

388: Real Problems Vs. Thought Problems



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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 388, Real Problems Vs. Thought Problems.

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, everybody, thanks for joining me today. I'm excited to talk to you about this topic of real problems versus thought problems because the more you understand this concept the more empowered you will become in your life and in your experiences, your current experiences as well as whatever future experiences you want to create for yourself and in your life.

Before we dive into it I want to invite you to join me for a coaching intensive. I just want to be really transparent about this, what this is and why I have created it. Coaching has profoundly impacted my life and the lives of many, many other people that I know in such a mind blowing way, it makes us go, "Why didn't someone tell me this sooner? Why didn't I understand this earlier?" The one regret I hear people have is that they wish they would have dove in and experienced the benefits of coaching earlier on in their lives.

Yet it's challenging to describe and so it's easier to show you. And I don't want anybody to come and sign up for coaching or join my coaching program if they don't feel like the coaching resonates for them, and if it's not going to be powerful in your life then I don't want you to waste your time or money on it. So I have created these coaching intensives to be a low commitment, it's a low financial commitment, a low time commitment, really easy and powerful way for you to experience coaching.

Think of it like the little bite sized sample of frozen yogurt so that you know whether or not you want to buy a full cup of that frozen yogurt. And I'll tell you, I charge \$19 for these coaching intensives and you can come and get coached yourself or you can just listen to other people get coached and you will still get the benefit of understanding what coaching is when you

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see it in a real life application like this for five days in a row. And if you can't be there live, you can always watch the replay later on in that day.

But I charge \$19 because I want you to show up, not for me. I want you to show up for yourself. I want you to put forth a little bit of effort because as amazing as coaching is it doesn't work if you don't put in a little bit of effort. And the \$19, I know when I pay money for something then I tend to pay a little bit closer attention, take the time to put it in my schedule or to make sure that I watch the replay rather than thinking I'll look at that one day later, which never comes.

But if you decide at the end of the five day coaching intensive that it's powerful for you as I'm pretty confident you will and you want to come and join my coaching program which is called Be Bold. I'm going to tell you all about that program during the intensive. I'm going to tell you what it is, and what you'll learn, and what you'll gain if you come in there, and who it's for and all of that good stuff, how it works. And we'll let you just take your \$19 and apply it towards your first month in Be Bold. So it's a win all the way around.

And if you decide it's not for you then it's only \$19 you've invested. And I've yet to have anybody say they regretted investing in that coaching intensive even if they didn't come and join my coaching program after. So just want to be very clear that you should come and check it out. I am teaching in January a coaching intensive called Get Your Goal. And I do rotate the topics a little bit but they're all going to be focused on really an introduction to coaching.

So those of you who are already in Be Bold, we'll be posting it in there for you at no additional charge. But if you're not and you want to just better understand coaching or better understand how to get your goal this year go to jodymoore.com/intensive.

Okay, I want to talk to you today about real problems versus thought problems because this is still something I see come up a lot for my clients and in my own brain. We think that problems are real, that they exist in the

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world, that they are just our observation of what's true in the world. And it's okay to think that, in fact you should think that at times. But the truth is a problem is not a problem until we think it's a problem. So until I have the awareness of something happening it doesn't just hurt me.

So for example if let's say my husband who is as of the time I'm recording this podcast, he's out of town on a fun guys' ski trip. Let's say he's talking bad about me right now, he's probably not because my husband doesn't talk bad about anyone. But let's just imagine. If he's saying something negative about me and judging me, I'm not sitting at home suddenly feeling hurt because unless somehow it gets back to me that he said what he said I can't have a thought about it.

If it does get back to me, once it lands in my brain and then I make it mean something and I have a thought about it that's when I feel the hurt and pain. That's how we know, somebody talking bad about you doesn't hurt you. Your thoughts about it hurt you. So that's a very simplified dumbed down version of just explaining what I mean when I say all problems are thought problems.

Even let's take physical pain. People will say, "Well, what if somebody's hitting me? That's a problem right then in that moment." And I say, "Yes, physical pain is something most of us don't seek after." But again there are times when even physical pain we don't make a problem because of the way we're thinking about it. For example people sign up to do things like participate in Iron Man triathlons, which I've never done and never plan to but my guess is there's a lot of physical pain. And even though we don't love physical pain we actually sometimes do.

We actually sometimes know that it means that we're achieving something that we desire to achieve or we're pushing ourselves or seeing what we're capable of. So until I think, this is this is harmful, this is bad, it isn't a problem. Now, that's not to say that you shouldn't think that things are problems, you should. So I'm going to dive into this deeper in just a minute. But I want to begin by explaining part of the reason I wanted to record this

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episode is because there are, there is the possibility, I should say that people can take what...

