

464: Perseverance



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With Your Host

Jody Moore

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We've all had the experience of being really excited about a goal or a habit we want to start or stop. We're committed and motivated and we follow through really well for a couple of weeks at the most, and then we 'fall off the wagon'. I have really good news for you today. There is no wagon. There is just your human brain doing what healthy human brains do. Today we're going to talk through why this pattern is so common. And of course, what you can do to compensate for it in order to create the life you desire. Are you ready? This is episode 464, Perseverance. Here we go.

This is *Better Than Happy*. I'm your coach, Jody Moore. And on this podcast, my objective, just so we're clear, is to change what you've been taught and have likely believed about yourself up until now. Here's what I believe about you. I believe that what you think is real is mostly imagined. And what you imagine is actually creating what's real. I believe that in the ways you desire to achieve, you 100% have the capacity to succeed.

And finally, I believe that joy, love, and miracles are your God-given natural state of being. And any time you feel far from them, the way back is much simpler than you think, but that's about to change. Are you ready? Let's do this.

Hello, everybody, welcome to this episode. Today's episode comes from one of the questions I got from one of you through our phone in Ask Jody Anything hotline. So, if you have a question you want to send me, the number is 1-888-HI-JODY-M. And you're welcome to send me a question. In just a minute I'm going to play that question for you and I want to thank the person that sent it in.

First, I want to just talk to all of you who are in The Lab with me. The Lab is where we take the work here on this podcast, and we apply it to actually make our lives exponentially better. I hope you're doing that kind of application just listening to the podcast. But if you ever want to come and join us in The Lab, I promise you, you will get 10X the results that you're getting by just listening to the podcast.

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So, for those of you in The Lab I just wanted to give you a little preview as to what's coming this summer. Summer is, for many of us, kind of a time when we're off of our usual schedule, maybe you have kids home from school or maybe something changes about your job. Maybe you just want to be able to travel more or have a little more leisurely time, a little more daylight and sunshine.

And so, we kind of wanted to mix things up a little bit in The Lab for summer and do a really fun, I don't know, we're going to do summer of style. So rather than do kind of what is sometimes some of the more heavy lifting work that we need to do on our own brains and our own just self-image and our relationships and our money. And some of those things that's important that we want to do but it can feel like heavy lifting. We're going to do something really light and fun, summer of style.

Now, here's the beautiful thing. As we start diving in, I'm going to teach this in a totally different way than you've ever been taught about style before. We're going to do it in the months of June and July because I'm teaching at the end of June, so you'll probably implement most of it in July. We're going to do, prepare your closet. So, we're going to do a little bit of decluttering, but again, in a totally different way than you've probably been taught to declutter before.

And that's going to allow us to get inside your head and take a look at some of the thoughts and beliefs and stories that are keeping your closet and your life more cluttery than maybe what you want. Then in July, we're going to move into defining your style. I want you to understand what personal style is and how to choose it with more intention. How to discover what you like, not just what you like for yourself and your style, not just what you appreciate when you take a look around outside of you.

And then finally in August, we're going to do shopping with intention. This is something I have had to work on a lot in my life, not just shopping to try to escape my life or because I need a hit of dopamine in some way, but actually shopping with intention. And we're going to be doing some giveaways. I'm going to have discounts and gift cards to give away. And I'm

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going to be sharing all my favorite stuff that I like to buy for my style personally and it's going to be a lot of fun.

So don't miss summer of style in The Lab. If you want to join us, you can head to jodymoore.com/thelab. And you can just join us for summer of style if you want, if that's all you want to do. That's the great thing about The Lab, you can come and go as you please. Okay, so to kick things off here, let's go ahead and listen to the question that somebody left me, that is the topic of today's episode.

Hi Jody. I have a question about perseverance. I have listened to a lot of your podcasts and I love them and I feel like they're so motivating and have really changed my life for the better. I keep coming back to the same issue I've been having with being able to stick to something and to persevere when it gets hard. For example, budgeting and dieting and really any goal I set, I come up with a plan and I'm motivated and I'm excited. And I start it and I do really well for a week or two.

And then it's almost like this self-destructive button gets pushed and I get tired and I'm worn out. And I think, oh, this is too hard. Is it really worth it? And it's just this cycle where I fall off all of the goals and things that I have set. After a little while I realize okay, what am I doing? This isn't helping. And then I restart and I set more goals and want to stick to a budget and want to be healthy and fit and do really well for a couple of weeks and then life happens.

