

426: Faith Matters with Bill & Susan Turnbull



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Jody Moore

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I'm Jody Moore, and this is *Better Than Happy* episode 426, Faith Matters with Bill and Susan Turnbull.

This is *Better Than Happy*, the podcast where we study what the healthiest, most successful people in today's world think, feel, and do. We leverage this knowledge to create our best lives. Are you ready little bird? Let's fly.

I'm so excited for you all to meet my friends Bill and Susan Turnbull today on the podcast. Bill and Susan along with Bill's brother and his wife, David and Kristen Turnbull, are the founders of Faith Matters. Faith Matters, if you're not familiar, is an organization who, first of all, that's where I published my book *Better Than Happy* few years ago.

But they do amazing events, gatherings. They have a magazine. They have a podcast. Their mission in the world is to help us expand our understanding of our faith, to deepen our faith. They are out to help contribute to the restoration in a useful way. I love so much the space that they've created to have real, open conversations that are necessary and useful.

Bill and Susan, on a personal note, are some of the most lovely people I've ever met. Their whole family actually I've gotten to know, and they have really impacted my life. So I asked them to come on the podcast today. You're going to hear in the beginning, Bill and Susan are going to talk a little bit about the amazing event they have coming up in Utah on October 13 and 14th. So you'll learn a little bit about that conference and how to join us if you want to.

We're then going to learn a little bit more about Bill and Susan's background, why they started this foundation, and what their journeys looked like. Then we'll follow up with a project that Faith Matters and I put together, together that I think you'll be really excited about. We're excited to get it out into the world. It's available now. So please enjoy my conversation with Bill and Susan. Here we go.

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Jody: So today on the podcast, I have some dear friends of mine, Bill and Susan Turnbull, who I'm so excited to interview. I don't know why we haven't gotten you two on here before now. I mean, seriously. I kind of had to wrestle you down because you do have amazing, full lives. So we'll blame it on that.

But I'm so excited to introduce you two to my listeners. You two have been so influential in my life. I just really count you amongst the blessings in terms of people who have impacted me, and I've only known you for a few years, but really have had some profound personal growth from things that you've shared and from the example of how you live your lives. So thank you for that.

Bill: Right back at you. I can't imagine, you've been one of the most influential people in our lives in recent years and to our family also. It's really, really been. Yeah, just it's been so helpful. Susan is.

Susan: You know, it's interesting, because I always felt like we have good relationships in our life and with each other and with our kids and friends. But since we've found you and all the things you teach, it has just really been able to open us up to just be way more, to think more consciously and to just be more empowered in all of our relationships. It's just a fun thing as a family to learn the model together and just live life in a better way. So thank you.

Jody: Yeah, your family has been great and really open to all of it. It really is powerful. The more people you can get to engage in it, the more fun it becomes. So. Now Susan is a coach as well teaching these things. So that's been fun. Maybe we'll get into that in a minute. Let's start with there's a big event coming up in Utah called Restore, which I'm really looking forward to. Do you want to tell us a little bit about this event, how it came to be, what is it about?

Bill: This is fun. We did the first one last year, coming out of COVID it was great. We just imagined that maybe people that engaged Faith Matters might want to get together. So we created this two day event, and we

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hoped maybe a few hundred people would be there. It turned out it was like, it turned out kind of big. Like 1,500 people showed up, which was a lot for a two day event.

Susan: The fire marshals had our back at all times.

Bill: We almost burned the place down.

Jody: It was so awesome to see that room so packed and people just wanting to get in. It speaks a lot to what you created that it's attracting people like that.

Bill: Yeah. What was your experience? I mean, obviously, you spoke. So you were a part of it, and you're speaking again. So this is.

Jody: Yeah. I mean, I've been putting on live events for quite a while. We fill events, and we get people excited to come. But I've never had what you guys have with people just, again, lining up to get in. Because I think there is such a loving energy behind what you do at Faith Matters. I definitely feel the Spirit in that room.

At the same time, it's a safe space to talk about what, in the past anyway, have been sort of topics we don't discuss in church necessarily, for whatever reason. Either we are told not to, or we just are uncomfortable with it. There's a vulnerability about the work that you all are doing. There's a truth seeking behind it all with a lot of love and generosity.

