

413: The Alternative to Fixing Feelings



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Jody Moore

[Better Than Happy](#) with Jody Moore

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I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy*, episode 413, The Alternative to Fixing Feelings.

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. I am recording this episode on video as well as audio because I don't normally do that and I want to get this content up on YouTube for people that prefer to consume content in that way. So if you want to see a visual, you can head over to YouTube. I have a YouTube channel that's under Jody Moore Coaching. And I will just say, if you're not going to go over and get the visual, I'm just going to describe for you today, first of all, I have a really pretty dress on and I did my hair and my makeup.

And there's my headphones, my normal headphones for recording podcasts got stolen by a child or something and I need to get some new ones. And the challenge is I need a cord that plugs in. And the headphones nowadays, all the good ones are Bluetooth. But because of the technology that I need to record the podcast I need one that plugs in. And anyway I just haven't got any yet. So what I'm wearing are my son's gaming headphones that he uses on his Xbox and they're gigantic and they have a big old black antenna, a mic and they're just, they're very nice I'm sure.

And my son takes good care of his stuff. I'm going to try take good care of these headphones. But anyway, I look a little bit like I am in the radio control tower I think today. What are you going to do, that's how we roll.

So okay, I want to talk to you today about the alternative to fixing feelings. And I want to talk to you about this with regards to your own feelings, but also with regards to the feelings of all the people around you. Because if you've been listening to me for a while then you've heard me talk about how negative feelings are actually not the problems that we make them out to be. They're actually part of a normal human experience. And you don't have to have listened to me to know that.

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It's obvious when I say it out loud. There's a lot of people teaching that in various ways. And while negative emotion maybe isn't our most favorite part of the human experience, it is we realize when we slow it down, a natural healthy part. So I want to just dissect that for just a minute a little bit deeper. And then I'm going to talk to you about the alternative because this is what I find is I talk to people a lot about why feelings are natural and healthy. And people can get their heads around that and they see it and they agree.

But then they look so stumped and I can relate to this too about being so stumped about, well, then, what would we do instead. Most of us don't have a picture of that or a good example of that in our lives. And so I want to talk you through some things that I try and that have proven useful. And that when I tell them to other people they go, "Oh, yeah, I didn't think of that." So I'm going to give you kind of a crass example of my latest favorite analogy that I've been using, because it helps me to think about feelings and why they are such a natural healthy part of being a human.

So biologically, physically our bodies, these bodies we have, go through all kinds of things. And they're constantly changing. We're constantly reproducing all the cells of our bodies. I forget what the timeline is but we basically shed cells and recreate them and cells die out and new ones are created. I'm sure I'm saying the terminology wrong but you know what I mean. Our bodies are constantly changing, we're aging, we're growing, we're evolving, we're gaining or losing weight and/or muscle. And we're dehydrated or we're hydrated.

Our bodies are constantly changing. And a part of that and not just the change but a part of the way that our bodies do all the amazing things they do that keep us functioning and experiencing life and experiencing the world and housing our spirits are really fascinating processes. And many of them are kind of annoying and/or downright disgusting. Think about it, our digestive system is a miracle.

The fact that we can just eat food and then the body knows what to do with it. It takes that food and it utilizes it for energy and it stores some of it as fat

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in case we need food later and then it processes it. And we lose it through waste. We digest it and then we go to the bathroom. It's amazing. Now, those things don't always work perfectly in all of us. Sometimes we need a little help, a little medication and based on what we're eating, we make that process easier or harder for our bodies.

But for the most part, our bodies just figure out what to do with that food and it's amazing and awesome. We get hunger signals and then we get full signals and all the things that happen. But some of it's kind of gross. The fact that we have to go to the bathroom and have these kind of stinky disgusting substances that come out of our bodies and we've got to find a place to take care of that. And we've got to clean ourselves up afterwards so we don't get some kind of infection.

That's all kind of annoying and stinky. And yet none of us are walking around mad about it because we know it's part of having a human body. And in fact, if that's not happening regularly then we actually have a problem. Then we need to go to the doctor or get some kind of medication or figure out what we're eating to regulate ourselves. We call it being constipated. If we're not digesting food and going to the bathroom or if our bodies aren't able to move sugar out of the bloodstream and all the things that our bodies do with food then we need to get some help. Something's actually wrong if that doesn't happen.