My kids wake up early so that I'm not able to work out or I end up splurging and I ruin our budget and I just get deflated and then it's hard to stick to it. And I'm just wondering if there are any skills or principles that you would share that could help when we get to those points in our lives, that can help me persevere and just push through it and stick to what I set to improve myself? I feel like I'm just constantly restarting and I'm not making the progress I'd like to make. Thank you so much and I really enjoy listening to all your podcasts.

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Good question. Can you relate to this? Do you have this same question? I can certainly relate to this. Okay, so before I dive in and answer what are my suggestions, it's important that we understand why this happens, because that's going to give you a lot of leverage over yourself, just understanding why. So, remember, our brains are amazing, complicated brains have lots of functions, but at its core, it's most important job, the job that will override any other job if necessary is to keep us alive.

And keeping us alive to the brain looks like trying to achieve three goals. In no particular order, the three goals are, one, seek pleasure, two, avoid pain and three, save energy. So, when I say pleasure, pain and energy, we're talking about physical and mental or emotional. So, our brains seek pleasure because traditionally, if we think about basic primal survival, when we think about before we had modern society and all the conveniences and luxuries that we have today, things that were pleasurable were good for our survival.

In other words, staying with a tribe and feeling connected and feeling warm but not too hot. Regulating our body temperature is pleasurable. Eating certain foods, like fruit and meat that hasn't gone bad, and vegetables, those things taste good, good for our overall survival. Avoiding pain also was a really useful way for the brain to keep us alive, because if there's some bushes that have lots of thorns and I run through them and get cut. That's not good for my overall survival and it hurts. And so, I try to avoid that.

Emotional pain as well, being embarrassed, being rejected. All of that is traditionally historically not good for my survival. We need a tribe to survive. Still not really good for us to be rejected by a tribe. But anyway, our world today is very different than it was when human beings first had to navigate the world. So, I just want to be clear, I'm not saying all pleasure is good for us and will keep us alive and all pain is bad for us and will lead to our demise in some way. That's not true at all actually, there's plenty of pleasure that's terrible for us.

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And there's a lot of pain that can be good for us when approached in the right way. I'm just saying that's what the brain thinks. The brain thinks, pleasure good, pain bad, and then again saving energy. So, anything that feels too hard, too exhausting, both physically and mentally and emotionally, our brains want to try to avoid. Because our brains think we should save up our energy just in case of some kind of emergency or crisis that we need to be able to get out of or survive in order to not die.

So, this is important to know because this is why we self-sabotage. This motivational triad is really powerful and we can override it temporarily but at some point it kicks in and takes charge. And the worst thing you can do to get yourself back on track is start judging yourself for it, to feel ashamed, to feel bad, to tell yourself that you're never going to be able to change the way you want to or what's the matter with you? The answer is nothing is the matter with you. So that's step one. I just want to bring some awareness to it.

So, the truth is, we're not going to get rid of this part of us, and it wouldn't even be healthy to do so. We're always going to have to manage the delicate balance between the primitive brain that cares about short term pleasure, pain and energy levels. And the prefrontal part of the brain that understands that foregoing some pleasure and enduring some pain and spending some energy can create our best life in the long run, even though it will feel the opposite of what we want in the short run.

We're always going to have to navigate the balance between those two things, which I think is kind of a cool thing. It's tough to do, but I like that it's tough. I like what it requires of us because I think one of the things it requires the most, in my experience of coaching tens of thousands of people, is that it requires that you learn to be compassionate with yourself. Requires that you let go of perfectionism. It requires that you let go of pride and shame. It requires that you be patient, that you can celebrate baby steps.

It requires so many things that are overall really good for us and I think actually make us more like God which is the whole point of being here.

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Patience, perseverance, kindness, compassion, all of those things are God like qualities to me. And in order to balance those two parts of the brain and achieve what we want, we have to develop those attributes.

So, I want to give you five things to think about today when it comes to perseverance of how to balance these two things and how to move forward. The first one is that I want you to be paying attention at all times to your why. So, in this question, the woman who wrote in or who called in, excuse me, talked about budgeting and dieting. Those were the two examples she gave. So I'm going to refer to those two examples. But you apply these to whatever you want to.

Let's talk about budgeting, for example, why might we want to follow a budget? Well, there can be lots of great reasons, but there can actually be some reasons that may not serve you and this is personal. I wish I could just give you a list of, these are good reasons, these are bad reasons. I am going to give you some suggestions to consider, but the truth is they're personal. Sometimes I notice that I'm actually kind of unusual when it comes to reasons that are useful for me that create feelings of self-compassion and acceptance and abundance. They don't place you above or below anyone else.