I think that we are hungry for that right now. We're hungry for a place where we can talk out loud and tell the truth about challenges and areas of opportunity with a lot of love and with the Spirit. That's what I feel like you two have created.

Bill: Yeah, I don't know. Us too.

Jody: With some help, with some help.

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Bill: Yeah, this is a two day event. It's October 13 and 14th. That's a Friday and Saturday. Gosh, it's going to be a party. Like we're just looking at the list of people.

Jody: Name some of the speakers.

Susan: Well, let's start out with Jody Moore. Yeah.

Jody: I mean, we'll do some name dropping. Jody Moore.

Susan: It's incredible, actually, to go down this list. We have Governor Spencer Cox is speaking. Jennifer Finlayson-Fife, Steve Young.

Bill: I don't know if your, maybe your listeners don't know Steve Young, but like, yeah.

Jody: I think they do. I think we all know Steve Young.

Bill: Any guy knows Steve Young.

Susan: Thomas McConkie.

Bill: Thomas McConkie. Fiona and Terryl Givens.

Susan: Jared Halverson.

Bill: McArthur Krishna. We've got Lisa Miller who's great. She teaches psychology and spirituality at Columbia. She's a professor, and she's written some amazing books. She's a great speaker, Jewish lady. So we incorporate. These are LDS voices, but also some people from outside of our faith, which adds a really nice element. You've got to add a relation to Lisa that a lot of you--

Susan: Rosalynde Welche, Tom Kristofferson.

Bill: I think the music alone at this event would be worth coming for. Like if it was only just the music we've got so Brandon Flowers from The Killers is going to be there. He's going to sing and probably talk a little bit.

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Jody: That's going to be so cool.

Bill: He's like probably talk a little bit about what life as a rock star and Latter-day Saint is like. Negotiating those challenges. It's been quite a road for him. The Bonner Gospel Unity choir, the King Will Come Group. The biggest thing like we got Steven Sharp Nelson from the Piano Guys.

Susan: Steven Sharp, The Piano Guys.

Bill: We've got I think the last thing we're going to do on Saturday might be the most spectacular music number maybe ever in the state of Utah. I'm not sure. But an original composition by the Stewart brothers who lead this enormous choir, Millennial Choirs and Orchestra.

So they bring an orchestra. I mean it's going to be the biggest choir you've ever seen. It's going to be like quite a climax leaving. Also, the sun and the moon are going to part of the program because it brings the eclipse together, which is, it's going to be really cool.

Jody: Very neat. I think that the speaker lineup and everything kind of speaks for itself. But just to be really clear, who did you design this event for? Who is this appropriate for? Obviously, anybody's welcome. But who did you have in mind when you put it together?

Bill: One thing we're doing this year as we've got like an evening, Friday evening, for young people, Gen Z. We've got a separate gathering for them. We hope that attracts a lot of young people. But yeah, I mean. It's a really connecting experience. So.

Susan: It really is. I've learned through the years not to hype things. You know like when you go to a good movie or a great restaurant, then you talk too much about it and then it's disappointing when you take someone. I'm only going to say one thing about Restore. That's that I guarantee whoever comes is going to leave feeling inspired and feel more connected to Christ and more energized, and feel more belonging.

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Bill: Like the more Jody Moore people at an event, bigger party it is, more fun it is.

Jody: Right? We will bring some fun. Okay, so tickets are available at FaithMatters.org/Restore. Did I get that right?

Bill: Yeah, yeah.

Jody: Remember, it's dot org. I always type in dot com accidentally. So we'll link it in the show notes here.

Bill: Yeah, I'm sure there's like a special discount for your listeners.

Jody: Oh yeah. Use code Jody, and you get 20% off. I forgot we have a discount available. Yeah. Everyone do that. Put in Jody. J-O-D-Y. It's Jody with a Y for those of you that don't know. All right, well I'm looking forward to that.

