Jody: I love that so much. I think honestly that's mostly all they need is someone to validate their feelings. These are young adults. We're not talking about a four year old here that doesn't have any idea what's going on. We're talking about a 18, 19, 20 year old, a child who really just needs some validation like, "It makes sense that you feel that way. You know what? I love you, you're right on track, missions are hard. It's natural and normal to feel this." Or just being away from home is hard. Being in a foreign country is hard.

Whatever it is, you validate the pain and I love you and I'm here for you. And that's it, that's kind of all they need. There's nothing to fix because there's nothing broken.

Jennie: Right. But that has to come, your listeners kind of know what self-coaching is. That coaching has to happen on you before you get on that call. It has to happen, we talk about how our thoughts create our feelings, and our feelings are going to drive a set of actions. If we're going to take useful action on that call we've got to get our heads in the right place, nothing's gone wrong. This was always part of the plan. 50/50 is part of the mission, it's part of life.

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Whatever sentence that is that gets you to love, and empowered, and compassion, and curiosity, we've got to do that first before we get on the call.

Jody: Yeah, I love that, I call that pre-coaching. Before we even get on, if we think there's a chance, we don't always get to, because we don't always know if that's going to happen. But often we do know, we have a good idea. So, if you suspect it's going to be challenging, you pre coach by giving yourself a thought like, it's okay for my child to struggle. That's been my most empowering clean parenting thought. My child is not supposed to be happy all the time. My child is meant to struggle at times.

And I am not supposed to fix it all the time, it's okay. Nothing has gone wrong here. I'm just going to love him or her, and the truth is, they're a lot better at sorting it out and finding the way out of the pain when the time comes than actually all of our inventive ways we try to offer.

Jennie: Yeah. I think that when we start to be like, "Oh my gosh, something's wrong", what they hear is something's wrong with me. That's what they hear.

Jody: Yeah, you're right.

Jennie: I'm the problem. And they're not the problem, they're just, they're a human serving a mission.

Jody: Some days I think about all the things that we buffer with, we use that word 'buffering' as coaches which just means a way that we can avoid feeling even just boredom or nervousness, insecurity. There's so many ways now like with phones. I was just at a luncheon the day where I didn't know anybody. And I noticed myself just be like, I could just pick up my phone and check my email or whatever. Then I don't have to stand here and feel awkward. I don't know anyone and I kind of don't want to go meet people and I don't know what to say.

I could just escape all that so easily. So, we'll pick up a phone, we eat some food, we watch Netflix, we shop online. We do all these things that

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just help us escape. And then we send kids out on missions and we take almost all of that away. They have no money to shop or buy food, extra food really. They don't have phones like they used to have. They can't just watch TV, or movies, or even just listen to a lot of music. We just pretty much take all of it away and then we wonder why they're struggling.

I'm like, "Because they never had to feel those emotions, now they have to. It's like we throw them in the deep end of the pool."

Jennie: Without their family there.

Jody: It's so mean. Without your family. You're in a foreign country sometimes or at least a new place. You don't know anyone. You're living with someone you didn't choose. And then we're just like, "Yeah, I mean it makes sense that it would be hard." But also throwing someone in the deep end of the pool is how they learn to swim pretty darned fast.

Jennie: Yeah. And that's a lot of the work I do is we talk about how to feel those emotions. Yesterday I was working with a preparing missionary and we talked about homesickness and how homesickness is an umbrella emotion that has a lot of other emotions underneath it like anxiety, and loneliness, and longing and stuff like that. So, I'm like, "Listen, if you can learn how to feel those emotions now, that longing, that loneliness, that anxiety, on the mission you're golden, you're good."

Jody: That's so good. Okay, so when my son calls me crying on his mission because he will, I'm sure of it. I'm going to work ahead of time ideally to get my head in the space of it's okay for our kids to struggle. And just validate and empathize. We can still have empathy. And I'm so sorry that you're feeling that way. But we've got to remember, there's nothing broken, there's nothing to fix here. And then do you – because I like to in a situation like that, if it's my child calling home saying, "I'm homesick." Personally, for me it sounds like, "Oh, man, I'm so sorry to hear that but I love you."

And let them cry for a minute, just be silent, and then I like to say something like, "What does homesickness feel like? Do you feel it in your stomach more or in your chest?" And I turn to a conversation like that to

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help him process it, I don't go like, "We're going to process emotion." That he doesn't really know, I try to make it conversational. But I'll say something like, "What does that feel like?" "Oh, yeah.! Or I'll help him describe it. I'm like, "I remember being homesick when I was younger and I felt like I had a really bad stomachache."

And you just ask them, as they do that, they're going to process the emotion.

