

453: Leveraging Cognitive Dissonance



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With Your Host

Jody Moore

[Better Than Happy](#) with Jody Moore

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Welcome to episode 453, Leveraging Cognitive Dissonance. If you're familiar with the term 'cognitive dissonance' from the world of psychology, you may think of it as a negative thing or a sign of something off, and it can be. But it can also be an awesome way to leverage the way your mind works naturally to create something extraordinary. Today I'm teaching you how to put this part of human nature to work in your favor.

Welcome to *Better Than Happy*. I'm Jody Moore and I'll be your coach today.

Hello, everybody, welcome to the podcast. I have a very fun message in store for you today and I think you're going to love all about cognitive dissonance. Before we get into it, I want to remind you that we have a podcast hotline and I want to thank everybody who has called in with comments or questions. I love so much hearing your voice. I love feeling like I'm not just talking to myself here.

So if you have a comment or especially a question, I'm going to be doing some more episodes pretty soon here where I address questions. You can leave me a message at 1888 HI JODY M. Second of all, if you've been considering joining The Lab, I want to encourage you to do it right now because I'm going to be closing the doors for a little bit here to new clients. So this is your last chance to get in for a little while. The reason why is because I want to take everybody that comes in and take really good care of you.

I want to really hold your hand and spend some quality time with you, especially in the beginning as we get you up and running with these tools. I don't know why, but for some reason I've just been feeling a call towards doing some more intimate coaching than what I've been doing for the past few years. So one of the ways I want to do that is in The Lab. So I have a brand new five week program, you're going to go through with me. And it's called The Instant Win Formula and it's for everybody who's new in The Lab so that I can really get to know you.

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You will have plenty of opportunity to ask me questions or come on and talk to me because this will be an intimate group. And I just want to, like I said, really spend some quality time with you getting you up to speed on how to use these tools in your life. So that's going to be an amazing program, The Instant Win Formula. You have to join me in The Lab to get it. And like I said, within the next, I think, week of when this podcast airs, we're going to close the doors for a little while. So jump in right now at jodymoore.com/thelab.

The other thing that's going to be happening soon is I have two new higher end intimate deep dive programs. And we will have more information coming, but seats will be very limited for both, because like I said, I want to work a little bit more closely with people. And so we'll open those spots up first to people in The Lab. One of them is going to be around reversing pre diabetes. This has been a big focus of mine for the last little while. And I'm so excited about the success I'm having, some of the strategies and tools I've discovered.

And I know there are many of you out there who are struggling with this topic as well. I'm still doing some of that work, so you'll be doing it along with me. But that's going to be an awesome and again very limited, very intimate program. The second one is going to be for coaches who want to really nail down their offer and their niche and how they're going to get clients. So again, both of those will have more information coming soon, but we will open it up first and foremost to members of The Lab. So make sure you're in there if you want at all to join either of those.

Okay, so let's talk about cognitive dissonance, shall we? Let's begin with the definition. This definition comes from the website medicalnewstoday.com. I feel like it's a great definition. It says, 'cognitive dissonance is the discomfort a person feels when their behavior does not align with their values or beliefs.' I love how simple and clear that definition is. Probably also love that that's the way it was first defined for me, and the way that I think about it today,

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I want to tell you the first time I really became aware of cognitive dissonance and the power of it was when I was in college at an institute class. So for those of you who aren't members of my faith, institute is a religious institution that we have at a lot of colleges where there are a lot of LDS kids and you can take classes that are religious based. And so in this class, the teacher taught us that cognitive dissonance is exactly what I just described to you.

If your behaviors and your beliefs don't line up the way you said it was, you will either change your beliefs or you'll change your behaviors until they do line up to get out of that dissonance. And he followed it up with, this is probably why we're constantly reminded of the importance of reading our scriptures, going to church, listening to conference. It's not that we don't understand the principles of our religion. It's that we want to make sure that we continue to reinforce our beliefs because at times our behaviors won't line up with that. We will all make mistakes.