I feel like the most useful reasons are almost not very exciting. Dan Sullivan, I might have talked about this before, but Dan Sullivan has a book called *Wanting What you Want*. And he talks about this, if you just want it just because you want it, that's actually the best reason. If you don't have to justify it with a bunch of things then that's probably your most pure, just desire. It's almost like I can't even describe why I want it. I just want it.

I can't tell you why I am 5' 4, I just am 5' 4. It's how God created me. It's how my body just is. Other than maybe my posture or something, I don't really have much to do with it. And I don't know if that's true, if all of our desires we learn from each other, or if there's pure intrinsic desire. But for me, just thinking of it as I just want this because I want it, can be useful.

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Now, it doesn't have to be that. It can also be, I want to feel more in control of my money. I want to have a healthier relationship with money. I want to not be scared of money. I want to not feel like money is controlling my life. I want to get into a more abundant, more generous, more healthy 'relationship' with money. All of those for most people are going to be really useful reasons. What are not going to be great reasons are things like, then I'll finally be able to feel confident that I'm going to be okay.

Now, I did say that working on your budget, one of the healthy reasons I just named was getting into abundance. But let me back up and correct myself. I want you to get into abundance while you work on budgeting. That's the best way. I guess what I'm saying is if your reason is coming from abundance, for example, there is plenty of money, there are plenty of resources.

Or maybe for me, abundance often sounds like I am capable of getting the things that I need and creating what I need and want in my life. And I don't have to take anything from other people to create it. And I don't have to sacrifice and be unhappy. I don't have to miss out on some part of life in order to create what I want. So, notice that is kind of an abundant mindset. And that can be true when I have a lot of money and it can be true when I have little to no money or a lot of debt. Did you know this? This can be true either way. So, this is why I say examine your why.

And the second component of examining your why is to not be in a rush. Because if I'm in a rush, if I'm impatient with it, if I need to solve this right away, it means that I'm not doing the work of becoming what it is that I ultimately think I'm going to have once I achieve this goal or change this habit. I'm not doing that work along the way.

I'm believing that I have to wait to change something more significant in myself or my world before I can have what I want, which is the feelings of peace, feelings of joy, feelings of happiness, feelings of confidence. All of the feelings that we want to have are available to us right now. And as we try to take action and change things in the world, we want to try to access those feelings. Are you with me? That's the best way to change it.

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And the good news is that it means then you get the reward of feeling how you want to feel before you even get to the finish line. So, any time I'm in a rush and I'm feeling impatient with it, I stop and go, "Wait a second. This hurry that I'm in is because I'm believing once I get to this certain spot then it will be better there and I want to feel better. So let me just pause and remind myself, I can feel better right now." And that is my work to do because that is the way to get there. Do you follow me?

So that's the first thing you have to keep in mind. This is all thought work. This is all happening in your head. This is where I can help you through coaching if you want some guidance and some help on how to get there. But it's examining your why and making sure you're not in a rush, doing the work as you go.

Okay, second thing, baby steps. I know we don't, none of us want to hear this. We're so sick of people saying, "Just be willing to take baby steps and let it take time and celebrate your baby steps." But that is the way to truly create change. What we tend to do is we under-promise and over-deliver to other people and we overpromise and under-deliver to ourselves. And I want you to under-promise and over-deliver to other people and to yourself.

Here's what I mean. If I tell my friend I'm going to meet you every morning for a walk at 5:00am, which just by frame of reference is way before I like to normally get up. Then if I tell my friend, I'm going to meet you every day, then that's going to be a tough commitment for me to honor. And at the same time, I don't want to let my friend down. I don't want to create a negative relationship where my friend feels like they can't trust me and I don't want to be a person who doesn't do what I say I'm going to do.

So, I probably wouldn't if I'm not a morning person, I'm not, so far I've gotten up at 5:00am not very many times this year. So that would probably not make sense for me to commit that to my friend. But I might say, "Listen, why don't we start meeting twice a week, why don't we meet every Tuesday and Thursday at 5:00am? Let's just start there and let me see if I can get that down."

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Now, if we get into a good consistent pattern of that and then I say, “Maybe we want to add another day.” But I’m not going to overpromise and under-deliver to my friend because I value that relationship and I see myself as someone who follows through on what I say I’m going to do. But what do we do to ourselves? The exact opposite.

