

478: 4 Lies About Failure Keeping You Stuck



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With Your Host

Jody Moore

[Better Than Happy](#) with Jody Moore

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What exactly is failure and why are we so afraid of it? This is a very commonly discussed topic amongst the world of self-help and coaching, but I have four things for you to consider today that might be different than the way you've been thinking about failure and success in the past.

Welcome to *Better Than Happy*. Today, I'm uncovering four big lies about failure that may have been keeping you stuck. Let's 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. Thanks for joining me today on the podcast. Welcome back. Thank you for sharing the podcast with your friends and family. And if you like this podcast, you get a lot out of it, you find it to be motivating or helpful or entertaining, I would love so much if you would continue to share it. You can mention it to your friends and family. You can post it on social media. Make sure you tag me if it's in a place where you can tag me. And just thank you in advance.

I also love reading your comments and reviews when you leave them on the podcast. So thank you so much for supporting me in the work that we're doing here of up-leveling everybody's mental and emotional health, making us more confident, more loving, more of the people that we want to be in our lives.

So today, we're going to talk about failure. We're shifting gears a little bit. The last couple of weeks, we've talked a lot about health and bodies and

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nutrition and food, and that's because next week we dive into Make Peace with Food. Well, I guess it's in, yeah, a little over a week from when this episode airs. So if you haven't registered for Make Peace with Food, that's a four-week challenge.

You're going to get lessons from me in video form, and you're going to get live calls with me to implement and execute what you're learning in the lessons and then come and ask me your questions. So pretty awesome deal, 29 bucks. Head to jodymoore.com/food. Again, we go live on September 16th, which happens to be my brother's birthday. Happy birthday, big brother. Again, jodymoore.com/food if you want Make Peace with Food.

But today we're shifting gears. I'm going to talk about goals and goals could be like a literal, I think I will try to achieve this thing type of goal. Or sometimes goals are just a more formal name for our desires, things that we want, things that we desire, like a relationship, for example. Maybe you want to get married. Maybe you want to be a parent. Maybe you want to move somewhere or just try something new, but you're worried about what's going to happen down the road.

What will the outcome of that thing be? Will it work out how I hoped? Will I enjoy it? Will I succeed in the way I hope to succeed? Will I create what I hope to create? This sort of unknown about the future, about both factors that are outside of our control and things that we are sort of responsible for, at least trying to contribute to the creation of, the brain doesn't like the unknown, especially if it's not going to play out the way we hoped in our minds. And this is what we typically call failure.

So today, I want to talk about four lies that you may be believing. Now, maybe these are things that you literally hear people say or you talk about and you outright believe these things about failure, or maybe they're more hidden beliefs that you - I found it fascinating that we sometimes have these beliefs that exist in the prefrontal cortex. When we slow it down and

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we really think through it and talk about it with intention, we have like wiser, more faith-based, more trusting beliefs.

But still in the primitive brain, in our unconscious mind, which is driving the car most of the time, we have these other beliefs that create fear or worry or scarcity or shame that are keeping us stuck. Maybe those kinds of beliefs, those more unconscious beliefs. Either way, we want to do some thought deconstructing today. I recently heard someone say that phrase, thought deconstruction. I'm like, that is what we do in coaching. We are deconstructing thoughts and stories and beliefs. And when you deconstruct them and pull them apart, they lose some of the power over you.

It's kind of like taking little pieces of the thought and the story and the belief system and pulling them apart so that they're weaker. So if you were to take a handful of popsicle sticks and try to break them, you might not be able to, might be hard. But if you took one popsicle stick at a time, you could snap it right in half really easy to do, right? When they're all together, they're really strong. Individually, they're weak. So when we deconstruct our belief systems that aren't serving us, they become much easier to snap and to break and then to replace with a belief system that does serve us. So that's what we're going to do today with the idea of failure.