I'm not, by the way, the first by any means or the only one teaching this. What anybody teaches in the world of mindfulness, we can take that knowledge and use it to try to manipulate people and harm people. That can happen. People could take, even if you love what you learn on this podcast and you're a fan of it, somebody could take that and now use it to manipulate you. This is what we call gaslighting.

Gaslighting comes originally from a film that was made in 1938 called *Gaslit*. And in this film, it's a psychological thriller, I haven't seen it, but this is what the description says, is that there's a husband trying to steal from his wife. And so he is trying to make her think she's crazy. So he will purposely turn the gas down, their house was lit by gas. And he will turn it down just a little bit every time he leaves so that she starts to imagine that when she's not with her husband, or when he's not home, the house is darker.

And when she asks him about it, he says, "No, what are you talking about? It's just you, you're imagining it." So he uses the idea that our thoughts create our reality to try to trick her into believing she's crazy. The house really is darker. He really did he literally turn down the gaslight and he tells her, "No, it's just her."

There's another series on Netflix that came out this past year called *Gaslit* with Sean Penn and Julia Roberts, amazing series I highly recommend. It portrays the events leading up to the Watergate scandal called *Gaslit* because Julia Roberts' character, Martha Mitchell believes that she knows what's going on and is trying to get the truth out there. And they convince her that she's crazy. They even start eventually giving her medication for her 'mental illness' which of course does have negative effects on her mental state. And it's a pretty heartbreaking story.

So at any rate gaslighting is a technique that somebody uses in order to manipulate, or control, or harm, or take advantage of someone else. And I

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want to inform you a little bit today, or make sure I'm doing my due diligence anyway to bring your awareness to what is a proper use of the tools that I'm trying to teach you here. Now, more common and more likely even than somebody try to gaslight you is that you may take these tools and use them to gaslight yourself which I also do not want you to do.

Again, there is a chance someone else might try to do it but odds are much more likely that you're going to be tempted to use what I'm teaching you to gaslight yourself, to convince yourself that you should just think differently. And I don't want that either. There is many times when that's going to be really harmful. Okay, so keep that in mind as we go through this episode.

Now, again, back to what I said in the beginning, all problems are only problems as soon as we have an awareness and a thought about what's happening and this is really, really good to know. Here are a handful of examples that came to my mind as I was preparing this episode that I want to use to teach you this concept, the housing market. People love to talk about the housing market and whether or not it's a good market, a slow market, a fast market, a hot market. I don't know what the right adjectives are.

But we talk about the housing market as though it's a circumstance. It's not a circumstance. It's a series of thoughts. There are specific circumstances going on within that story but for the most part the way we talk about the housing market is just a series of thoughts. It's not a great market. It's not a good time to buy a house or a bad time to buy a house, even interest rates are high is just a thought because it's all relative.

How about any of you who are dating. If you are single and wanting to get married and your thought is there's just no good guys out there, there's no good men. That is not a fact. That is a series of thoughts. There may be specific facts within it like the exact number of single men in your city at any given moment could be a fact. But the facts are actually pretty minimal in this area. There's mostly just thoughts and stories.

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It's good for you to know because if you're single and you want to get married and you're walking around thinking there are no good guys, it's really hard to meet a nice guy, it's hard, it's not fun, whatever your thought is. Ultimately that's going to show up in some way in your result line. You're going to either find evidence that it's true, this is why people tell me, "We have a lot of proof that it's true." I'm like, "Of course you do, that's what brains do." That's what my brain does, it gathers proof, it gathers evidence that my thoughts are true.

And here's what's crazy about it, in many cases what we are doing is making the problem more of a problem. Isn't that crazy to think about? We're not making it easier. We're not helping find a solution in most cases. We are making it more of a problem by walking around thinking there are no good guys to date, it's really hard to meet a good guy. Guess what is going to happen in your life? You're not very likely to meet a guy that you clique with. Even if you do meet someone that you're interested in, your affect is going to be less likely to be attractive to that guy.

So thinking there are no good guys to date, there are no houses on the market, or houses are expensive, or it's hard to get into a house, or whatever, dating market, housing market. You are going to contribute to that, even if it's just filtering out possible solutions, not noticing possible guys to date, possible solutions to whatever is your situation in the housing market. You will filter out things that don't support your current belief system.

Okay, here's another example. I'm a procrastinator. Now, this can take lots of forms. It could be I'm a procrastinator, I'm a people pleaser, I am a worrier, I'm uptight about certain things, I'm overly emotional. Whatever you're labeling yourself is just a label and what I love to do when I'm coaching clients is they'll say to me, "I'm a procrastinator." And they'll start giving me an example like for example I was supposed to write a talk for church. And I kept telling myself I was going to do it early and then it turned out Saturday night at midnight is when I wrote that talk.