We tell ourselves. That’s it. I’m never eating dessert again. I’m never going to go to Target and buy something that I don’t need again. I’m never going to do this again, or I’m going to do this every day from now on. I’m going to read my scriptures every day for 10 minutes a day. It sounds so reasonable, some of our overpromises we give ourselves.

How do we know what’s reasonable when it comes to changing a habit here? You take a look at where you are and you ask yourself, what would be a baby step forward? Take a baby step and under-promise and over-deliver to yourself. You can always do more than you said you were going to do. But when we do less, when we don’t follow through on our commitments to ourselves, we do just as much, if not more, damage in that, now we lose trust in ourselves.

We don’t feel like we believe we’re going to do what we say we’re going to do because we’ve shown ourselves that we don’t. So, I would much rather you take baby steps and go back to number one if you’re like, “That’s going to take so long.” So, what, if we give ourselves the reward of feeling how we want, we practice that, we do thought work, we get coaching, we keep our heads in the right space then it doesn’t matter how long it takes. Remember, we’re just doing this because we want to.

We just want to, I don’t know, see what’s possible, see what we could do. Just sounds like it might be a good thing. I don’t even know why. Let’s just see what we could do.

Alright, this leads me to number three, which is, we have to get out of all or nothing thinking. Because even when you give yourself really reasonable expectations and you take baby steps, you’re not going to be perfect at it, you’re just not most likely or I’m not anyway. I’ve never been perfect at

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anything yet, so my guess is I never will be in this lifetime. And this is the brain trying to pull us off track when we miss a day or we overspend in a way we hadn't planned on or we eat some food that we said we weren't going to eat, etc.

And then the brain goes, "Oh, forget it. I'm totally off track now, so I might as well just blow the whole thing." That is all or nothing thinking. If you can't do it all, we might as well do nothing. Now, why does the brain do this? I don't know if it's just simpler to think in binaries like this. Or if it's just that motivational triad working really hard to get us to stop doing this thing that's causing us to forgo pleasure and have to endure some pain and have to think or work harder than what we're used to and want to be able to do. I don't know. All I know is it's common.

I don't know that everybody suffers from it, but most people do. And the brain loves to use it to pull us off track, the motivational triad, the primitive part of the brain loves to use it to sabotage us more or less. So, this is why I teach this concept of shooting for B minus work that I learned from my teacher, Brooke Castillo. She's like, "What if you just told yourself", let's say you have your budget and you're like, "This is how I'm going to spend my money."

And you tell yourself, I'm going to aim for 100%. I'm going to aim for getting an A on this but I'm going to celebrate myself if I'm getting at least a B minus. And if I can't get a B minus consistently or better, then I have to go back to step two. I have given myself too big of a step that I'm actually not ready to take. Now, I'm not talking about the first two weeks or the first two days, however long you last. In the beginning you could probably do way more.

But I'm talking about, could I, for the next year, commit to this. And if it gets easier after a month, you can change it, you can step up your expectations. But I'm just saying, what am I willing to commit to because any of us can do something for two weeks with willpower. But we're not trying to use willpower here. We're trying to truly change our habits or behaviors. So, you have to get away from all or nothing thinking.

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Remember, I'm aiming for an A, but I'm celebrating and congratulating myself if I get at least a B minus. If I get below that on occasion, I say "Hey, hun, what's going on? Seems like we had a hard day today. Did I give you too high of an expectation? Do I need to revisit it or was it just one of those days and we're going to dive back in tomorrow or in the next hour. Was that just a moment and we're going to dive back in now?" Be open to having conversations with yourself about it, but watch out for all or nothing thinking because for most of us it sabotages us.

Okay, number four, accountability. We respond well to accountability. Well, as I say that out loud I'm like, "Do we though? I like Gretchen Rubin's work that talks about different types of accountability and different people that respond differently to different types of accountability. You might want to check that out if you're interested in learning more about that.

But when I took her assessment years ago, it came back that I'm a 'rebel personality', which means I actually don't really respond very well to accountability, both external or my own internal accountability, which I would say that tracks in most cases.

But if it's my idea, if I at all have the thought that this is just something I should do, even if nobody else has really directly said that, I just picked it up from socialization. Or what I see other people doing and I tell myself that I should do this thing then I push back against accountability in pretty significant ways. But if it's genuinely my desire, like I said, I just want to. I have cleaned up any noise I have about whether or not this is to impress other people, or again, it's just something that should be done.