So, the first thing that came to my mind when I was thinking about this topic that is, I think a lie about failure, is this idea that if you fail, whatever that means for you, you'll be disappointed. You'll be discouraged. You'll be frustrated.

Now, there are a lot of people out there who teach that you should set realistic goals. You should just strive for small baby steps because you're more likely to achieve a small goal, and then you won't get discouraged and frustrated, and then you'll keep going. And those small baby step goals add up to big changes in the end. And I like that approach at times. I think that's true.

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I think baby stepping your way to something big is, first of all, I think kind of cool because it requires patience. It requires a slowdown and not being in a rush, and it requires being able to find joy and satisfaction and be proud of yourself for small achievements. So I think there's a lot of benefit to that. But at times when you want to, I think it is also okay to set a big goal just to push yourself or really require a significant amount of growth. We even sometimes want to put ourselves in a place of discomfort so that we can work through that's where true growth happens, right?

True growth can happen in small steps as well. But there are times when having massive change is definitely possible and kind of exciting. Okay, so this idea that if you don't achieve it, you're going to be discouraged, the reason I say that's a lie is because I think it would be more accurate to say, if you don't achieve it, you can choose to be discouraged, but you don't have to be.

Did you know this? Did you know that it's not just an automatic default thing that happens that you feel discouraged? Now, it will be if you're not paying attention. It is probably most likely your unconscious response for most people, but it's not a given is what I'm saying. Okay? So one of the things that I learned through my coach training that has been so helpful for me is to remind myself that I can choose how I'm going to feel whether I achieved that goal or not. And I like to determine that before I get to the end point of the goal, ideally even before I start the goal.

So let's say I decide I'm going to - well, one of my kids came to me today and said that she wants to try to run for some kind of student council position at her elementary school. Okay, so she's starting out saying, "Mom, I want to try to get this position. I'm going to do the things I need to do." We've got to write a little talk and she has to sign up and raise her hand basically, and then give a talk to her class.

So if she doesn't get that, then she can feel discouraged if she thinks, "Oh, that's so discouraging. I'm so disappointed that I didn't get it." And then she'll feel whatever other emotions she feels based on what she thinks,

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right? If she thinks, “I’m a loser, I’m never going to succeed, or people don’t like me, or who do I think - why did I even think I could do this?” If she thinks thoughts like that, she’s going to feel bad.

But we can at the beginning of the goal say, “Hey, listen, you may get this position and you may not. I think that you have a very good chance of it. I believe in you. I know it’s totally possible and that you’re 100% capable and you would be so great at it. So let’s go for it and let’s be excited if you get it. But if you don’t get it, instead of feeling discouraged, let’s just decide right now that we’re going to feel proud of ourselves for trying. Can you promise me that?”

This is a discussion I’m going to have with her later, by the way, because we were on the way out the door to school, running late, of course, when she brought this up. But I’m going to say, “Listen, you can just decide right now that if you don’t get it, you will say, thank you so much, me, for trying. Thank you for doing something hard and scary and new and putting yourself out there. That was difficult and it required work, and I’m so proud of you for trying. Did you know this is an option?”

That’s often the way I set up my goals for myself, is I remind myself I am not going to be disappointed. Now, sometimes I don’t achieve the result because I didn’t fully show up and try, right? And so even then, though, I don’t beat myself up if I’m operating ideally, I should say, from my most conscious, highest version of myself, then I will pause and say, “Hey, what happened? I thought we really wanted to achieve that goal, but it seems like we didn’t actually want to do what was required to achieve it. And that’s okay, but I’m just curious about it. What’s going on? Did we decide we don’t actually want it enough to do what’s required to get it? Because that might be the case. Okay. I get it. Let’s reassess. Or were we just not able to overcome resistance or what have you?”

And I just want to understand myself is what I’m saying at the end. I still don’t have to beat myself up, right? I still don’t have to say I’m a terrible

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person, I'm a loser, I can't believe, et cetera. I can just go, "Okay, what was that about, I wonder? What happened there? What went wrong?"