I want to really kind of backup for a minute and talk about Faith Matters in general because you guys have a phenomenal podcast, by the way, that I reference regularly. But if anyone's not listened to the Faith Matters podcast, definitely check it out. But you're much bigger than that and you started long before the podcast. I don't know that people really understand what you do. I don't even know that I fully understand what got you into everything.

Bill: And you're on the advisory board.

Jody: I'm on the advisory board. I've heard parts of your story, but I'm really curious about more. I know my listeners are curious. So tell us who are Bill and Susan Turnbull. I know there are other people, your brother and his wife, that. Tell us the story.

Bill: Faith Matters, it's a nonprofit, and it's largely supported by the time and money of the founders and the executive team. So our podcast hosts are Tim and Aubrey Chavez. So they have their own lives. They have their

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business lives. Somehow they managed to host this amazing podcast and do a lot of other things for us as well.

By the way, they're also donors. So you can't underestimate what Tim and Aubrey Chavez do, and they're like the loveliest people in the world and dear friends. So yeah. We have a very small paid staff, but mostly it's a lot of a lot of people giving time and money. So it's yeah.

Susan: And Terryl and Fiona.

Bill: Terryl and Fiona Givens had been really seminal to Faith Matters. They wrote a book, a series of books actually, but I think a book, particularly the book called *The God Who Weeps* that Deseret Books published back in the day, and I think it's the best thing Deseret Books ever published. It was very influential. So they were the first people that we really invited into this enterprise. Terryl was actually the first podcast host. He hosted the podcast for like the first year.

That was really important because Tim and Aubrey were listening to that podcast. This was like five years ago. This is when we started. We haven't been around that long. But Tim and Aubrey were listening to that podcast, and they were coming through. You've had them on your show. So they may have told their story.

But they had kind of worked through a real tough transition in their faith, which happens. So Tim went to Harvard. That is a place where sometimes faith goes to die. They really resonated with what we were doing early on, and they just called up and said, "Man, we love this. Can we get involved?" We said sure, yeah.

So partly, their podcast tracks development together as a couple. They have this great relationship, but like negotiating their faith and deepening their faith and meeting challenges to that faith. So partly, in this podcast, as they engage guests, you're sort of seeing them also transform over a period of years. That's been a beautiful thing to watch. So, yeah.

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But how we got into it. I would say, first of all, before we get into that story, I would say that we've created a platform for all kinds of independent LDS voices that are doing amazing things in the world. So under this idea of exploring an expansive view of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So what does that look like? Looks like podcast, YouTube. We actually have a really cool magazine that we just started recently. Wayfair, gatherings like Restore and other gatherings, courses, publishing. We publish some really important books, which maybe we'll talk about because yours was one of those. I guess we got married young. So we were. Yeah, I was barely off my mission. We met, and it was like.

Susan: Our moms set us up in a beauty shop. We'll tell that story another time.

Jody: Wait, Susan, didn't you go to Bill's kind of homecoming talk? Someone told you, you need to meet this guy, and you went to his homecoming talk, right? I love that story.

Susan: I hate blind dates. So our mom's met in a beauty shop anyway. The beautician said oh, Bill and Susan, you have to have them meet. Bill was in Italy. I was going to college. So she said you have to meet. You have to put these two together. So our moms just concocted the whole plan. But when Bill got home, I hate blind dates. So I'm like I'm just going to slip in the back of his welcome home and just listen and see what I hear.

Jody: Maybe you liked what you heard.

Bill: I happened to be on my game that day. So yeah.

Jody: That is one smart beautician and also all the moms now are getting ideas about how they're going to set their kids up.

Bill: Hey, it worked.

Jody: Just be careful moms. It doesn't always work. I love it. It's so good. Okay, so anyway, you two ended up together really young.

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Bill: Yeah, we got married not long thereafter and started having a family.

Susan: We like to just jump in and make things happen.

Jody: Right? Why waste time?

Bill: I would say that in my university years, I was just curious about a lot of things. So I have to say first of all, I had some really profound experiences with God in my, especially in my preparation for my mission and during my mission where I feel like I experienced the love of God in such a profound way. That God became just very real in my life and faith became like this drinking from that well was very, very nourishing.