What about sweat, our bodies know how to regulate our temperature, again for the most part unless we're sick or something's gone wrong. But a healthy human body can regulate body temperature. And it cools us down by producing a moisture, a salty moisture that we call sweat and it's kind of stinky. I don't like sweating, it feels sticky and gross but I know it's a good sign that I have a healthy body. And it's even a sign that I'm moving that body which is good for my body. And I'm getting some exercise.

It's good to get my heart rate up sometimes and to sweat even though I don't love sweat. It doesn't smell good. It doesn't look pretty. It doesn't feel great on my skin but the alternative is actually way worse. If I'm not

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sweating, if I'm overheating that's going to be way worse. Menstrual cycles, birthing babies, even intercourse.

I could go on all day about the functions of the body that are amazing and brilliant and signs of healthy bodies that are kind of actually, also annoying or disgusting. And yet we deal with it because we know it's a sign of good health, we know it's normal and so we're not mad about it. Imagine if we were, imagine if we were like, "Oh, man, this again. I thought I was done with this. This happened yesterday. I didn't want to have to go to the bathroom again. It's so annoying."

Imagine how much more difficult dealing with all of those biological functions would be if we were resistant of it, if we were mad about it. If when it happened to one of our kids we were like, "Oh, shoot, I'm so sorry you have to deal with this. How can I fix it? How can we get this to stop?" If we had the resistance, the negative emotion, the frustration around those biological functions that we tend to have around our emotions. We would make all those biological functions much more challenging and they would become a bigger, more dramatic part of our day, but we don't do that.

We know that they are normal. We've truly embraced and accepted that those biological functions are normal. And you see where I'm going with this. Negative emotion is just as normal. It is just as much a sign of good health as going to the bathroom every day. Feeling sad at times, feeling frustrated at times, feeling angry, feeling anxious, feeling worried, feeling overwhelmed, feeling lonely, feeling whatever you're feeling. I'm not saying that it's not useful to take a look at how much of your life you're feeling that way and what thoughts you are thinking that are contributing to it.

You know if you've listened to me at all, you know I'm a big fan of examining your stories and choosing what you're going to think and that we get a lot of leverage over our emotions when we do that. But what I am saying is you're not meant to never feel negative emotion. And when you feel it, then being mad about feeling it or feeling guilty about feeling it or telling yourself that you shouldn't be feeling it, that you should think something different, that only makes it worse.

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Instead of just learning how to accommodate it. That's what I love about thinking about this with regards to our bodies and our biology is we've just learned how to accommodate it. We've learned to put toilets all over the world. We've learned things like I'd better go to the bathroom right now because I'm going to be in the car for a while and it's uncomfortable to have to pee and not have a place available. So I'll go ahead just in case. We just work it into our lives, accommodating it.

And I want us to do a little bit more accommodating for ourselves, feeling bad, being overwhelmed, being frustrated, being upset, being worried, whatever it is for you. I want you to know how to accommodate it because the truth is, it is a sign of mental health in many cases. There can be extremes but in many cases, and I certainly coach on situations all the time where people are telling me they're upset. And we always begin with questioning, but is it a problem that I'm upset? Maybe I just need to be upset right now.

Maybe I just want to be upset or maybe being upset is okay. And just allowing it and processing it is the fastest way through it. And learning how to regulate my biology of my body when I'm upset instead of moving into overwhelm and guilt over it, making it even worse. Maybe that's the best way through it. Maybe I won't even need to look at the thoughts, if I just process the emotion and regulate my nervous system on the other side of that.

So then again whenever I talk to people about this, they're like, "Okay, yeah, I get it, I see it." And let's think about the people in our lives too, because this is a common one. Well, my child is just so upset. My husband or wife is upset. My mom and dad, I don't want them to be worried. I don't want these people I love to feel bad. Sounds so lovely, doesn't it? But it would be like saying, "Yeah, but I'm fine with me having to go to the bathroom every day but my kid has to go to the bathroom every day too." I'm like, "Yeah, hopefully."