These are useful questions if you ask them from a place of genuine curiosity, then you can actually learn a lot about yourself and you can actually deepen your connection with yourself in this way, rather than use a goal to beat yourself up or to feel bad. So many of you are afraid to set goals because in the past when you haven't achieved them, you've beat yourself up. I don't blame you. I don't want to go hang out with someone who's going to beat me up either.

So the solution becomes we just don't set goals. We just don't put milestones out there that we try to achieve. But you don't have to do that. You don't have to be discouraged. You don't have to feel bad. All of that is optional. It's coming from what you make it mean when you don't achieve your goal.

Okay, lie number two. Lie number two is that failure is the worst case scenario. This is what our brains believe, right? We're just talking to a group of entrepreneurs this week and we talked about this concept. Somebody said, "I really want to achieve this thing, I want to grow my business, but I've had attempts at other businesses in the past that have failed, and so now I'm afraid to try." Can anyone relate to this in any area of your life?

What I said to this man was, "Yeah, because your brain is confused about worst case scenario. Your brain thinks failure would be the worst thing that could happen, but let's just stand back and ask ourselves if that's really true." Because what I believe is that the best case scenario when we set out to achieve something or pursue something is success.

Now, keep in mind, success is something we have predefined that we made up. Okay, let's not forget that. But ideally, we land where we wanted to land. We have the experience we hoped to experience. We create the result we're trying to create. That would be success, right?

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The number two most ideal scenario after success is what we're now calling failure, meaning it didn't pan out the way I hoped. I didn't feel how I thought it was going to feel or I didn't create what I hoped to create or I didn't land where I was hoping to land. That is the next best case scenario. The worst case scenario, number three, is just not trying at all. Doesn't that actually make more sense when you stop and think about it?

Because failure is still movement. Failure is still progress, even if it's learning that we don't want that thing anymore or learning that it's harder than we thought it was going to be. They say when we dive in to learn a new skill or something that we go through these phases, right? And the first phase often I've heard called unconsciously incompetent, meaning we are incompetent. We don't know how to achieve it, but we're unconscious of that. We don't even know what we don't know.

So if you fail, at least you've moved out of unconsciously incompetent into consciously incompetent. For many people, that feels worse if you don't know how to not beat yourself up for it. If you feel bad about all that you don't know and you get discouraged going, "This is a lot harder than I thought it was going to be, now I see all the things that are required to achieve this and it's much more than I thought," then that's going to feel terrible.

But if you use that as, "Hey, look at the progress I'm making. I'm now aware that this is harder than I originally thought," which is normal. That moving from unconsciously incompetent to consciously incompetent is a valuable step. After that, you move to consciously competent, right? Which means you are able to achieve what you're trying to a lot of times, but it requires a lot of focus and a lot of effort. You have to stay conscious to do it, right? And the fourth phase they say we move to is unconsciously competent, where you can achieve a lot of success without a lot of focus and effort. It becomes more of a natural skill or way of being that you have, okay?

So you see why I'm saying failure is not the worst case scenario. Not trying is the worst case scenario because it's a step backwards if ultimately what

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we want is to have an experience or create a certain goal. So the best way that we learn is through experience. Actually, the only way that we truly learn is through experience.

We can get ideas by reading, listening, taking classes, talking to others, we can have a certain level of understanding, but we can't have a deep level of knowing. We can't have it be a part of our being if it's a complicated skill at all without actually applying it and having the experience. And with that application and experience is going to come failure, what we're calling failure.

I always like put it in quotes when I say failure because - we're going to get to that in a minute, actually, I'll tell you why. Okay, so just keep that in mind. Best case scenario, success. Next best case scenario, failure. Worst case scenario, not even trying. Not showing up.

All right, let's go to number three. The third big lie about failure that we say all the time in the world of personal development is this idea that you should stop and assess what happened and learn from it. Now, I'm saying this with a caveat, that of course I want you to learn from your failures, but I don't think you need to stop and spend very much time in most cases assessing what went wrong.