But also when I got home and began to be exposed to the broader sort of intellectual world, a lot of questions emerged. For one thing, I found that the experiences that I had weren't just like a Mormon thing. They were like people all over the world that were having experiences very much like this. So I became curious about.

There's something about engaging that broader world that made my previous conception of God and my faith a little too small. It's like oh, God's working in so many ways in the world. So I began drinking from a lot of different spiritual wells, honestly, and intellectual wells. There was part of that, that maybe diminished my experience in the church a little bit. I felt like a little less I identified as just maybe a Latter-day Saint.

Jody: Would you, at that time, have described it as a faith crisis, or did it just feel, what did that feel like?

Bill: Yeah. So there are also things that you've learned along the way that oh, I didn't know that. So there's that part that causes some dissonance, right. So there's like that tension. Well, first of all, you have a family and a spouse, and you've built your life around this. So that's kind of a reason to stay engaged right there.

Susan: Those spiritual experiences you have, those are real touchstones in your life.

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Bill: Yeah. Those happened in my engagement with our faith. So like okay, God's in this faith powerfully. I know that. Yeah, that kept me really engaged.

Susan: I grew up in an LDS home where that's what brought me to know my divinity, to know my heavenly parents, and to know Christ. So I have such an ah for our tradition because that's where I met God. That was just always, I felt so anchored in that through my life that it really helped me through all the hard things that we've been through. We've been through lots of hard things. But when you have that anchor, that was a beautiful thing. So I think that will come through and some other things we're going to talk about, but go ahead.

Bill: I'm sure my little journey was a little disruptive to Susan.

Jody: Yeah, that's what I was curious about. Were you concerned, Susan? Did it feel like he was pushing away from the church? Or what was it like for you?

Susan: Bill was just, he's a real spiritual person. So I always just had faith in that we would have the Spirit with us. We did. I think that that's one of the important things that we've learned on this faith journey is that if we can help. That's why this tradition is so important to both of us.

Bill: Susan's long term. She takes a long view. She's full of hope and faith. So yeah. It's like the little deviations in the short term tend to even out with the energy that she brings to life. So yeah.

Susan: My mom has this saying. She always says eternity is a long time.

Jody: Yeah.

Bill: Yeah. There was a time when I would sit in church a lot and just like feel a little bit like on the margins, even though I was participating. But that was the case for a number of years. We moved to a new community, and I had this really interesting experience that I think was formative and maybe formed our idea for Faith Matters. Do you want to tell that?

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Susan: Yeah. It was like 1990, so 33 years ago, and we moved to this new community and into this ward where we had probably like six really bright couples that were faithful members and also exquisite seekers. When they go to gospel doctrine, they would want to ask questions and talk about things. That was really disruptive.

Bill: They were asking some really disruptive questions.

Jody: I love it. I wish I would have been there.

Susan: He didn't know what to do. So he disinvited them from the gospel doctrine class.

Jody: Oh, okay.

Susan: Not too long thereafter, we got a new bishop. He called Bill and I in and asked us to be the gospel essentials teachers.

Bill: To be fair, so he was our neighbor.

Susan: To invite, and to invite these couples in. So we had a class, and we had two rules. One was that all of our classrooms were centered in Christ, and all questions are welcome. But no bagging the church. This was an intention to stay centered in Christ. So that class was, it taught us a lot. We just, the class grew and grew. I feel like it's so interesting because now only like five years ago we threw this out into the universe. It's like hey, we had a space that centered in Christ and questions are welcomed.

Bill: Yeah, we created a unique space in the ward with the blessing of the bishop, which was really cool. I don't know how often that happens. Yeah, it was this space for like an open exploration, honest conversations about the biggest questions, right?

So sometimes those are hard questions, but always in a way that opened on to something bigger. We had this rule. For every, this is the Gottman ratio rule, which we still apply. Like this still holds at Faith Matters. For every critical thing you say, you need to be saying five or six positive

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things. Otherwise, you're not in a healthy relationship. We might talk about that a little bit. Yeah.

