

407: Cliques



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With Your Host

Jody Moore

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I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy*, episode 407, Cliques.

Did you know that you can live a life that's even better than happy? My name is Jody Moore. I'm a master-certified life coach and a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. And if you're willing to go with me I can show you how. Let's go.

Hey there everybody. I want to talk to you about cliques today. Before we do, I just want to celebrate that it's 75 degrees outside and beautiful and sunny and the grass is turning green and the blossoms are coming alive on the trees. And isn't it a beautiful time of year? Let's just pause because if you're like me and you complain all winter long we should do at least as much gratitude and loving when the weather is like this. My kids are loving the weather. I'm loving the weather. We're looking forward to summer, which is just around the corner.

We're trying to just power through these last few weeks of school. We have still a little while to go. We get out pretty late here, but we're going to make it. We're going to make it. Okay, so I want to talk about cliques today, clique as in C-L-I-Q-U-E. The kind of clique, not like clicking on a website, clique as in, well, let's just get the official definition here. A small group of people with shared interests or other features in common who spend time together and do not readily allow others to join them.

That's the kind of clique I want to talk about today because I had a conversation with some friends recently and this topic came up and I was like, "Oh my gosh, I have so much to say about this." So I decided to do a podcast episode. Here you go. Maybe you have people that are in whatever communities you associate with, at your church or at the school or at work, wherever it is that you spend time that you would say those people are in a clique or those people are cliquey. Sometimes we call people cliquey.

Maybe you're feeling left out in some way if you're thinking that, would be my guess, you're feeling left out. Or maybe you are in some kind of a position of authority as a parent maybe. Maybe you see your kids being in

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a clique where you see them have a group of friends that doesn't readily include others. Or maybe you are a teacher and you see this at a school or a leader in a church setting or something. Maybe you can pause and if you get real with yourself you can identify that maybe you have a clique or are in a clique of some sort.

Wherever you are I just want us to dive into this concept in this term for just a minute and think about some appropriate ways to think about it and what I think are mostly not useful ways to think about it. So when my friends and I were talking about this term we were discussing, are people that we know cliquey, are there cliques, are our friends in a clique, are we in a clique? And I was like, "What does that even mean?" I just gave you the definition as far as how the dictionary online defines it.

But what I mean is let's say just by way of example, this isn't what we were talking about but just by way of example let's say maybe I'm worried that my teenagers are in a clique. I couldn't go up to them and be like, "Hey, are you guys in a clique? Did you sign up for a clique? Did you join a clique? Did you sign your name somewhere or pay money or agree to be in this clique?" Nobody would say, "Yes, I am in this clique."

The same way I would say I am a life coach. I am part of The Life Coach School community, I choose to participate in that. And I'm certified through that school and I'm like, "Yes, I'm a Life Coach School coach." It's pretty easy for me to define that. Am I in a clique? Most of us would never say yes, because we don't want to be exclusive of people, but even if we are, it's not like at a formal official thing. So in other words it goes in the thought line. It is not a fact. It is not a circumstance that anybody that you know is in a clique as far as I know.

I never met anyone that was like, "We're starting a clique, do you want to join?" It is a thought. It is a story. And the only reason that's important to identify is because that makes it up for grabs. That makes it optional. And when something like this is up for grabs and optional we just want to question, is it useful to describe it in that way? Is it useful to think of it in

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that way? And on this one I'm going to go with mostly no, it is not. That's why I never use that word.

I never say to anyone, "Hey, do you notice that you're kind of in a clique?" Or, "Don't you think there's so many cliques in our ward? Don't you think people are so cliquey?" I just would never say that. I'm not saying you can't. I'm not trying to say it's wrong to. I'm just saying, for me, I've decided that is not a useful way to think about it. Do you know why? It is full of judgment for me anyway. If I were to say and in my past when I have said, "Those people are cliquey, they're in a clique." What I mean is they're not very nice. They're not very friendly. They're not making me feel very welcome.

I don't mean like isn't that cool, good for them that they have such a tight knit group of people that they have known for so long that they're so comfortable with that they do everything with. That's so fun for them. That's not what we mean when we say they're in a clique. What we mean is they're not very nice or they're doing something wrong. It's full of judgment of them and usually pity for either us or the other people that we think maybe wish that they were part of their group. That's what it does.