I believe that your brain already is hyper-focused on what's gone wrong. If you're like most people, if you're like me, your brain is hyper-focused on what's wrong with you. Where did you drop the ball? What's gone wrong is the primary question most people are walking around asking themselves. So I'm not saying you can't analyze things. And again, the more complicated the goal and the task, the more analytics might be useful, but only if you can do it from a neutral mindset with the eyes of a scientist, okay?

So for example, let's say you're trying to launch something in your business. Maybe you have a business and you try to launch a new product or a new offer or something, and you don't achieve whatever goal you

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created for yourself in your launch. You don't get a certain number of clients or sell an amount of product, et cetera, okay? Then yeah, there may be numbers to go back and look at, like number of people that we reached, leads that we generated, how many people did we nurture, how many people came to whatever activities we offered, and then how many people bought, right?

So there's some basic numbers in business. So if you can look at those numbers and be very objective and very entrepreneurial and not take it all personally and not get all dramatic and heavy, then great. Look at those numbers. That can be useful information. But if you can't, if you're very emotionally charged about it, I would say, don't even bother. Just move forward. Stop thinking about the past and start thinking about the future, because my guess is that your brain actually already knows. Even just intuitively, you have intuitive guesses about what went wrong that you don't have to have numbers to prove.

What's the documentary about Taylor Swift on Netflix that came out years ago, before all the Eras tour and everything? I think it's called Miss Americana. Go watch it if you haven't, so good. Okay, so there's this part in the middle when, I think it was right after the Reputation album, and Taylor Swift gets the phone call from whoever on her team to notify her about Grammy nominations coming out.

And she's basically, her new album is not nominated for anything. And she's disappointed, and the person's trying to deliver it in a really soft way. And then she says, "Well, I guess I just need make a better album." And the person's trying to like, buoy her up, right? And say, like give reasons why maybe she got overlooked. And she's like, "No, I just need to make a better album."

Okay. Now, she is disappointed, which is fine. I'm not trying to turn you into a robot here. What I love about that scene is her immediate focus on the future. She's not spending a lot of time assessing the past. I don't know

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what happened after that scene, but in that particular moment, she moves into the future.

“I'm going to do something better.” And boy, did she, right? So that's what I'm talking about. Instead of thinking, “I should learn from my past failures,” how about, “I'm just going to do better now?” Let me just go do better. It's so much more fun for me to do that, to think about the future and just go do better.

“I just need to do a better job of taking care of people. I just need to do a better job of planning out my food. I just need to do a better job of being a mother.” Whatever it is that I'm quote-unquote failing at, I'm just going to go do better now. Let's do that. Fourth and final big lie you might believe about failure that I want to blow up for you today is the idea that it's even a real thing.

What is failure? It's not a real thing in that it's not clearly definable. It's not something that everyone would always agree on in any given situation. So it's really just a made-up construct or idea. Here's what I mean by that. First of all, it is you not achieving a made-up objective. Like you decided what you wanted to have happen, and by what timeline, and then you took a guess as to the efforts that would get you there. And maybe you executed those efforts, or maybe you didn't, but it was still made-up in the first place.

It's not like a real thing that actually happened. It's just your made-up idea of what the finish line is, you didn't get there. Okay, so what? You made it up to begin with. Maybe you were wrong about what was possible. Maybe you were wrong about what would be required to get there. All right, so you were wrong. That doesn't mean you failed. You just were wrong. See what I'm saying?

It's not even actually a real thing if we break it down. The other thing it sometimes is, is just us quitting. Every time somebody tells me, “I had a business before, but it failed.” Or, “I attempted to start a business, but my business failed.” I always wonder why are they choosing to tell themselves

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the story that way? Because it didn't fail. You just chose to stop trying to make it work. And I'm not saying you shouldn't have. I'm not saying that you should never quit.

