

410: What I Learned from the Amish



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Jody Moore

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I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy*, episode 410, What I Learned from the Amish.

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.

Hello, everybody, welcome to the podcast. Thanks so much for joining me today. Recently, about a month ago I had the opportunity to travel to Lancaster, Pennsylvania and I apologize if I'm saying the name of the city wrong. I was taught how to say it but I'm probably still getting it wrong, I apologize. Anyway I got to go there with Time Out for Women. It was our last stop on the tour and what an awesome experience that's been the last year and a half to get to speak at Time Out for Women. And what a beautiful way to wrap it up there in Lancaster.

So as many of you probably know, Lancaster is known as Amish country. There is a large population of Amish and Mennonites who live there. And I had a little bit of time. I flew in Thursday night, the event was Friday evening and all day Saturday. And so I had a little bit of time, Friday, during the day to go and explore Amish country. And I wanted to go see it. I wanted to go learn a little bit more about Amish culture and the Amish people and so I did. And my friend Michelle went with me and it was amazing.

So we went to this tour of this Amish farmhouse. There was this really sweet older gentleman who was our tour guide who basically just taught us a little bit about the Amish people and what they believe and why they live the way that they do. And there was a lot of really interesting things that I learned there, but one that stood out that I wanted to highlight today on the podcast is, as many of you know, Amish people do not use electricity or drive cars. And I never really knew the reason for that and according to our tour guide a big part of the reason anyway is simplicity and slowness.

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They are believers in simplifying life and slowing down at least relative to the way most of us live our lives. They don't see the reason to rush around and complicate things and be in a hurry. And technology certainly does speed things up and often cause a lot of complication and chaos in our lives.

So one of the things that our tour guide pointed out that I thought was really fascinating is he said, "Think about what we do when we're feeling really overwhelmed or stressed or anxious. We leave our homes where we have all kinds of things happening and all kinds of technology and all sorts of modern conveniences and we go to the beach or we go to the mountains. We go be in nature because a part of our primal, if you will, mammal tendency is to connect with the Earth and simplicity."

And the Amish simply believe in living that way all the time. They don't have to escape the chaos of home because they keep home really simple so they don't get as overwhelmed or stressed or anxious because they have not complicated and sped up their lives. One of the things he said that really stood out to me is he said, "They don't have microwaves because why do you need to be in such a hurry to heat up your food?" So fascinating. And I don't know about you but I could certainly see the logic and the wisdom there.

Now, I'm not ready to abandon my television or my computer or my car, but I did love the reminder about slowing down and simplifying. And it reminded me of another thing that I picked up as I had the opportunity to participate with Time Out for Women from my friend, Melinda Brown. Hi, Mindy. Mindy Brown is the owner of the Instagram page, Brave Like Eve if you want to go check it out. She is brilliant and wise and I love her so much. And she has a saying she likes to live by. And I hope I get this right, Mindy. I believe the way she said it was, "Be where you are. Be where you are."

Isn't that beautiful? It reminded me of, well, I should say when I was learning about the Amish, it reminded me of Mindy and her commitment to be where she is. And so I want to dive into that a little bit today. I want to tell you about some of the ways that I try to be where I am in the hopes that

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you will think about opportunities to do that in your life because I do think it serves our mental and emotional health to slow down and be where we are. I think it creates a more beautiful, rich life experience.

And I think it serves our relationships both with our friends and family and even our spiritual relationship with God and Christ as we slow down, simplify and choose to be where we are. So the first thing that came to my mind was I like to go to conferences and workshops and live events where there are people speaking or teaching. And so all those things I go to on a regular basis like church every week. But I also like to sign up to go to special things where I'm going to learn more or be motivated in some way.

And I even get the opportunity nowadays to sometimes be a speaker or teacher at these types of events. And I've always loved things like this. I've always loved a motivational speaker or a conference or a workshop. I got to go to a lot in my corporate days but I continue to go to a lot even on my own. And one of the things I've noticed is this journey that people seem to take where when we're brand new to something and we feel like the newbie or the rucky maybe, we tend to be really excited and we're really engaged and we're really good at being where we are.

We get there on time, we maybe even want to get there a little early so we can get the best seat and we're sitting up close and we're taking notes and we're paying attention and we're soaking it all in and it's great. And then after a while, if you're like me anyway, we start to think that we know this stuff now and now we're an expert and now we're a pro. And maybe now we roll in late, we leave early, we're not as engaged. We're distracted by our phones or other things. We're talking with others.