It makes victims out of some of us and villains out of others of us. I do not see an upside to that game. That is what happens in a really good movie, we have victims and villains. We have lots of conflict. We have good guys and bad guys. That makes for a good story. That is dramatic. That is entertaining, but that is not very loving and connecting, which is what we ultimately want. So what is going on, I want to back up for just a minute and notice what is going on when people hang out together a lot and don't invite others or include others or appear to be very open to others?

And I think that there are only two reasons this happens. The first reason, which is probably the most common reason but not the one our brains go to, is lack of awareness. I don't mean just overall lack of awareness that you would like to be in their group. I mean genuinely our brains only have so much capacity and attention span on any given day and in any given

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moment around any given subject. So most of the time it's because it didn't even cross their mind to invite you.

They were not thinking about you know. Now, you can use that to feel bad and think I wish they were thinking of me or you can remember that we all just have a certain capacity and a certain amount of people and topics and things that are relevant on our mind at any given moment. And you being irrelevant doesn't mean that you're less than or that you're not cool or not fun or that they don't want to be friends with you. It means their brain did not come up with it in that moment. That could change down the road, I don't know. It's just the way of it, it's not good or bad, it's just the reality.

Most of the time it's lack of awareness. They didn't think about you. They didn't realize you wanted to come etc. So I think that this reason is the reason people think, you know what, we should sit our kids down and talk to them about cliques and why they're bad and how they shouldn't be in a clique. But I don't recommend that because of reason number two. And I'll tell you what I do recommend instead but first I want to talk about reason number two. Number one, lack of awareness.

Number two is that person might be operating from their wounds. They may be acting from their hurt. They may be acting from their pain. So it may be that they are aware. It may be that they kind of know that you want to come or they didn't forget about you but they didn't invite you on purpose because they didn't want you there for whatever reason. If that's the case it's always because that person in that moment with that decision is operating from pain.

That is the only reason we do things that are 'unkind or mean or not inclusive or not' etc. So their wounds of pain may be their own insecurity. It may be their own scarcity in terms of wanting to get more attention or wanting to outdo you in their life in some way. That can happen. That does happen actually and not just with kids. That happens with adults too, that's real. But if that's the case it's because they're operating from pain. They're trying to compensate for their own pain in some way. That is the only reason we ever behave 'badly', because we're operating from pain.

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So this brings me to why I would never go, “Hey, do you guys realize that you’re kind of cliquey?” Because first of all, maybe they aren’t aware and we can bring it to their awareness in other ways. But as soon as we use the word ‘clique’ for most of us that implies you’re doing it wrong. And I don’t want to offer them more pain, shame, guilt, judgment etc. That is not going to be the long term fix.

It might get a short term change of behavior but the long term fix is to help them either heal those wounds or at least make decisions from something other than pain. Make decisions from inspiration, motivation, righteous desire, love, service, true service, not just people pleasing. I would love to help shift people into that kind of energy and let them operate from there because they will do amazing things. We don’t have to tell them how to be inclusive and kind. We are all born with the light of Christ.

We know how to be that version of us. It’s just when we’re operating from pain and wounds, we choose otherwise. We ignore that light of Christ within us. We operate from a different place. So as soon as they use the word ‘clique’ to most people that implies, hey, heads up, you’re doing it wrong. It does not bring them into the energy I want, which is motivation, inspiration, love.

So the question becomes, how do we make people aware without giving them shame, guilt and judgment, further increasing the hurt, wound, pain side? I just would use different words personally. I might ask questions. I would begin with curiosity. I would begin with, let's not sit people down and judge them and tell them what they're doing wrong. Let’s ask people for their opinions because it’s perfectly natural, normal and healthy to have groups of friends. It’s human nature to gravitate towards people that are like you that have common interests etc.

And that we can keep that healthy part of us and be more inclusive and open but it doesn't come from like I said, shame and guilt. It will come from something different, something more divine, something holy or something more spiritual and righteous. So I would ask questions like, “What is it like to be a student at your school? And what do you think it's like for the other

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students there? And do you ever notice people in your class or your school or in a ward”, or wherever you’re having this conversation, “That seem to feel left out?