Jody: So that's true even if we're questioning programs in the church, for example, or the way things are handled. I feel like it always is handled with a lot of respect. So not that there isn't room for criticism and improvement, but then we follow it up with the five or six things we like, things we approve of, right?

Because it does keep your head in the space of we're all on the same team here trying to achieve the same mission. It's easy to get off of that and turn into victims and villains and good guys and bad guys. That's not what we're trying to do. We're not trying to go to war here.

Bill: Yeah. I mean that's the truth in any relationship. If you want to have a healthy relationship, you need to be focusing on the good things about their relationship. It's not that you can't. It's not that there aren't negative things. It's not that that ratio isn't five to zero or six to zero. It's five to one. There's still room for that.

I think there's a metaphor that we've adopted, and it comes from, it actually comes from Michael Wilcox who's a great LDS teacher and writer. He was a guest on our podcast some time ago. He introduced this metaphor of the compass. That metaphor has like become hugely important to us.

This is not the compass that tells you north and south. This is the drawing compass. The one where you got the pointy foot on a page, and then you can draw circles with the searching foot. The searching for it has the pencil attached to it, right? You can draw increasingly wider circles. That's sort of the idea behind the restoration is to draw these like increasingly wider circles, and circumscribing all truth into one gray hole. So that's been a metaphor that's become really meaningful for us.

Susan: Yeah. I actually love Michael Wilcox. He's Jared Halverson's uncle, you know?

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Jody: I didn't know that. I love him too.

Susan: Yeah. He said this, and I love it. God has been speaking to his children all the time. Every way he can, everywhere. I can hear his voice in the voice of the sage or a philosopher or a poet or playwright. God's voice is like an orchestra. We believe in a God that is speaking all the time, everywhere, everywhere he can. I love that. The orchestra reminds me of the body of Christ, and how we are all so important. I think if everyone could fill that in a ward that we would have so much more, if we thought about it like an orchestra.

Jody: Bill, you mentioned that one time in a conversation we had, the three of us had over breakfast just about what is the church. Will you speak to that point because it's been really profound for me and anyone I've shared it with.

Bill: Typically, when we speak of the church, I think most people conceive of that as like this thing outside of us. It's that institution that maybe resides in Salt Lake City led by these men. When we speak about it like that, it's hard to be in a relationship with that kind of thing, right? It's difficult.

But if we look at the church as us. Instead of talking about the church, look at it as our church, we can begin to look at it like the body of Christ, of which we are each a member. Something that exists in this like very intimate relationship, but also that needs to be cared for.

So what does it look like to have a fixed foot? One example is with that fixed foot, we're really exploring our own tradition more deeply. Right? What would that look like in what Faith Matters does? One of the first books we published was a book by Terryl. It was the first book published by Fiona and Terryl Givens, and it was called *All Things New*. The subtitle was like rethinking sin, salvation, and everything in between. So we're like that's a really bold thing to do, right?

Jody: Yeah.

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Bill: But they're the perfect people to do it. So we're actually looking at our religious vocabulary, and first of all, pointing out that it's possible to get stuck in some ideas in a religious vocabulary that we may have inherited early on in the church. We grew up in sort of this Protestant environment.

So part of the restoration project should be to renew and reinvigorate and recast that language. In their book, they point out like how we got to where we are in the first half. Then in the second half, they look at all of these like basic gospel principles. Like salvation and atonement. Like what it has meant, but what it could mean in the restoration.

Just by looking at these in our basic language and principles and reexamining them, we can breathe new life into them. That's part of the project of the restoration. Something that happens all the time. So every generation in the restoration gets to renew and sort of recast the restoration in new terms. That's one of the things that's really beautiful about our faith is that it challenges us to do that. It's not like some static thing, but we can let it get static. We can get stuck.

So yeah, you do the same kind of work in the book that you published, in *Better Than Happy*, in kind of the same sort of thing. We published this book called *Restoration* by Patrick Mason. Patrick just looks at what is restoration and gathering? What does that mean? Those books have actually been hugely influential. They've sold a lot of copies.

We're beginning to see as reason of that sort of a shift in the way we use some of these words and the way we think about them. So that's like the fixed foot.

Jody: Yeah. What about the searching foot?