What if we think about negative emotion the same way? What if we stopped not wanting people to feel bad? Notice I used a double negative on

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purpose. What if we stopped not wanting them to feel bad? Now, in the English language a double negative equals a positive. If I say stop not wanting it, then our brains interpret that as I should want it. And that's the reason I use a double negative is because I don't mean that you should want it.

I'm not like, "Oh, honey I hope you get really stinky and sweaty today." I don't really ever think that. But when they do get stinky and sweaty I don't want it. I'm not mad about it. I'm just like, "Alright, yeah, well, we're going to take a shower now. Here's what you do and here's how deodorant works." We just accommodate it. What if we stopped not wanting people to feel bad? What if we just embraced that sometimes people are going to feel bad?

Okay, so let's go back to you first, to how to apply this to yourself. Then I'm going to come back to how to help someone else. But it's really important that you keep playing with this premise in your mind, that negative emotions aren't wrong or bad, even though, yes, sometimes we can change them with our thoughts.

So let's say you're really, let me think, let me use a personal example. So my husband is out of town this week. And I'll just self-coach myself out loud here for a minute. I did not think through this before recording this episode. So you'll just hear what it sounds like in my head. It's a mess always. So my husband's out of town. He's on a trip with his buddies. By the time you hear this, he'll be back but he went on a surf trip. He goes on this trip every year and he looks forward to it and they plan for it and he exercises every morning so that he can keep up with the surf on this trip.

And it's a beautiful thing and I'm so glad that he does it. And yet, it's hard for me when he's gone because he is so helpful when he's here. First of all he works in our business, so there are many things that he does that I don't know how to do or can't fully complete without him here to do his part of the job. And so there are times when I get frustrated with that. And then he's really, really helpful at home and with our kids. And my kids are good kids and they're at ages that are pretty easy right now, but it seems like of

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course the week he leaves town this is the week when the dishwasher breaks.

And I have a kid that's home sick from school and it happens to be almost the last week of the school year so there's all the extra school programs and stuff at church and it just, it seems like everything hits heavier that week that he's gone. I don't know that that's true or that's just the story my brain's telling me. But I'm finding myself starting to get overwhelmed and feel behind on everything. And then I start to feel it's tempting to want to feel resentful of my husband for leaving even though I don't. I'm so glad he goes on trips like this.

And I get to go and do things all the time too. I don't really believe that but that's the temptation, is to resent him. And then because I don't agree with that or like that then I just turn it back on myself instead. And I start feeling guilty because here's the thing. When I go out of town, which I do sometimes, I'll go out of town for work or I'll go on a girl's trip or something. And I'm always like, "How is it? I'm sorry I was gone so long, was anything okay?" And my husband's like, "It was great." I honestly think for him it's easy when I leave.

I don't think he gets very overwhelmed or frustrated. I think maybe he misses me a little bit. I miss him. But I don't think he gets overwhelmed like I do. And so then I feel guilty, why do I get overwhelmed and everything when he leaves and he doesn't? And that little catty part of me wants to when he comes home, sort of just let him know how much I sacrificed for him to go. Maybe make him feel a little bit bad or at the very least, make sure he understands that this is really hard for me. Can anybody relate to this besides me?

Alright, this is the mess in my head. So if I stay in the overwhelm, it's so much easier. If I just be a little bit overwhelmed, even a little bit frustrated that certain things can't get done on the timeline I hoped they would because I need my husband for it. If I just stay in that, that's all kind of what I would consider primary emotion. That's what's really going on here is the overwhelm.

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As soon as I am upset about being overwhelmed that's when I'm starting to decide is this his fault, is this my fault? Should I not be feeling this way? And all of it just gets harder and worse. It all just gets harder and worse. So the temptation sometimes after you learn the tools of coaching is, well, okay let's coach myself so that I'm not overwhelmed. That's what people tell me, "I just don't want to be overwhelmed when my husband goes out of town and it should be fine and can you coach me through it, Jody Moore?"

And sometimes that is the right approach, but many times the approach is, no, no, no, what if you just let yourself be overwhelmed. It's like you're running a race and you're sweating right now and you're telling me, how do I not sweat? Now, I get it, it's a little bit different because with emotions we do have the ability to choose our thoughts. And in many cases we can but sometimes it's just let yourself be sweaty.

