

401: Goal Playfulness



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Jody Moore

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I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy*, episode 401, Goal Playfulness.

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, we're going to talk about goals today. Who's excited? Now, listen, I'm not here to tell you that you should have a goal and make you feel bad about your goal. I want to do the opposite. I want you to feel more inspired and lighter and easier about anything that you want to achieve or create or change about yourself or about your life.

And I want to preface by saying that there is a lot happening in my house this week. We've got a painter here painting some of the interiors of our house. And then we're getting new carpet laid at the same time so it's a little loud and a little chaotic. Hopefully that doesn't distract us here on the podcast but it might. We'll just see.

Okay, so anyway I want to talk about goal playfulness and I want to begin by explaining that I have a lot of experience in sales. I've had many different sales jobs in my day. And I've always been fascinated by sales because it's a social science. It's a study of human behavior and what motivates us as human beings. And so I always love learning more about that. So I've read a lot of books on sales. I've studied a lot about it.

And one of the things that I was taught that I found to be really useful as a salesperson back in the day was to keep in mind, rational self-interest theory. So rational self-interest theory says that human beings make decisions based on a cost benefit analysis. And we do this usually unconsciously. Sometimes we consciously sit down and make a list of pros and cons on a piece of paper but most of the time we do it without even realizing it very quickly in our heads.

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We weigh out costs and benefits and we make decisions that have the most benefit and the least cost associated. So let's say I'm driving to work and I really want to stop and get myself a drink before I go to work but I'm running a little late or I have just enough time to get to work on time. I may not make it on time if I stop and get my drink but I really want my drink, not going to be able to leave work until lunchtime to get it. And so what we do is we quickly in our minds weigh out the costs and benefits.

So if I'm a little late to work, first of all will anyone even notice? And if they do, will I be in trouble really? Will my boss just remind me I need to be on time? Or will it be a more severe punishment? And will the benefit of having my drink with me to get me through the morning outweigh the little bit of guilt I might feel if my boss even notices? Or could I sneak in and he or she may not even notice and I don't get in trouble at all and now I have my drink.

So you see how we very quickly weigh out costs and benefits and we make decisions accordingly as human beings. This is rational self-interest theory. Rational self-interest theory would say that we're always looking out for our own self-interest. And you might say, "Well, what about when we're serving, what about Mother Teresa?" Certainly she didn't just have her own interest in mind. And rational self-interest theory would say, "Well, she did. It's just that her goals were to serve others that made her feel good serving others. Or that's what she chose to do so that was still her interest."

Anyway it gets complicated but I guess my point I'm making is that we can poke holes in rational self-interest theory. I'm not an extremist about it saying that we're always just looking out for our own best interest. But I think this idea that we constantly weigh costs and benefits and make decisions accordingly is pretty useful to consider especially if you're a salesperson. So if I'm selling something then I'm trying to find potential buyers who would find the benefit to outweigh the cost.

Who would say, "Yes, I want what you offer, I want this product or service etc. And I want what that would provide for me, what changes I think that would help me make in my life."

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Like when I used to sell treadmills, let's just use that as an example. I sold treadmills over the phone and so I would talk to people and I was looking for the people who really wanted a treadmill in order to get some exercise in and not have to leave their house. And the benefit of having the convenience of a treadmill in their house and what that would do for their long term health and maybe their confidence and maybe how it might change the body etc.

We need that to outweigh the cost, meaning first of all the price of the treadmill. But there's also the cost of the inconvenience of getting the treadmill to my house and getting it set up. And then there's the cost of the pain of having to be on the treadmill. The exercising in and of itself is somewhat of a cost because it's somewhat uncomfortable. It takes up our time. There is a time cost involved.

So I am trying to as a salesperson really speak to the benefits and remind your rational brain of the benefits so that those benefits will outweigh the cost. So you'll be willing to make the decision to get the treadmill in the end. Are you with me so far? Okay, I know you're like, "Why are we talking about sales? I'm not a salesperson." Stay with me. I promise I'm going somewhere with this.