Bill: Yeah, the searching foot. So Brigham Young said our religion embraces all truth, wherever found in all the works of God and man. He was really riffing on Joseph Smith. That's what, I mean, Joseph Smith is all in on that enterprise. I was wondering if Joseph Smith had lived long

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enough, if he had encountered, for example, a wider world, Buddhism, for example. What would he have done with that?

He was the ultimate like embracer of truth. Then he had figured out oh, how can that fit into our tradition? How can we take the gifts of that? So that's part of the enterprise of Faith Matters too. This is one example of this. Have you had Thomas McConkie on your show?

Jody: Yeah, a couple of times. Yeah. He's great.

Bill: Okay, Yeah. Okay, we just finished a new book that he wrote. This is like Thomas who kind of had this journey into the Buddhist world, and really immersed himself deeply in that. Then at some point says he left Mormonism because something about it broke down for him. Then he kind of comes back from this Buddhist world and says oh, I can actually reembrace the tradition of my youth with like new eyes, but I can bring these gifts from these things that I've learned. This is, I think, what Joseph Smith would have done, right?

So he's writing this book where these two worlds come together? How can as a Latte-day Saint, how can I embrace the gifts that come from the Buddhist tradition? It ends up being a terrific book.

Jody: I'm sure.

Bill: But that would be an example. But we also we embrace things like developmental psychology, which I know you're very much interested in. Which can get into the conversation of stages of faith and like a spiritual journey and what it looks like through stages. I think maybe we can talk about the little project that we did together.

Jody: Yeah, just one thing. Then we'll dive into that. I just want to make sure to close the loop for people. So you went from this gospel essentials class in your ward back to kind of your roots, and feeling the power of what you're able to create there, and then decided we could do this on a broader scale.

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Susan: I think we just always longed for a space like that. There wasn't one. So about five years ago, we just kind of threw that out in the world. Wow, we just attracted just some of the best minds and souls that we've ever met. So.

Bill: Yeah. It's quite a cast of characters. Kind of the best and brightest. It's not us. Like they just sort of gravitated to this idea. Also we're at a time now where because of podcasts and YouTube and social media, like these things are, it's possible to have these larger, much larger conversations. So part of it was just what wasn't possible 20/30 years ago.

But we yearned for this space to exist and then we sort of helped bring it into existence. There's so many powerful things. Like look what you're doing, bringing these remarkable insights doing wonderful things in the world. So that's what this is about. We don't have anything particular to offer other than like creating the platform and letting people like you.

Jody: I would disagree with that. But what you're doing is organizing these events and providing the space and the handling the logistics along with the knowledge and wisdom experience that you bring is a big thing. I'm always happy to participate in things like this. I'm like I don't want to be in charge though.

Even on my own meetings in my business, I'll have meetings with people on my team or my contractors. Every time the meeting starts, I'm like who's in charge? They all know I'm not going to be in charge.

Susan: Just a note. We're not in charge. Like we have good people that are.

Bill: Yeah.

Jody: Well, I know, at this point. But okay. So one area that's been really relevant, especially in recent years, is this topic of some people would call it a faith crisis. Other times, it's simply some tensions, I think, is the word we've used. Some tension and discomfort in your faith. You described your

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own experience as being just feeling that it was somewhat incomplete, or it felt smaller than the spirituality you wanted. So let me just tee this up here.

I think it was, you texted me, Bill. Is that what happened? He texted me saying, or maybe called me, saying, I feel like coaching is a really powerful tool. You'd seen the power of coaching. You said I feel like it could be a really powerful tool to help people navigate these tensions in their faith. What if we created some kind of a project to try to help people through this faith journey? We use coaching as the main tool to guide them.

Of course, I said I agree. Coaching is the way. I am a hammer, and everything looks like a nail now to me. But I have actually coached a lot of people through this topic, and have seen the power of it. One of the things I love about coaching, and I've been through my own journey of up and down with my own testimony, of course.

I remember feeling the same way when I was down with it of like I wish there was a place I could talk about this without feeling like the person I'm talking to has an agenda, either of keeping me in the church or encouraging me to leave the church. I need a place where I can think it through and talk it out loud with someone that doesn't have such an agenda. We really tried to create that experience with the course that we then partnered on.