Once I clean all that up and I find just my own, I'm kind of curious about this thing now. I kind of want to see if I'm capable of this. I kind of want to explore this thing. Then I respond really well to accountability. I like having a coach maybe to hold me accountable or a friend to hold me accountable. And I could say, "Hey, let's check in with each other." Just have someone that we're going to talk to every week and say, "Here's how it went."

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You can also hold yourself accountable. And I know people ask me a lot about what does that look like. And it looks the same as it would if I were holding someone else accountable. It looks like every week checking in with myself and taking a minute to assess. I like to do this kind of work in a journal a lot of times, but I'll be like, okay, let's just take a look at how is it going? How are you feeling? What wins did you have this week? Where did you fall short? And let's understand why.

And do we need to take a look at what you're thinking and believing? Do we need to change the expectation or do we need to just keep going and let's give it another, we can see how we do this week? But it's always got to be done with compassion and openness to hearing yourself out. And you've got to try to strip away the self-judgment. So, get an accountability partner if it's helpful for you.

And then the fifth thing is I want to speak to the way the woman worded this in this question. And I'm sorry, she didn't leave her name, so that's why I'm just calling you, that woman, which is fine. And anyway, you said that you feel like you're 'constantly restarting'. So as your coach, when I hear you say that, it makes me go, "Do you realize that's a thought, I'm constantly restarting? And is it a thought that's serving you?" We just want to question it.

How do you feel when you think I'm constantly restarting or when you're working on eating a certain way or you're trying to follow a budget and you don't, and then you think now I have to start again, how do you feel? You probably feel discouraged. You feel something negative is my guess, that's not serving you in this situation. So, I would just choose to reframe that, you're not restarting. Did you know that? There's no such thing as going backwards in time. I don't have a time machine, neither do you.

And you have some experience now in that area that you didn't have yesterday. You're only ever going forward. You're moving forward. It's just that we think forward looks like a nice line headed in either up or down, depending on what you're trying to do, in the direction that we want it to go and it's nice and smooth. But that's not what forward looks like. Forward is

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a graph that goes up and down in all different ways, but it keeps moving to the right as it goes up and down vertically. That's forward.

That's the reality actually, you're not restarting. You know something about yourself that you didn't know. If you pause and consider it, you haven't experienced it, you could learn from, you're not starting over. You're still on this journey moving forward. So, I would just say to reframe little thoughts like that, that your brain will offer you.

Remember, that motivational triad part of the brain that wants to seek pleasure, avoid pain, save energy is trying to sabotage you because it's like, "This is really hard. Why do we need to watch how we spend our money? It's so much more fun to just buy what we want. And you know what? We're doing fine. We're fine. We haven't died yet. We've been able to pay for what we need. Why do we want to do this challenging hard thing that requires a lot of energy, that causes us to forgo pleasure and is kind of painful?"

So, it's trying to sabotage you by going, "Oh, see, now we have to start over because we messed up." So, we don't want that part of your brain deciding how you're going to think about this and whether or not you're going to keep going. So, you have to answer it with, no, we're not starting over.

I like to picture a neighborhood that we're driving through. In certain places in the neighborhood, there's homes with really sweet, lovely, friendly families and nice yards. And then there's also, as we keep driving, there's an old run down gas station that looks like we wouldn't want to go inside the building because the roof might cave in, it's condemned. And that's in the neighborhood, and some of us go, "Oh, no, I got out of the neighborhood."

I'm like, "No, you're still in the neighborhood. There's just a lot of buildings like that, old condemned buildings. Keep going, keep driving and then you'll find some more nice, beautiful buildings. And then you're going to see a scary park that looks like the kind of place you don't want to send your kids

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in the dark, especially.” And that doesn’t mean you left the neighborhood. No, that’s in the same neighborhood. Failure and success live in the same neighborhood.

You achieving your habits and you not following through on your habits, that’s in the same neighborhood. The only thing that’s not in the neighborhood is you just going unconscious and giving up and walking away and not trying anymore. That’s when you’ve exited the neighborhood.

So, listen my friends, I love this kind of work of just changing a goal or a habit because of who it helps us become. I know I said this in the beginning, but I just want to reiterate it. You don’t have to be better at anything. You’re already worthy and complete and whole and lovable, and your life is good, whatever it looks like, you’re right on track, I promise you. Just trust me on this. And then access your genuine desire. What do you kind of want to try? What do you kind of want to see if you’re capable of? Let’s go.

Alright, thanks for joining me today, everyone. We’ll see you next week. Bye.

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