So if you're selling something that's very expensive financially and especially if it's going to maybe cost a lot of money and a lot of time and maybe it's really scary for people. Which I have sold things like this, when I sold college degree programs. I sold college degrees at the University of Phoenix. So these were working adults typically who want to earn or finish a college degree but they have families and jobs and things and they don't want to quit their job and go to a traditional school so they could go to night school or online school.

And they could earn or finish a college degree in a reasonable amount of time in this format, but it was going to cost money. It was going to take up time because not only would they be going to class once a week they would have homework, studying to do. And a lot of them were nervous about it. Maybe they hadn't been very serious students in the past or hadn't

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been successful in school and they were nervous about am I really going to be able to fit it in? Am I going to be overwhelmed? Because these are busy people with a lot going on.

So there's a lot of cost there that I have to overcome. So the way I was trained as a salesperson was to really flush out their motivation. What is the reason why they want their degree? What will it do for them? Does not having it prevent them from getting a promotion for example? In a lot of companies there are job descriptions that say you cannot even apply for this manager role or director role or whatever the promotion is if you don't have a college degree. So for many of the students I talked to it was, I can't move up in my company, I can't make more money without this degree.

So that's some pretty strong motivation because they're very limited without it. So I was trying to as a salesperson, the way I was trained was I needed to really flush out their motivation. What would it be like for you to have that promotion? How are you going to feel when you get that new job? What are you going to do with the extra money? How is that going to benefit your family? How are you going to feel when you're finally taking your family on that vacation that you've always wanted to take them on?

How is it going to feel when you're at graduation and your kids see that you accomplished this amazing goal? So I don't mean this, we're not trying to trick anyone. We're just trying to flush out, is it true? If they were like, "No. I don't really know. I don't really care if I get it, it's not that big of a deal. I can still move up without it." Then traditionally, according to the way I was originally taught, that would be a tougher sale to make.

That's a tougher sell because there is going to be a significant amount of money. There is going to be a significant amount of time and sacrifice. And if they don't have enough of a benefit, enough of a motivation to counter that, it might be a tough sell. That's the way I always thought about goals and decisions comes from my sales background, it made a lot of sense. It seemed to resonate with people and yet I kind of want to push back on that now.

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So this was why I wanted to record this episode because recently I've had several experiences where I have been the one on the customer or client or consumer end of these types of conversations. I have been looking into the possibility of purchasing some kind of a program or course or hiring a coach or a mentor or somebody to help me achieve a goal or to help me accomplish something that I want in my life or in my business or for my health, etc.

So I do feel bad for people that have to try to sell me things because I've just done it so much and I've seen so many different versions of sales that I know exactly what they're doing. I can kind of read between the lines and I can hear and see the sales training in what they're saying. And not that they're doing it wrong but it's just like when you're – I'm sure if you're a teacher and you've been trained as a teacher and then you go to a class and you see somebody teach then all you notice is where they're sort of doing it wrong.

I remember this when I waited tables too. I learned how to wait tables and then when I would go out to eat I was like, "The server, I can tell is behind or struggling or whatever." So once you learn something then when you are on the other side of it you just view it differently and that's how I am in sales interactions. I just sort of view it differently. But these couple of experiences that I've had recently and I'll give an example in a minute but they have been somewhat expensive purchases, multiple thousands of dollars for these programs or courses or things I've been considering signing up for and things that would take time.

And so these salespeople keep doing exactly what I used to do, which is trying to flush out my motivation. For example I was looking at hiring someone that helps with public speaking, this public speaking program. And they were like, "Okay, so when you're on that stage giving the talk, how is it going to feel?" And I was like, "Cool. It's going to be cool." But I didn't have super strong motivation. They kept trying to find it, I noticed them.

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And again I have been them so I know exactly what they were trying to do. And I know how challenging that is. They're like, "Well, if you don't, if you're not able to give these talks, you're not able to develop in this way, how is that going to limit your business?" And my honest answer was, "It won't. I mean I'll be fine. I'll figure out something else." There's a lot of different ways to grow my business. There's a lot of ways I can serve people the way I want to. There's a lot of ways to get my message out.