We will all sometimes indulge in behaviors that aren't in alignment with our principles and values. And then we will either change our beliefs or change our behaviors until they line back up again, thanks to the way amazing, brilliant heavenly parents created us. So if we keep reinforcing the beliefs, then we're more likely to change behaviors that don't serve us in the end. Do you see what I'm saying?

So that really landed for me for some reason. The way he said it, really simply was, if you're sending and reading your scriptures. You're either going to stop sending or you're going to stop reading your scriptures. So just keep reading your scriptures. Really interesting, simple way to think about it. So I want to take this principle though, and I want us to apply it to a lot of other areas of our lives and I want to talk about how to use it as leverage to really help you grow and evolve and create more of what you want. So here's how I like to think about it.

A lot of the coaching we do is around the belief line and this is why actually, it's because of cognitive dissonance. If you tell me that you're not capable of making money and I can coach you to a place where you believe that

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maybe you could make money and then eventually I can coach you to a place where you believe, of course, I can make money. Then guess what will happen with your behaviors? You will react accordingly. So we spend a lot of time there, but there's another way to think about it as well.

You can change behaviors and stick with the behavior that you want. And because of cognitive distance, your beliefs will eventually catch up unless you quit the behavior. This is why, I didn't realize this at the time, I wouldn't have articulated it this way. But when I first started my business 10 years ago, I told myself, the only way I fail is if I quit. So I'm just going to keep going. I didn't put a lot of pressure on myself in terms of what results I had to create or by what timeline.

I insisted on having fun along the way. Luckily, that wasn't that hard for me to do because I love coaching so much, I could talk about it forever. But even with learning technology and marketing, as much as possible I tried to enjoy the process. But I just kept telling myself, if we just don't quit trying to become a successful entrepreneur, then there's no way we won't. And that was true, because even though I didn't believe in the beginning that I was a successful entrepreneur, my behaviors were as though I was. Here's what I mean.

I went to work during the set hours. I think in the beginning I worked three days a week because I was still having babies and I had little ones at home and things, so I wanted to be with them. So I said, "I'll work three days a week and probably six hours a day on those three days," very part-time. But I, in my mind I was like, I'm going to succeed at this, and I chose to believe that. And so I chose to show up and sit down at my desk and 'go to work,' even though I had no clients to coach.

And I should say, I chose to believe that it was possible. I really wanted to believe I am successful, but I had to believe first it's possible to be successful to get there. So I think that's okay. My point is, my behaviors were that of somebody who is successful. Now that I have a bunch of clients and I have a team, even if I don't show up to work then there are people on my team who aren't getting what they need from me. Or there

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are clients who are waiting and don't have a coach showing up for their call.

So not showing up to work is really not an option for me now unless it's a scheduled day off. If I say I'm going to do something, I've got people waiting on me, I'm going to follow through. But in the beginning that wasn't the case. I had to just pretend, I just had to do the behaviors that I thought I would be doing once I was successful. And what do you know, my brain caught up and the world outside me caught up. It all happens at the same time, as is often the case.

I'm not opposed to you starting with the behavior you want to change. Change the behavior you want to change. What I do want you to know is that it's going to feel uncomfortable. It's going to feel negative. It might feel scary. It might feel overwhelming. You might feel like a fraud. You might be like, "I have imposter syndrome." You might feel guilty. Your brain might try to tell you that you shouldn't be doing what you're doing or I don't know, all kinds of negative emotions can be part of cognitive dissonance.

That's why I like that word dissonance, because we don't even have to pinpoint exactly what it is. If we just go, "This is just dissonance because I'm behaving in a way that doesn't line up with my beliefs and values and so it feels uncomfortable and there's a wrestle here." But if I keep behaving in that way, eventually my brain will catch up. And the outside world, the results I'll create will catch up as well, making it, of course, then easier to believe.