We sort of start halfway checking out of things. And then once you think you're a real expert at it, now maybe you're a speaker or a teacher at the workshop, now I find that people at that stage often just roll in to give their talk and then either leave or sit backstage or simply really check out. And I know this is just my thoughts, maybe someone wants to coach me on this but that bothers me. It bothers me when the other teachers and speakers think that they don't have anything to learn anymore.

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When they think they're above this event for some reason and maybe it's not that they think they're above it but they're too busy. They have too much going on to possibly be there and get anything out of this event. Or they're already too much of an expert. I don't think that mindset tends to serve us. If I'm going to attend an event and whether I'm a participant and I'm brand new or I'm more of a veteran as a participant, or I am one of the teachers and speakers at the event.

If I choose to attend that event I'm going to that event. I'm going to be there. Now, there are exceptions of course but overall I want to be all in. I want to add what I can and I want to take away what I can from the other speakers, teachers and attendees. I believe that I've got plenty to learn. And I believe there are people who maybe on paper, haven't achieved certain goals or milestones yet that still can teach me so much. And I want to soak all that in. And I want to add positivity and anything else that I possibly can to any event I choose to participate in.

And listen, you guys, I've been to a lot of stuff and sometimes I get halfway through something and realize, I don't know that I should have said yes to this. I don't know that these are my people or that this is exactly, I'm not talking about things that are, if something's truly offensive or wrong I would definitely exit or whatever. I'm just talking, this isn't as exciting as I thought it would be. This isn't what I was expecting. I'm still going to be there because I committed to be there.

I'm going to be all in and I'm going to see what I can do to add to it to make it better. I don't leave early. I don't come late. I stay and I participate and I try to be engaged. And for me that has allowed me to meet people, to make connections, to learn things I otherwise wouldn't learn and to just feel good about the contribution that I'm making as I also receive a lot from these events. Now, maybe you're not someone who goes to live events like that or not regularly but do you ever have things happening online, like a Zoom call of some sort, a Zoom meeting or class that you are participating in for whatever reason?

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If I'm going to be in a class and I'm going to login on Zoom, I'm going to be there. I'm going to turn my camera on. I'm going to pay attention. Again, I'm not going to be perfect at it. I do get sidetracked by things. I do get a little distracted at times but for the most part if I'm there you can count on me being there. I recently signed up for a class with a teacher named Leah Davidson who's brilliant and amazing and I'm learning all about the nervous system and how to regulate, how to help clients and myself regulate our nervous systems.

And when I went to sign up for it. I realized that about half of the live workshops I already have conflicts with in my schedule and I won't be able to attend live. So before I sign up for something like that I make sure and check-in with the teacher and ask her if that's appropriate that I'm only there 50% of the time because I don't like to only be in something 50% of the time. I don't like what that means, people probably assume about me. I don't like to be so busy and I don't like to sign up for something that I can't truly be there for, not only for their sake but for my sake.

Because now I'm going to have to go catch up on the 50% of the classes that I can't attend live to really get what I want to out of this class and that's going to complicate my life. That's going to make me busier in certain ways. So again, like I said, I'm not perfect at any of this, but that's always my intention is to be there, to be present, to be engaged even if it's an online situation.

The next thing that came to my mind as I was thinking about this topic is first of all obviously our phones get in the way of this. Our cell phones which we carry with us everywhere, if you're like me it's like an extension of me. I don't really go anywhere without it. It's constantly notifying me, even if it's in my purse, then my watch buzzes on my arm notifying me of all kinds of random things which I should probably turn a lot of those off. But that phone and that technology is definitely preventing us from being where we are.

But in addition to that, I don't know if you're like me but another thing that does that is my AirPods. I love my AirPods. I own, I think three pairs

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because I lost a pair and so I bought another and then I found that first pair. But then one of them started to die so I bought a second one just in case one's ever lost and I need to listen to them. I know that's ridiculous. And I love them because I can listen to audiobooks, I can listen to podcasts. I can listen to the class that I missed, to Leah's class as I go for walks, as I do the dishes, as I do all kinds of things.

And in some of those situations I think that's totally fine and appropriate. But I have had to discipline myself to take those AirPods out at times. I like to have them in when I'm grocery shopping. If I have a list of the groceries I needed and so I don't need too much of my brain, I can just follow the list, then I will listen to my audiobook or something while I'm grocery shopping. And I think that's okay, except that guess what? I'm missing out on the opportunity to connect with strangers in the grocery store. Now, personally I do it because I don't want to connect with strangers in the grocery store.