Bill: Yeah, and I think it is true that a good portion of our audience at some point has come to feel some tension in their relationship with the church. Right? I think that's a.

Susan: Yeah, well I was telling you Bill, I mean, I love coaching on relationships. I said the deeper and more complex our relationships are, they can help us really grow. Or we can just become just bitter and closed off. So this relationship to our church, it's really complex, right?

So I think we maybe don't even understand all the layers of complexity that we have. But once we realize that it is relationship then you are able to help

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us see how we can look at that relationship in a cleaner way and a more conscious way.

Bill: Yeah, I mean, what we do tends to have the effect of helping people see a path forward, usually in the faith, but certainly on their journey of faith. Usually within like maybe it helps them redefine in a more healthy way what their relationship is with the church. So yeah, that was the idea behind this.

So we got, what, ten people together for two days, all people who like volunteered who said yeah, I have some degree of tension in my relationship with the church. Can we talk about this? We treated it like a relationship. How do you care for a relationship?

I love that, like you said, there was no agenda here. I mean, maybe at the end of this two days, people have said yeah, maybe it's time for me to step back from that relationship, or maybe they come to a different conclusion. But how would you characterize those two days we spent together?

Susan: Yeah, I want to hear from you, Jody, how you, because you coached a lot on these topics. How did you feel about this course?

Jody: I always feel so much gratitude and love for the people, the attendees, to me they're my clients for those two days. Because I know how much courage it requires to be willing to be that vulnerable. With coaching, we really do dive into what's true and what's real that's going on for you. It can feel scary to talk about that stuff, even just out loud yourself, let alone in front of a group of people. They all knew that we were recording this to create a course to try to serve a much broader audience.

So some of them have some really tough situations, really personal challenges that are triggering some of these faith tensions, really legitimate questions and concerns or trauma. So I always just leave, first of all, so appreciative because it's through hearing other people's stories, even if we don't have their same experience. We have to hear specific, real life, I

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think, situations in order to get the benefit of seeing oh, I'm thinking about it in a similar way, even if I don't have the same experience.

Bill: Yeah.

Susan: That's what's powerful about listening to your coaching. I would say anyone that hasn't been listening to your coaching, it's so helpful. Because when you're listening to someone else's story, it's not as personal and emotional. So you can get so much power over your thoughts by listening to someone else.

Bill: Or when it's not so energized. Yeah, yeah.

Jody: Yeah, for sure. All right, go ahead Bill.

Bill: Yeah. But I also think the putting yourself, the way you did this course, it's pretty easy to insert yourself in this group and imagine yourself as part of it. So that was very skillfully done. I think one of the things you did is that language shift from faith crisis to faith journey de-energizes some of that like crisis energy.

Like if you really do, and that's what you helped walk them through. Let's consider this a journey. Like maybe nothing's gone wrong here. Creating a framework, sort of a developmental framework, which you use the Fowler stages of faith, to kind of march through what that journey can look like in your life. I think that was super helpful as well.

So the conversation around the church though, wasn't that interesting? How people perceive the church and then trying to make that shift to seeing it, actually, as not something outside of them, but something that they're actually in relationship with and they are a part of. That shift from the church to our church or my church was a really powerful shift for the people involved.

So but it didn't happen immediately. Like you could see people resisting that notion, right? Because some of them have a lot of baggage around the church. We added a lot of resources in addition to that to sort of flesh out

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this course, including some of the questions that people ask. We've tried to provide ways to engage some of those questions. So, I think what we ended up with is this really rich resource that it can help clarify a lot of things.

Susan: A lot of things. I remember when participants said, you were pushing them on this idea, one of their stories. They said, "Wow, that is my third epiphany of the day." Anyway, it's really a valuable course, and thank you so much.

Jody: Yeah. I think that even just going through that experience, the things that I had to learn to prepare for it, and then the insights I had as we talked through it. I wouldn't describe myself, right now anyway, as being in the thick of a struggle with my faith, but it really shifted, for me, the way I view people who are going through that.