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And what I always ask them is, "Okay, so you procrastinated in that example." I mean even that's a thought, some people would be like, "What are you talking about? I don't write it till on the way to church." So it's still just a thought, but even if I give you that thought, behind that thought is a thought about your own behaviors like I shouldn't do that, it would be better if I didn't. And I love to ask my clients, "So what that you're a procrastinator? Is this really a problem?" And the answer may be yes.

Even though it's a thought, this is a problem in my life is a thought. This is not a problem in my life is a thought. And you may want to keep the thought, this is a problem in my life. But how do we know? We ask ourselves why? Why do I want to keep that thought? What's the upside? There may be an upside. Here is in my belief usually the upside to keeping the thought, this is a problem is if it allows you then to redirect yourself to finding a solution then I'm in.

If you decide, this is making my life more challenging or it's minimizing the experience I want to have in my life in some way. And now knowing that I'm labeling it a problem is going to allow me to shift into possible solutions to tell my brain, look for solutions, look for strategies, look for ways or not even always looking for solutions. Sometimes it's just choosing to not be mad about not wanting to write the talk earlier. Sometimes it's like what if we just get comfortable doing things we don't want to do and we know that we're not going to want to do them.

We expect that we're not going to do them and we do them anyway, that could be a solution. So choosing to keep the label this is a problem is fine if you're like, "This is going to then allow me to say let's start finding a solution." Or let's contribute to a solution if this is a more of a global or a problem that's bigger than just a personal problem. Let's start contributing to the solution, then I'm in.

But if it doesn't do that, again there's no good guys to date, there's no good houses on the market. I don't find that in most cases to serve people. I find that to just discourage them, and overwhelm them, and cause them to stop trying, cause them to go on fewer dates, to look at fewer house, or to not

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list their house or whatever it is. So if it doesn't have an upside you can decide that's not even really a real thing. It's all just a story in the end. It's all just fabricated in our minds. And then we all look for proof that it's true and we can make anything true in the end.

Let's look at some more examples. How about your business situation, let's talk about your niche. So for those of you that aren't entrepreneurs or haven't heard that term, a niche is just a specific problem for a specific group of people that you're going to solve through your product or services in your business. Most everybody who teaches entrepreneurs teaches that it's when you're beginning anyway you need to have a narrow, you need to have a niche. You need to have a specific problem that you solve for a specific person in order to really get traction and be successful.

So then the question becomes, what is the right niche? What is the niche that is going to take off? What is the one that people are willing to pay money for that will help me be successful in my business and that I feel qualified to serve, and that I'm going to enjoy? What is the right niche? That's a good niche is just a thought. My niche isn't working is a thought. There's no niche problem until you have the thought, this is not a good niche. And guess what? You can have that thought, you're totally allowed to. Just make sure you like your reason.

And your reason might even just be, I've gone out and tried to market this niche and I'm not getting traction and so I don't want to try anymore. I want to try a different one. Totally fine with that as long as you know that this niche won't work is just a thought. It can still be a thought that you choose, you can choose to change direction. But I want you to be empowered with that knowledge because we don't want to give more credit than is necessary to things outside of our control. This is true when you're an entrepreneur too.

Here's another one I hear from entrepreneurs a lot. My ad isn't converting. My ad isn't converting is actually a thought. I don't even give people that as a fact. We can pull numbers. We can say, "I have put \$100 into Facebook Ads. I've got zero clicks, and zero opt-ins, and zero sales." And I'd say,

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“Okay, those are the facts, my ad isn’t converting is a thought. So just be careful about”, because again my ad isn’t converting makes the ad so powerful and it makes Facebook so powerful. And it all feels very confusing and discouraging, and overwhelming.

But I put in this much money, I got zero clicks, zero opt-ins, zero sales is a fact. And it’s just more neutral, it’s just math. So it's not so overwhelming, it's like, okay, well, then we’re going to have to change something. Let's try something different. But the other thing I ask is, “Okay, why is that a problem? I put in \$100, I got zero clicks, why is that a problem?” And when I ask my entrepreneurs that question a lot of them think what I'm saying is that they should think it's not a problem. They should say, “Yeah, you're right, so what, let’s move on.”

No, I'm not saying we shouldn't decide it's a problem. But is the answer, I knew I couldn’t be successful, this is never going to work. This is so hard. I’m not the kind of person who could do this. I don’t even know why I tried. Who do I think I am?” If that's the answer to why this is a problem then we need to clean that up. but if the answer is because I know Facebook ads can convert well and I’m going to figure out how to make it convert well. What should we try next? Then I’m all in for labeling it as a problem.

There are many, many things that I want to label problems. I want to go, “That's not going to work. We’re not going to keep doing that long-term. What are we going to do to remedy or solve for this problem?” Then we’re on to something. Are you with me? The why matters a lot. Why is this a problem? Let’s move it outside of business and let’s talk about your spouse.