Jennie: I'll even say something like, "You're feeling anxiety. What do you think that's about? Where do you think that's coming from?" And then a bunch of thoughts will come out. And like, "I think I'm a bad missionary. Or I'm not living up to my potential. And I shouldn't feel burnt out." Whatever comes out and instead of being like this is what we tend to do with those thoughts, we tend to be like, "That's ridiculous. You're an amazing missionary. Don't think like that. You've got to think better about yourself."

And instead, what I say is, "Oh, yeah, I have thought that sometimes too." Normalize it like, "Yeah, I have felt that way about myself sometimes too. I've felt burnout too. Makes sense that you think that way. It makes sense that you're feeling that way. You feel like a bad missionary. I know that totally makes sense. I feel like a bad mom all the time."

Jody: I love that example because it's easier for your child to be like, "What, don't be ridiculous, of course you're a great mom." But you don't have to come right out and say. In your previous example, when we're like, "That's ridiculous, you're an amazing missionary." It's like we're trying to yank away the thoughts. And sometimes the brain just yanks right back on them because she doesn't know that about these things that I did or didn't do, or she doesn't. We start playing tug of war. So, this is a subtle way of showing them it's not true that you're not a good missionary.

But it's normal for your brain to offer you that, my brain offers me that about being a mom. And then I feel bad. And so, it's like it normalizes it, at the same time it shows them it's just a story, it's just a thought but not in a way that creates a tug of war where they're going to pull back on it.

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Jennie: Yeah, I think that, right. And coaching, that's kind of when we first get introduced to it. We think we want to do the opposite thought. We think we want to go from I am a bad missionary to like, you're an amazing missionary. But what's so much better is kind of what we talked about earlier is like, I keep having the thought I'm a bad missionary, makes sense that I think that sometimes.

Jody: And here's the truth, sometimes you are a bad missionary and other times you're a great missionary and that's alright.

Jennie: You're 50/50.

Jody: Yeah, just like sometimes I'm a bad mom. Sometimes I'm a great mom and it's okay.

Jennie: That's right, and it's all good.

Jody: Yeah, oh my gosh, it's so good, I love it so much. Okay, Jennie, so where can people go to learn more and get more of your amazing tools, and help, and resources?

Jennie: Yeah. So, you can always go to [jenniedildine.com](http://jenniedildine.com) and Jennie is spelled with an I-E. I've got some amazing free resources there. I have a whole resource page just for missionary moms, how missionaries who are currently serving can get help from me while they're on their mission. So that's amazing. I also do have a podcast, The LDS Mission Podcast. And it's for preparing missionaries. What's super cool is currently serving missionaries can listen to it right on Facebook.

And I don't want your missionaries to break any rules or anything, if they're not allowed to do that kind of thing. But it is there and they can listen. And it is helping tons of missionaries just to listen to my podcast.

Jody: And mission presidents should go check it out too and if they like it, just give the okay. We're not trying to tell anyone to break any rules. But I know a lot of mission presidents find it to be helpful, and bishops. And so, I

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just want to make sure everybody knows. So, Jennie, you said Jennie with an I-E, Dildine is D-I-L-D-I-N-E.

Jennie: Yeah. And I did create one amazing freebie for everybody.

Jody: Good, tell us.

Jennie: I created a free training and the name of the training is Change Your Mission with One Tool. So, this is for preparing missionaries and it's just a little 10 to 12 minute training that literally this one tool I taught it to a missionary who was out serving. He was ready to throw in the towel, ready to go home and I could see it now, him on the screen with his little missionary tag and everything. And he had a piece of paper so he could take notes. And he had a pen in his hand and I taught him this tool that I teach on this video.

And he threw down his pen onto his notebook and he sat back in his chair and he was like, "Wait, what?" And his whole mission changed in an instant. And that is the tool I'm going to share with you on that video.

Jody: That is so good. Okay, where do we get that?

Jennie: Yeah, so it's [jenniedildane.com/](http://jenniedildane.com/) a bunch of words and a bunch of dashes, I won't share with you now. But we'll just link it in the show notes if that's okay because I want everybody to have it. The more missionaries we give these tools the better.

Jody: Okay, yeah. Go to the show notes and we'll pop the link to that free tool. We'll call it...

Jennie: Video training.

Jody: We'll call it one tool, let's call it the one tool.

Jennie: One tool, yeah.

Jody: In the show notes, and then we'll link up to it so you can grab that.

Jennie: Yeah.

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Jody: Yay, so fun. Thanks so much for your time, Jennie, and thanks for the amazing super important work you're doing in the world. I love it.

Jennie: Thanks, Jody, it was so fun to be here. It's such an honor, thank you so much.

Jody: You're welcome.

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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.