So I highly recommend, obviously, if you're having some tensions or concerns, this is going to be a powerful course for you. But even if you're not, if you know anyone else who is or think you might, if you're a church leader who's going to encounter this, I highly recommend.

Because I noticed, one of the most profound things I learned from Fowler and his stages of faith was how tempting it is to judge one another. Right? If I'm in a stage of faith where I'm not questioning, where I'm feeling pretty good and comfortable with it, it's easy to look at those who are questioning as maybe being just not obedient enough or not having enough faith. There's a certain temptation to move into judgment there.

If I am in a phase where I'm questioning and pushing back, it's easy to judge those who aren't as naive, uneducated, not well read, blind sheep. That is the temptation is to judge either way. Which, of course, is never useful. It's not ultimately who any of us really want to be. So just really diving in and understanding what is going on from a psychological standpoint. Why is it that some people struggle and others don't? To me was really eye opening and profound.

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I found myself then, I taught a fireside in my stake on it, did a course in my coaching program on it. Because I just feel it takes it from being a faith crisis, where nobody knows what to say to each other and everybody's afraid, into a faith journey. Which can still be uncomfortable, but it's a useful kind of discomfort. It's that clean pain we talk about that actually refines us and expands us and is part of the restoration for each of us personally, I believe.

Bill: Yeah.

Susan: Jodi, one thing you say that I always try to remember is that whenever we're in judgment, we're not in curiosity. So anytime when I find myself in judgment, I just try to think be curious about people and what they're going through. I just love that. So that's one of the.

Bill: Which actually explains why someone who may not be themselves, like in some sort of tension with the church, but they have a family member. I can imagine a couple going through this. I could imagine it would have been nice for us to have this resource 30/40 years ago.

But I can imagine if you have a loved one that you want to understand what they're going through and maybe even be constructive in the process of what they're going through, I think this course could be really helpful. So yeah. Jody just comes, just shows up. Jody gets nothing from this. In fact, she like wouldn't even let us pay her airfare here, if I remember, to do it.

Jody: Yeah, all the proceeds of this course will go to Faith Matters, either to cover the production costs or support the foundation. You guys are a nonprofit foundation. Tim and Aubrey donate money, and I donate time. So that is my way of contributing to a cause that I believe strongly and support. So if people want to purchase this course, what did we come up with for the final title? Your Faith Journey?

Bill: Your Faith Journey, yeah.

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Jody: Your Faith Journey. See, I know what it's called. Where will it be, I think by the time this podcast airs, it will be available to people. Where do they go to get it?

Bill: Yeah, I mean, go to our website. It'll be on our website.

Jody: You'll head to FaithMatters.org to grab that course, Your Faith Journey, and we'll link in the show notes directly to it. Bill and Susan, thank you so much for your time. Thanks for coming on.

Bill: We'll see you in a few weeks.

Jody: I'll see you at Restore. I cannot wait.

Susan: It's so fun to hang out and hear your presentation. Thank you, Jody.

Jody: Thank you.

Bill: We love what you do. I keep going back. When I feel my thoughts becoming a little unhealthy, or like I start, I don't know something, I have to go back and start listening to coaching calls. It's amazing. Like okay, I go to Be Bold or whatever. I'm like oh yeah, okay. Really it's so helpful.

Susan: You need to do it every day.

Bill: You need to do it every day. Yeah.

Jody: That's what I think. I mean, real quick. I know we were out of time. But I remember when we started working together on publishing my book. So Bill really, and both of you dove in, but I think Bill was being exposed to some of it for the first time. You were great and so supportive and loved it. Then remember, I did like a coaching week that I think Susan you and some of your daughters signed up for, and then you heard coaching. Don't you think it's so, it just takes everything to the next level to hear it actually in a coaching format from just hearing the concepts and the tools?

Susan: That's the power. For sure.

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Jody: Because I remember Bill then said to me I feel like we need to get coaching in the book somehow. Like we need people to experience that. We did. There's coaching in that book. Yeah.

Bill: Yeah, there is. Yeah, which is key.

Jody: All right. Thanks, you two.

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