Sometimes it's like, you know what? I don't want to keep trying to make this thing work anymore. I'm done trying to make it work. Or what would be required is more than I'm willing to give, or for whatever reason. I don't even think you have to have a good reason. You can just decide you're no longer going to pursue this thing. But that is not failure, that's just you changing your mind.

At one point you thought you did want to attempt something, and then now, later, given where you are, you decide you no longer are going to try to achieve that thing. That's real, but failure's not real. Failure's just the label you give it, and if you don't have any negative emotion with that word, then cool, I'm cool with it.

But if you do, if you carry it with you, like some kind of a heavy weight, I'm just going to tell you, you can just put it down right now. "I used to have a business and I don't have that business anymore." That's a much more true story and probably a more empowering story. The last reason failure is actually not even a real thing is there are almost always little wins along the way, but why do we not say, "I won, well, except for these things." What we say instead is, "I failed. Well, except for these things." Right?

Let me give an example. So a friend of mine years ago was starting a business and I told her I wanted her to fail more because I wanted her to go bigger because I knew her really well. I knew she was sharp. I knew she was capable and I knew she was playing small. So I'm like, "Your job is to fail three times this month." And then she would come back to me and say, "Jody, I failed." I was like, "Great, tell me about it."

She's like, "Well, I wanted to do a webinar, and so I put it out there, and I got like 50 people to sign up. I was so excited, and then the day of the webinar, I had tech problems, and I couldn't even execute the webinar, and

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then all these 50 people didn't get the webinar they signed up for, total failure.”

And I'm like, “That's not a total failure. You have 50 people now that you know are interested in what you teach. That's just a tech problem is what happened. That's not a failure.” And she was like, “Oh...” This kept happening over and over again. And I was like, “Why aren't we like, 'Jody, I found 50 people who are interested in learning what it is that I teach. Oh, and by the way, I didn't get to teach the webinar because the tech went down.'” No, we don't do it that way. We're like, “I failed. Oh yeah, there were 50 people.”

So there are almost always at least as many, if not more wins. Even if the win is, “I discovered I don't like that thing, I discovered I don't want to do that thing, I discovered that thing is harder than I thought it was, I met somebody, I learned something, I learned how to use a certain program.”

Like for my friend, again, back to the example, she learned something about the technology, whether it's, “I need to double check before,” or, “I should do a test run,” or, “This particular platform doesn't work in this way.” Like there's way more wins than failures in almost any scenario.

So, stop calling things a failure. When I first started coaching coaches years ago, and we would talk about failure, right? That's when it came up a lot when I was coaching entrepreneurs. And I would say, “You have to get comfortable with it, you have to be okay with it.” And they were like, “Can you give us an example, Jody, of when you failed in your business? We want to hear about it.”

And I remember being like, “Why can I not think of anything?” Like, it's not that I'm amazing and everything I do works, but it was like, so hard for me to come up with examples. And I realized it's because I never call anything failure, hardly, not never, but rarely do I call anything failure. I'm just like, “Oh, I thought that was going to do this. It did not do that.”

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It takes a lot for me to label it a failure only because I just understand what I'm talking to you about here so deeply. I understand that these are all just made-up finish lines that I create. And if I don't hit them, I'm more like, "Oh, I was wrong. I thought we're going to get to this finish line, but we didn't, but we got to this finish line and now here's what we're going to do instead. Or this finish line is good enough. Let's go."

So just be careful about that word failure. I would use it very sparingly, if at all, because it's not even a real thing. It's just made-up. All right. That's what I got for you today. Thanks again for joining me on the podcast. Don't forget we have a podcast hotline.

If you have a question you want to bring to me, you can do so at 1-888-HI-JODY-M. That's Jody with a Y, M as in more, 1-888-HI-JODY-M. You can leave me a voicemail. I love hearing from you there. And otherwise, thanks for being here today and I'll see you next time. Take care.

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