What most people do though is, we change a behavior without realizing I'm going to have to also change my belief about myself. And I'll give you some examples in a minute. But we don't realize that the mental work is an important part of the process. We just try to change the behavior and we use willpower. And some willpower is going to be necessary. But then if I don't do the mental work, at some point I come along and self-sabotage. Have you ever experienced this? Have you ever lost a bunch of weight and then went back and regained it all plus some? I have.

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Have you ever created a successful business only to then see it go right down? Have you pursued a degree in school only to drop out? And again, sometimes we have valid reasons for these things, but I'm just saying, self-sabotage is a real thing and it's so fascinating. Why do we do that? Well, it's because if we're not doing the mental work along the way then we will eventually change either our beliefs or our behaviors until the two line up again, it's because of cognitive dissonance.

This is why just changing the external result doesn't do it. I think just changing the external result is probably the worst way to get there. Because if you change your behaviors, it's probably going to take time for the external results to catch up. Meaning, let's say I want to believe that I'm healthy and I believe right now that I'm not, I believe I'm a person who likes food too much and overeats and whatever. And I want to believe I'm healthy and I can live this way forever.

If I change my behaviors, I start watching what I'm eating, I pay more attention, I eat more of the foods that serve me and less of the ones that don't, maybe I add exercise in there, whatever. I also need to work on the mental side of, I'm a healthy person, I can live this way forever. And it will probably take some time before I'm going to see those changes in my body, before my weight goes down or my glucose is more regulated, or my muscle strength improves, my body composition changes.

Whatever it is you're trying to do, that's going to take some time, which gives me time to nurture the new beliefs if I do it along with changing my behaviors. The problem is, if we just get the external result then we haven't had the time necessary to both change our behaviors and change our beliefs to create what we want.

Here's what I mean. When somebody wins the lottery, you'd think it would be easy then to get out of scarcity and into abundance, to stop thinking, I don't have enough money. I'm not a person who has money. I can't pay my bills, whatever, all those scarcity beliefs. If you win the lottery and you get a big lump sum, wouldn't you think that it would be easy to think, I have

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enough money? I can take care of my needs now. I'm a person who has money. That would be simple to believe. Doesn't it feel that way?

If I gave you a magic pill and you suddenly lost the weight and were healthy and all of the external world, the external results were changed overnight, doesn't it feel like you would believe the new thing? You wouldn't necessarily unless you intentionally did the mental work along the way and ideally learn how to change your behaviors too. This is why people oftentimes, I should say, people who win the lottery end up in financial trouble again.

This is why sometimes you go help someone in whatever way. You might help someone financially. You might help someone solve any other kind of challenge or problem in their life and then they end up right back in that problem again. It's because you coming and helping them is nice. I'm not saying not to help people, but it doesn't change their beliefs about who they are in their mind. And it also doesn't change their behaviors and habits.

So how do we use this to our advantage? Well, first of all, just the awareness of it alone can be really powerful, because if you decide, hey, I want to believe that I'm a person who can, let's say, make money in my business. And your behaviors right now aren't showing that and your results aren't showing that and you don't believe that you are right now. Well, you can either nurture the belief that you are and that's actually not that hard to do.

That's a lot of what we do in coaching is we talk about, well, what makes someone successful, what is required? A brain, access to some information, maybe a computer. Do you have those things? Do you have a desire? Alright, then you could be successful. So we can work on that belief but also just start taking the actions that you think you will take once you're successful.

I will say I'm really grateful to myself for doing this. When I first started this podcast I just chose to believe that I'm a successful podcaster and that a lot of people were going to listen to my podcast. And that wasn't true at all

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in the beginning, but I just aligned my behaviors with that. Meaning I publish an episode every week, period, without fail. I don't miss a week. And in my mind I was like, one day there are going to be tons of people waiting for that episode. I don't want to let them down.

So I remember because I used to do the whole thing on my own. I edited it myself. I uploaded it. I just did it all myself. And I remember certain times because I've always released on Fridays, I can remember being in bed on Thursday night and realizing I forgot to upload the podcast or I forgot to edit it even. Sometimes even I forgot to record it.