But sometimes I wonder if, maybe there isn't an opportunity for me to help someone or to even just smile at someone. I'm so tuned out because between the groceries and what I'm listening to I don't have the capacity to focus on one more thing. So if there is someone around me that needs my help or something, I'm probably missing it, I probably am. There's definitely no room for the spirit to nudge me to be of service to someone between my grocery shopping and my audiobook.

But even more so what I've noticed is that I have started to give myself some boundaries about when I wear those AirPods at home. Because all of these little seemingly insignificant interactions that I have on a regular basis with my family get muted out a lot when I have my AirPods in because I don't really talk to people. And here's the best and worst part about AirPods.

If you're like me and you have a little bit of hair that covers your ears, people don't even know you have them in. So you can pretend you're listening to your child talk to you but really you're not, you're listening to something else. Is it just me? Does anyone else do that? So the one time I definitely have put a boundary on myself is in the morning because I like to

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get up, go to the bathroom or whatever. And then I like to take a bath. I know, people think that's gross but I like to bathe.

Sometimes I shower but mostly I bathe because I can put my AirPods in and just kind of sit and relax and it gives me a minute to wake up in the morning. But after I get out of the bath and get dressed I take my AirPods out because I didn't used to. And then my husband would come in from exercising and he'd be showering and getting ready and we just wouldn't be talking to each other. No dialogue between us because I'm listening to something.

Or my two elementary school kids who I get up and out the door for school, they talk to each other but I didn't have a lot of dialogue with them because I was listening to my audiobook. And I realized that I'm missing out on these opportunities to connect with my family. So after I get dressed the AirPods come out and maybe I get to listen to them again later on my walk or something.

But I had to put boundaries around myself because again, just like the Amish say, I'm complicating my life. I'm speeding it all up and I'm sacrificing something really beautiful and valuable and natural in the name of I don't know what. I don't know what the hurry is. So I don't know. If you're like me and need to monitor the AirPods.

One last thing I want to mention that came to my mind as I was preparing this episode is years ago in church a woman said that she tries to leave her house when she's going somewhere. She leaves her house 15 minutes earlier than she thinks she needs to so that she can be available if there is somebody along the way that she feels prompted to connect with or help out or serve in some way. And I thought, whoa, that's impressive. I don't know about you but I tend to leave my house five minutes later than I thought I needed to.

And so I'm constantly rushing to try to get places on time. And so I probably do miss a lot of opportunities. I mean maybe there's literally somebody on the side of the road that needs help that I don't have time to stop and help.

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Or maybe it's less dramatic, maybe it's just as I'm walking into church, maybe there's an old friend I see in the hallway from another ward. But I don't really have time to stop and ask how they're doing because I'm late for church. So I love the idea of leaving 15 minutes earlier than I think I need to, giving myself a 15 minute buffer.

And again I don't do this 90% of the time but 10% of the time I do, 10% of the time I remember that woman's comment and I give myself a little buffer of a window so that I can be on the lookout for something. And it might be something for someone else. And it might be something for me. It might be a minute of lingering in my car a little bit longer and having some peace and quiet or finishing listening to a song or something. And again, it slows down my life.

It minimizes some of the stress and anxiety that come from this hustle culture that all of us are living in for the most part, except for the Amish. Now, I get it, this requires planning. You've got a lot of things you want to get done. You've got a lot of priorities and things that you want to be able to do in your life. I know, I understand. I just don't want you sacrificing the quality of your life now thinking that there's some arrival point you're going to get to at which everything's going to slow down and simplify and get easier and then you're going to be able to relax and enjoy it all.

Again, I'm speaking of myself as much as anyone but if I've learned anything it's that that day doesn't come very often. I have to choose to slow down and simplify and enjoy my life, create peace, create slowness right now. There's not a magic arrival point at which it then becomes easier. So this has been true in my business, this is true in my family, this is just true in life. Everything around us is telling us, hurry up, do it now, you can do more, cram it in, we'll make it faster. We'll make it more convenient. We'll make it all easier to fit in so you can do more.

And at some point it's just useful to pause and ask yourself, why? Why do we need more? And what are we sacrificing in the name of more? And do we like our reason for all of that? It's just a useful question to pause and

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ask. It's a question that I paused and asked myself after visiting Amish country. So thank you to the Amish for that example.

Have an amazing, beautiful rest of your week. Thank you for listening to the podcast. And if you love this podcast, I would love for you to share it with a friend and make sure that you're subscribed and following so you don't miss an episode. I'll see you next time.

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