Have you ever felt left out? What is that like? Has anyone ever included you in a way that you weren’t expecting and how did that impact you? And doesn't it feel good to be the person who is inclusive? I know I have opportunity to do that more, do you think you might have opportunity to do that more? I feel like we all do. How could we make this a more regular part of our lives?” I’m all for discussions like that. I personally would just leave the word ‘clique’ out of it. I would just say, “This is natural and normal behavior but how do we improve? How do we become more who we want to be?”

I would even share inspirational stories, share your own examples about when someone included you and how it impacted you. Share examples about when maybe you've included someone else and how that impacted you. Stories are always a really powerful way to get us into that really powerful loving space that we want to be in.

The other thing and this is where I would spend the most time is I would talk to, and again if I have maybe a child who’s feeling left out or I have a group. I’m in Young Women’s and this wasn't about Young Women’s by the way but I'm just using it as an example. But if let’s say my Young Women group, maybe there’s some girls feeling left out. Then I would talk to the whole group about if you're feeling left out, what do you do? Not to the people who are ‘cliquey’, but to the person feeling left out.

I would say, “How do we appropriately and in a way that feels like you let people know that you would love to be included, how can you invite yourself?” You can invite yourself places, you guys, in what feels like an appropriate way. I know I'm pretty liberal on this one. I will just flat out say, “Can I go? I want to go.” But if you’re not comfortable with that, find what feels like you.

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It might just be, “Hey, if you ever do something like that again, I'd love to join you. I just think you guys are so fun. I'd love to spend more time with you. Or I love that activity that you're doing. I have always wanted to try that. I'd love to be invited if you ever have space.” Let people know that you want to be included. Most people are happy to include us, like I said, it just hasn't even crossed their mind. Let people know. I love it when people let me know that they want to join me for things.

It doesn't mean I'm always able to do it but I want to know, I want to know who wants to participate in things that I'm involved in. I just don't even know. I'm completely unaware most of the time. I'm trying, I'm trying to pay attention but I'm just sometimes not good at it at all. So that is what I choose to believe if people don't include me. I'm just like, “It didn't even occur to them or they just didn't know that I would like to be included. I will let them know.” I will invite people to things. I don't even have to wait for them to invite me.

I'll say, “Hey, you guys, let's all get together and go to dinner.” You can be the one to plan things and invite people if you want to. So that is where I like to spend the most time is how do you become closer friends with a group if you want to? Now, remember, there are those times when you've got people in the group who are hurt or afraid or in some kind of pain and they're operating like they're intentionally knowingly leaving you out. And that's a little bit different situation. That's one that I would say, “Come and get some coaching. I can coach you through it.”

But ultimately this is not about the clique, it's about the person feeling left out. They are the ones in the driver's seat. And this is really important. When we walk around thinking they are in a clique, we will make that true for ourselves. We actually contribute to excluding ourselves even if it's just like we get up and walk away and don't say anything. We don't let them know that we want to be invited. We don't certainly ask them about their lives. We're not thinking about what it must be like for them and how they're feeling when we're thinking, poor me, I'm left out.

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So we will make that true in the end. We become a resentful, bitter, grumpy version of ourselves that no one really wants to hang out with. We make our thoughts true. So if I walk around thinking these people are so cliquey, I'm going to create that reality for myself in some way. If I think, people just don't really know that I want to be included. I'm going to let them know. I'm going to get myself included and/or I'm going to include others. I have a much better chance of creating that result in my life.

So let's just stop using that word, it's such a weird word anyway. And it implies that somebody's doing something wrong. It makes victims and villains out of us. It disconnects us when we make victims and villains. We put ourselves on opposite teams. We are not on opposite teams here, we are human beings. We are the human race and because this normally happens within a community you have a lot more in common than just being human probably.

We're all on the same team. We all want the same things. We all just want to feel good about ourselves. We all want to feel like we're doing a good job serving others. We all want to be good people. We all also have needs and desires and things that we try to get met sometimes in weird ways. We're all just a bunch of humans doing the best we can but we all mean well. We all want to include others and we're all trying to be kind and sometimes we're pretty bad at it. Let's be united and approach it from that place, works far better.

Alright, thanks for joining me today you guys, I'll see you next time on another episode of *Better Than Happy*. Take care. 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.