What if I let myself be overwhelmed and I didn't start blaming or shaming and I wasn't mad about it and I wasn't telling myself that it's wrong. What would that look like? What is the alternative to fixing those feelings? You know what the alternative is? Is just be overwhelmed. I'm going to feel it. I'm going to act a little bit more short with my children than I normally am. I'm going to be a little bit less kind and fun than I normally am. And instead of the chatter in my head being about whether or not this is Jake's fault or my fault.

The chatter in my head is going to be, it's okay hun, I see you, I've got you, it's okay to be overwhelmed, it's okay. Take a deep breath and be overwhelmed. I love you. You're overwhelmed, you're exhausted, you feel like you can't do it all and I love you. Isn't that so simple and yet so not natural? It's still not natural for me, I'll tell you. And I've been teaching this a long time. I still have to slow down and go, "What's happening?"

And I'll tell you, the key for me in most cases, I'm not going to say this is true in all cases because I haven't taken the time to think it out and make sure I feel good about that. But I will say, in a lot of cases it is that shame blame trap that indicates I'm just not allowing myself to feel whatever I'm feeling because I want to escalate into whose fault is this, when the truth is

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there is no problem. There is no problem so we don't need to find whose fault it is.

Being overwhelmed is not a problem. Being overwhelmed is a sign of me having a healthy human brain. What? Alright. And just because it's not the only option, just because when I go out of town, my husband doesn't seem to choose to get overwhelmed, that still doesn't mean it's a problem. So my husband has negative emotion in some other areas where I don't have negative emotion. We're just all unique, the things that we struggle with are unique.

The things that come easier to us are unique. The things where it's easy to feel calm and peaceful are unique to each of us and the areas where we get upset are unique to each of us. And so the alternative is just be overwhelmed, be a little bit short. Sometimes I'll even say things to the people around me like, "Hey, I'm sorry if I seem a little bit short today, I'm just really overwhelmed, I've got a lot going on. I'm sorry if I seem a little distant. I'm sorry if I seem not fully present. There's just a lot on my mind and I'm feeling really overwhelmed right now."

I love to say that especially to my kids because I'm trying to teach them that it's okay to feel negative emotion. And that doesn't mean that I'm yelling at everyone. I'm not acting out on the overwhelm. I'm not acting in ways that I think are inappropriate. But I'm a little bit less fun. I'm a little bit less attentive. I'm a little bit shorter on patience. And I tell them, "I'm sorry for that and here's what's going on for me." Because then the next time they feel overwhelmed I'm hoping they'll remember, I know how you do overwhelm, I've seen my mom do it.

You just give yourself permission to be a little bit less than your most fun self. And if necessary you tell the people around you about it and you just move through it and it gets better. And I don't need to feel guilty about it or figure out whose fault it is. This is the alternative to fixing feelings is just allowing feelings and being very compassionate with yourself as you process them. Compassion, hey, hun, I see all the stuff you're doing, I love

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you. Thanks for doing all that. And I see that you're overwhelmed and it's okay to be overwhelmed. That's compassion.

Okay, now let's talk about it with regards to the other people in your lives. This one I coach on even more. It's okay, I get it, I can do it but this is affecting my child. So here's what I say to that. I say, "Well, what if it's okay for your child to feel that way?" And again, in *Be Bold*, we've talked about this a lot and they've listened to the podcast and so they know. I know it's okay but what am I supposed to do? So let me just make up an example that we can play with here.

So let's say that your child is feeling discouraged because she didn't get invited to a party. Let's take a teenage girl type example. Her friends are getting together to do something, somehow she knows about it and she didn't get invited and she's feeling hurt. The temptation for us is to fix that. We try to fix it in all kinds of ways. Some of us try to fix it by calling up the parents and saying, "Do you realize that this happened?" And maybe trying to get them to invite our daughter in that way.

Some of us fix it by telling our daughter, "Well, have you tried this? Did you call this person? Maybe they just didn't realize that you wanted to go." And we try to help them figure out the polite nice way to get themselves invited to the party. We try to literally fix the outside circumstance as though that's the problem. Sometimes we realize, okay, the circumstance isn't the problem, Jody, taught me that. It's her thinking that's the problem so let me try to now fix her thinking.