And I remember getting out of bed at 11 o'clock at night when everyone else in my house was already in bed asleep. And getting my microphone and recording or getting my headphones and my laptop in my bed and editing and then uploading and going, "Phew, I did it on time." And the truth is, there weren't very many people listening in the beginning, no one really would have cared. But I behaved as though, and eventually I then believed it and then the outside world caught up with me. Do you see what I'm saying?

So listen, you've got to know that there's going to be dissonance as you grow and evolve. If you want to believe that you're a good parent, if you want to believe that you can find a partner, whether that be a romantic partner, a spouse. Or you want to believe that you have lots of friends, you want to believe that you have a full social life. Allow yourself the dissonance between where you are and where you want to be. And you can work on the beliefs but I'd like you to also take the action at the same time, take the action, and notice the discomfort.

I'll tell you what, I'm going to actually do this today. I'm going to execute this myself and I would encourage you to find a way to execute it as well. Because I like to strengthen my ability to be in dissonance and to not hurry and rush out of it back to wherever I was, but to get out of it by growing. That's what we're trying to do. We're trying to evolve through the dissonance, we won't stay in it forever. But if we keep the behaviors,

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eventually our beliefs catch up or we work on our beliefs. And we don't want to sabotage in the end so we have to do both of those things.

But my point is, the more you allow yourself into that space, the more you know, yeah, this is just what happens. This is what Brené Brown calls the messy middle. I think I'm using that term the way she would use it. I don't know. That's the way I would think about it. So what I'm going to do today is go to the gym. Now, it's not that I don't go to the gym. I've been going to the gym for a very long time. In fact, I used to teach group fitness classes at a gym in California. But I have always been a person who goes to classes. I love classes. I have had some of the most amazing teachers. I love a turbo kick class.

I was just thinking the other day about step aerobics. Do you guys remember step aerobics? I remember in college going to step aerobics and loving it and even before step aerobics, just old school aerobics. We were doing ponies and sashays and things like that, and I have always loved a fitness class. But what I really have almost, I could count on one hand the number of times I've done is go out on the weight floor and use those machines or lift those weights. And I just walk right past all of that into the classes.

Now, it doesn't bother me, I just don't think about it at all. I don't think of myself as somebody who knows my way around the gym or knows how to use those machines or knows what to do with those weights. And yet that's not entirely true. I have weights at home, I can use those. But to be in front of other people who have been doing this a long time, who know what they're doing. I don't know the etiquette. I don't know the proper usage. There's so many things I don't know. And I'm going to go to that gym and not go to a class.

I actually tried to find a class and there's not one today, but not during the times I can go anyway. So I was like, "Alright. I'm just going to go to the weight floor and I'm going to let myself be in cognitive dissonance." Because in my mind I'm not a person who knows what to do on the weight floor or who looks how you're supposed to look on the weight floor or any of

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those. I'm not that person, but I'm going to go behave as though I am. I'm going to go figure it out. I'm also not going to be afraid to ask for help if I need to.

But I'm going to be a person who goes to the gym and lifts weights. That's going to be uncomfortable and I'm all in because first of all, I want to become a person who can do that, who becomes comfortable with it, who is strong, who regularly lifts weights. But second of all, I want to get better at being in a state of cognitive dissonance on purpose, choosing it on purpose. And working on both the behaviors and the beliefs so that I evolve myself in a useful way.

I want to encourage you to do the same. What are you going to try out? What's something that kind of scares you, something that makes you a little nervous, something you want to try but you're afraid to? Do that thing and expect cognitive dissonance to come with you because you're a mentally healthy adult. And I would love to hear how it goes. I'm going to report back on how it goes at the gym. Stay tuned. Thanks for joining me everybody. I'll see you next time.

If you find the podcast to be helpful you're going to love The Lab. *In Better Than Happy: The Lab* we experiment with applying all of it in your real life. Whether you're in the middle of a challenge and ready for some relief or you're ready to commit to pursuing your dream goals and making them a reality, come join me in the lab at jodymoore.com/thelab. That's jodymoore.com/thelab.