So it's not going to be the end of the world, honestly, if I don't do this or I don't achieve this milestone or goal. So then they would try another angle like, "How long have you been thinking about wanting to do this?" I'm like, "I just saw your ad yesterday actually and thought that sounds interesting, let's see what that's about." So what I realized was I don't have really strong motivation and that doesn't mean I'm not going to do it, it didn't.

For me I actually already knew I wanted to purchase this particular program, the public speaking option. And I even said to them, "I totally appreciate what you're trying to do here but let me just tell you that I have learned finally now that I'm 48 years old. I've learned over the last little while that having really heavy motivation like that actually doesn't help me achieve my goals." It might help me get started. It might help me purchase the thing, sign up for the gym, sign up for the course, sign up for the school or the class or the coach or whatever.

But then I often want to quit when it's that heavy. If I think everything depends on this, if I think this is, finally I'm going to be happy. Finally I'm going to feel confident. And once I achieve this then I'll be fulfilled, then I'll be successful, then I'll approve of myself. And if I don't I'll probably never be able to grow and progress. You feel the heaviness around this? I realized over the last five to eight years as I've studied coaching that that kind of heavy motivation is actually not useful for me and probably for most people.

Because it might get us started but it's too hard to carry in the long run. And what it does more than anything is put us on a rollercoaster. We get on a rollercoaster and in fact when I used to train salespeople we literally talked

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about the rollercoaster of motivation. And I talked about, you need to prepare your customer for the rollercoaster that they're going to get on. You need to explain to them, "Listen, you're going to feel really excited sometimes and really motivated and really determined." Can any of you relate to this with your goals?

You're going to be like, "I'm all in on this. I'm totally committed. That's it, I'm going to eat healthy. I'm going to go to bed early. I'm going to read my scriptures every day", whatever the goal is, you're all in. And that's great except that that means sometime down the road you're going to be at the bottom of the rollercoaster. If you're at the top of the rollercoaster then you have to come down at some point and the bottom is so discouraging and overwhelming and it feels like this is hard, what's the matter with me? Why can't I do it or this isn't working. I'm never going to figure it out.

If you've got to go up then you're going to have to come down. And so again what we used to do for customers and clients in different jobs I've had is just prepare them. That might happen and that's okay. And you can call me. We can talk through it and nothing's wrong and stuff like that. But what I'm realizing now is we could just not get on that rollercoaster. That's an option. We could just opt out of the rollercoaster. We're still going to be humans. We're still going to have little ups and downs. I call it rolling hills rather than a rollercoaster.

We're still going to have times when we're more committed than others and times when it's easier to think positively and harder to think positively, but if you don't make everything dependent on whether or not you achieve this goal then you don't get on the rollercoaster, you don't. So I had this experience again just yesterday which is what prompted me to want to record this episode is I got an ad in my Instagram. First thing in the morning, I wake up, I opened up Instagram which is a bad idea. Don't do that by the way.

But anyway I did and I see an ad for a personal trainer kind of situation, I couldn't tell if it was a gym or trainer. Anyway it says, 'Looking for women who want to get in shape, build muscle, tone their bodies in this six week

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trial', thing, whatever. And it was for my local area. It was like looking for women in this area so it spoke to me. So it said Coeur d'Alene, which is the town right next door to me. Women in the Coeur d'Alene area, who want to get in shape. I was like, what, that's me.

So it was specific, because of the location made me think, not just anywhere in the world, for some reason that caught my attention. It had a great image of a woman with a super toned body. And just a six week, it sounded like kind of maybe that's something I should try. Okay, so I click on the thing, the next thing you know I fill out a form and then I get a text and the guy wants to meet with me. And he's like, "Let's do a consultation or something." And I'm like, "Alright."

So by the end of the day I find myself in Coeur d'Alene meeting with this super nice guy by the way. So he starts asking me the usual questions that you should ask, a good salesperson should ask these things like, "What are your goals? What have you tried before that's worked and what hasn't worked and why now, why is this the right time?" And all those things. And he's trying to get over all my motivation.