Let me tell her, "Hey, listen, sometimes people are just not kind. Sometimes teenage girls can be downright mean or they probably meant well. They're probably just having a bad day." We try to then change her thoughts. "Did you know that I think you're amazing. You're such a fun girl, I don't know why anyone wouldn't want to hang out with you." Let's believe that. And we try to fix that way. Now, I don't know that there's anything wrong with trying that approach. I personally don't like to get involved in my kids' lives.

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I don't call parents unless it seems like an extreme situation that would necessitate that. I don't even personally like to tell my kids what to say to their friends or any of that. But it is tempting for me to want to go in and fix their thinking and offer them alternative thoughts. And I sometimes will test the waters of that to see if it's landing for them. And if it is and they're open to it, great, do it. But usually it's not, usually all I have to say is, "Oh, well, what do you think is going on for them?"

And I get a sense right away of whether or not my child wants to feel better and 99 times out of 100, they don't. So for the most part do you know what it sounds like if you're not going to fix their thoughts or in turn, fix their feelings? You're just going to go, "Oh, I'm sorry, that's hard. That hurts, that's painful. I see that you're in pain and I'm so sorry. I love you. What do you think you're going to do about it? Or what do you want to do today that might help you feel better? Or how do you want to process this emotion?"

When I get overwhelmed I often just like to go on a walk and take deep breaths and let myself feel overwhelmed, what do you like to do?" Notice I slipped a little, how are we going to help you feel better in there. That's how my brain is wired. We want to try to take that part out. We want to go, "Hey, it's okay to feel overwhelmed." Or in this case, hurt, that's what the example was. It's okay to feel hurt. When I feel hurt I do this sometimes. It just helps me move through the hurt.

Be careful about always saying "Here's how we feel better." Instead I'm trying to change my language to, here's how I move through it, here's how I allow it, here's how I do it when I'm hurt. Here's what helps me be with myself through the hurt. Because it's a normal part of the human experience. But for the most part it's really just validating their pain. That's all people need, have you noticed this? When you're feeling upset or hurt and somebody tells you why you shouldn't feel that way.

You just want to go, "Listen, I don't think you get it. This is a big deal." And if it's a big deal to them it's a big deal. And the alternative is, I'm so sorry you feel that way, that's painful. That's not a fun feeling but I feel that way sometimes too. And maybe, what are you going to do?

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Here's another brilliant question that a friend offered me that is so obvious, I don't know why I didn't think of it. Is there anything I can do to help, is there anything I can do? Mostly you know what they say? No. That's it, you guys, that's what we do instead of fixing it, we just be there and we validate it and we tell them that we love them and we tell them we're sorry that they feel bad. And we tell them that we understand that feeling because we feel it too.

And we show them that we have faith in their ability to feel that feeling. We don't have to fix the feelings. We can just be there and comfort people through the feelings. Isn't that mind blowing? Now, I will sometimes, I can't help it. I don't know if this is a good idea or bad idea but at times I will say, "Well, if you ever want to talk about it, let me know." I try to keep the door open to examining the stories and thoughts creating it. And sometimes people will take you up on that. I've had people take me up on that, people in my family, loved ones, close friends.

But many times they won't and they don't need it. They're just going to process the emotion on their own and their own brains are going to sort it out. That's it. That is the alternative to fixing feelings, it's just allowing feelings, it's just holding space for both yourself and other people to feel feelings.

Now that we've talked about all the negative feelings I want to make sure you join me for The Art of Happiness because we're going to go a little bit deeper into, okay, great, sometimes we have to allow negative feelings. But how do we create more of the positive ones? And that is so available to you. The amount of joy and happiness that's possible for you is probably for all of us beyond what we can possibly imagine. And I don't think that we'll ever max it out in this life but I think we should take advantage of a little bit more of it. Are you in?

So join me for The Art of Happiness. It's only \$19. And it's three days, one hour per day on Zoom. And if you can't be there live for any of the day's or for a day or you have to leave early or something then you'll also be getting the replays of them that you can watch any time that week. So make sure

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you check it out. It's just where we get real about things because I have you here live and we can really dive into the specifics in your life. So head to jodymoore.com/trial. I'll see you at The Art of Happiness. Take care.

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.