Some people think they chose the wrong niche and other people think they chose the wrong husband. And again maybe you want to keep that thought. There are so many clients who I coach and we take a look at, first of all, do you understand that it’s just a thought, it’s just a story, I chose the wrong husband? There is no such thing as choosing the wrong husband, or the right husband or wife. That’s not a thing. Someone made that up one day.

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Why are we considering keeping that thought if we're going to consider keeping it? What is my reason? Is it because I am indulging in self-pity, and overwhelm, and I'm stuck in the maze of judgment, and blame, and also guilt and shame, and my brain just thinks that that's reality? If so, I may want to question this story. But if the reason is I am not able to be my highest self in this relationship, and this relationship is complete and I think it's time for me to move on. I think that is the right decision. And it's scary to think about moving on but I think it's the best thing I could do.

Then we have a different situation. We are going to focus on a solution. So the why matters tremendously if you're going to keep something a problem. Now, here's the other thing I want to say. Sometimes we realize there's no upside to labeling this a problem. And again the brain is so tricky, I can't emphasize this enough because what your brain will think just like all of our brains think is, no, I don't want this to be a problem, it just is. I'm just telling you this is the reality, Jody, this is what's true in the world.

And the way that I loosen that up for myself and my clients in these situations is I ask, "Okay, if it weren't true, if it were really just a story in my head would that be good news? Is that possibly good news?" And they'd say, if they say to me, "Yeah, that would be amazing." I say, "Okay, then let's just experiment with it." And we don't have to get all the way to dropping the story altogether but sometimes we can shift our focus a little bit away from the problem, what our brains are labeling as a problem, to something that serves us a little bit better.

So for example let's say your thought is that your mother-in-law hates you, let's say daughter-in-law because the mother-in-law's always feel picked on. But here's what I want you to know, mother-in-law's, we love you, I love you. I'm not picking on you. You're not the ones that are difficult, it's your daughters and your daughter-in-law's, or your son and sons-in-laws. Anyone who had a mother-in-law problem has a them problem that they're projecting on to a mother-in-law.

So anyway I'm going to change it up because sometimes the mother-in-law's write to me and tell me they wish I would be nicer. And so let's say

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that you think your daughter-in-law hates you. And you want to say to me, “No, this is a real problem, this isn't a thought problem.” Then first of all, what we do is we back up from the situation, we get specific facts, maybe it's that your daughter-in-law said, “I'm not ever going over to her house again.” She told her husband that, and he told you. Then that's a fact, you're turning it into she hates me.

And again maybe you have a dozen family members that are like, “Oh yeah, she's told me before how much she can't stand you.” I know you have a lot of evidence. I know you're like, “This is not just a thought, this is a fact.” My point is even if you decide to keep that thought, focusing on it isn't probably serving you in this situation. I can't think of an upside to focusing on my daughter-in-law hates me. So we don't have to shift all the way though, here's my point, we don't have to shift all the way from she hates me to she loves, or she hates me and that sucks to she hates me and I don't care.

We don't have to make a dramatic shift like that. We can just take a baby step, a little pivot away from she hates me to being a human is hard. Do you see how that still feels believable? It's hard for her and it's hard for me. She's having a hard time being a human some days. I have a hard time being a human some days. It's just a slight pivot away from a focus on something outside of our control into something that is within our control.

So I want you to try something this week. I want you to try this at the end of this episode. I want you to take an area of your life that you think is just you observing yourself, or somebody you love, or some outside force in the world. I gave you a few examples like that, outside things that are going on a little bit more globally or at least in your community etc. I want you to take something that you think is just real and true and back up from it a little bit. You don't have to make yourself wrong about it. Don't gaslight yourself about it and tell yourself that you're crazy.

I'm not saying that you're crazy. You have a valid reason for everything that you think but is it possible that you've been looking out for evidence that this is true for a long time and you've actually been inadvertently

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unintentionally contributing to the truth of it to making it true for you and your life anyway? And that you could be wrong about it? You could be wrong about it. Is it possible? Just allow yourself to try on that you could be wrong. And don't forget, there's this part of us that doesn't like to be wrong. It's going to resist it.

But there's another part of you that knows it would be the best news ever if I were wrong. And entertain that part of you. Let that part of you have a voice at least as often as the other part of you that wants to be right. Give it space, give it a chance. Try letting that part of you out a little bit more. You don't even have to tell anyone and you can go back to what you're thinking already if you want at some point. But just this week pick one area and try believing that you're wrong.

Notice the actual, once you get past the ego, notice the sense of relief, and joy, and hope that comes from knowing you could be wrong. It's an amazing skill to develop. It will serve you in your life forever, I promise you. Alright, thanks for joining me today, everyone, have an amazing week and I'll see you next time, bye bye.

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