He's asking me like, "Well, what else would it do for you if you toned up the way you want to and lost the 10 or so pounds that you want to lose of body fat and made exercise an easy regular part of your schedule?" And all the things I told him. He's like, "How would that feel?" And he was trying to get deeper motivation which I can totally appreciate. I know why. And I said to him, "You know what, that would be cool, it would be. And also it'll be fine if I don't, it really would."

I like my body just fine. And I would love to change my body a little bit but I could live in this body forever and it wouldn't be a problem. And I could change it and that would be kind of cool. Honestly, I just kind of like to see what I'm capable of. I like to push myself and challenge myself and I like to keep growing and evolving and this is a healthy way to do that. I don't want to challenge myself to see how good I can get at hacking other people's Instagram accounts.

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I want to challenge myself in what I think are useful ways where I contribute something valuable to the world or improve myself, in this case it would be my physical health and some of my habits and routines. I told him, I'm like, "I get what you're trying to do here but I don't have heavy motivation." I'm just really playful about it. And that is how I tend to achieve my goals the best is by staying playful about it by knowing I could do this and it will be cool. I am capable of it and it will be hard.

It will push me and challenge me, okay, let's just see what we could do. Wouldn't it be kind of cool to do it? And also if I don't do it, that's fine really, I promise, it's fine. It's not a big deal. And again, this guy was so cool and nice. And he was like, "That's so cool. I love where your head is at, I think that's a really healthy place to be about it." But he probably doesn't usually hear that. He hears people go, "I just can't get the weight off. I've never been able to." And they're so discouraged and overwhelmed and that's fine too. He can really help people in that situation.

But what I have discovered and I want to offer to you is that what if it really is all okay? What if you really don't need to achieve or change anything in order to be a complete, lovable, worthy, amazing human? You really don't. And you don't need to change something in order to feel better about yourself. Changing things, achieving goals isn't actually going to make you happier, it's not. And that might sound like bad news but it's not, it's the best news because it means you can actually just be happier right now if you want to.

And then pursuing those goals becomes playful because I don't know anyone that's perfect at it when we start on the journey of trying to achieve something, growing your business, losing weight, whatever it is. I don't know anyone that's perfectly consistent at it all the time. And if you're going to get on the rollercoaster, that's exhausting after a while, the ups and the downs get pretty old and that is why we end up quitting. Especially because when we're down it's really hard to come back up again.

But if you're just on some rolling hills and it's kind of easier at times than others and it's cool when something works but it's also kind of a bummer

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when it doesn't but it's not that big of a deal. This is the healthiest I have found for me anyway, maybe I'm usual in this way but I would offer you to try it out. It's the healthiest way to pursue a goal is through playfulness. It's also though, I will say this, a little bit less interesting because it's less dramatic. It's one step at a time.

So as you do achieve things you don't get the high anymore of whoa, that was amazing, I can't believe I did that, look what I did. You don't get that kind of a high, but I'm okay with that because it means I also don't get the devastating low. So how do you get your dopamine hits, how do you get your joy then? You get it in tiny little drops along the way. Instead of big, concentrated amounts when you achieve something, you just be proud of yourself for trying. You just be proud of yourself for the little improvement or change that you made. You just congratulate yourself and thank yourself for doing a little bit even if you did it imperfectly.

And those little, tiny hits of your own approval and small wins that you'll have along the way are enough, honestly. It's a more sustainable way to live, I've found. And you can achieve really amazing things in that way. It will be slower maybe but it will be a longer term sustainable change. So have some fun with your goals, try on goal playfulness. And the next time you encounter a salesperson like the salesperson I was a few versions of me ago and that a lot of people are.

And again, I don't think that there's anything wrong with it. And so the next time somebody's looking for deep motivation just tell them what I always tell them which is, "Look, I'm not really wired that way. I don't put my happiness in whether or not I achieve my goals. And that actually helps me want to set even bigger goals. And it helps me be more committed and focused. So I don't have a heavy reason. I just think it might be cool to try and see what I'm capable of.

Alright, thanks for joining me today, everybody, I'll see you next week. Have a good one.

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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.