

483: The Rise of Feminism in the LDS Church Part 1: Coaching Session



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Jody Moore

[Better Than Happy](#) with Jody Moore

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There's a lot of talk about women's issues and women's rights and patriarchy within the LDS community right now. Maybe there are in lots of religious communities or other communities, but certainly within the LDS Church, it's more than I've ever seen in my lifetime.

There's a lot of emotions coming to the surface that have been shut down for a long time. There's a lot of anger that has been building up over time, and more than anything, there's a lot of confusion and unanswered questions and there's a lot of love and openness and compassion around this topic.

And it's a topic I've been wanting to talk about for a while but I'm really cautious about it because I, first of all, know that I can't do it justice, and second of all, know that there's a potential to offend people, which is not my intention at all. But I don't want to avoid it. I want to dive right in because it aligns with the work we're doing here at *Better Than Happy*. So this is part one, The Rise of Feminism in the LDS Church.

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 the podcast today. I'm so excited for this episode because I just got off a VIP coaching call in The Lab. So for people that have been there six months or longer, they get to come to a VIP call. This really amazing woman got coached and I, the whole time, kept

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thinking, everyone needs to hear this. So I asked her, with her permission, I'm gonna share the coaching session. We're gonna keep her name anonymous to keep her privacy, but I'm so grateful that she's willing to let me share it with all of you because coaching is really where I can demonstrate the transformations rather than just talk about them.

I wanna set this up by saying I'm gonna be doing multiple parts. I haven't decided how many yet, but at least I know for next week, I recently interviewed Kara Loewentheil, who is my friend who works in the feminist space in a much more liberal way. She's got an amazing book out. So I've got a great conversation we're gonna be having next week with Kara on this topic. We're including our discussion of *The Secret Lives of Mormon Wives*.

If you wanna hear Kara's thoughts on that. And she just has a lot of great insight. But today I wanted to play this coaching segment with you. And I'll tell you why.

When it comes to counteracting the patriarchal structure of anything, but we'll focus on the LDS Church here, of course there's a lot of change that has to happen at varying levels. And we need people helping to educate and inform and influence on all levels. And the level where I am the most equipped and feel I can contribute the most is on the individual level.

So that's not to say that I'm not a believer that we need structural change. We do. But again, where I feel like I can make the most impact is on the individual level. And without individual change and involvement, the structural change won't have the same effect or it will take much, much longer to create the effect that we want to.

So what I mean by that is, let me just give a quick example. And I think Kara and I discussed this in our conversation next week, but I heard some chatter amongst women in the church saying things like, well, why is it that we have this group of men called the High Council, and why is it that they

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go speak to different congregations, like not necessarily just the congregation where they live, but they go visit other congregations or wards and speak? Why do they do that, but there are no women leaders who get asked to go visit different wards and speak?

And so this is something that is totally, apparently at the jurisdiction of the stake presidency, because I've seen stakes start to ask women leadership to go out and speak. And most of the time, what I hear the women saying is, oh, no, not me. I don't wanna be the one to go speak. I don't wanna be the one, you know, taking on this role.

And it's because women don't view themselves, even though they recognize like, no, we need to have equal representation and voices and authority and all that where appropriate in the church for women, they don't view themselves as somebody that has something credible to offer or could be the one leading the way.

And so if we don't do that individual work to evolve ourselves, to view ourselves as first of all, already having something really valuable to contribute and being worthy of the time and the space to share it and then having the confidence to do it or doing it even though we're afraid and all of that, if we don't do that work, it won't matter that the structures have changed until many, many years down the road. Do you see what I'm saying?

So this is probably happening in more ways than you realize. I know I still have tons of blind spots in terms of my own lack of ability to see the equal roles that male and female have within our Heavenly Father's plan, frankly. So we wanna just become aware of those blind spots. That's how we evolve ourselves and that's how we grow. And we also, I'm a believer personally in my life and with my clients in making changes towards the future without bringing a bunch of dirty pain from the past. And you don't have to. You can even acknowledge that some of the things that happened

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in the past were not right, but not bring that like a heavy weight weighing you down into the future.

And I feel like this coaching session really helped us to highlight that in several different ways. So again, I'm gonna go ahead and play the session for you. This was on a VIP call in The Lab. So if you're VIP in The Lab, you can go back and watch the video there. Otherwise, I hope that this really helps illustrate what I'm trying to teach you here. And if you ever decide you wanna get some free coaching or listen to more coaching like this, you are welcome to join me for a complimentary coaching workshop at jodymoore.com/freecoaching. All right, let's go.

—

Jody: Hi.

Anonymous: Hi, I was just running away from my preschooler.

Jody: Oh, perfect. Just hide from them. That's what we do.

Anonymous: Yes, yes. They're always, you know, excited to see what's on my phone. So we'll-

Jody: Are they? Oh, yeah. They're all about phones, those little ones.

Anonymous: They do. Okay. I'm really excited to talk to you. Thank you. Been following for a long time. It's definitely on the same lines, my question as what's already been talked about, but I am having a lot of indecision about like what my dream life will be in like three years.

So I have my preschooler, he's going to go to kindergarten next year. And so I'm trying to, like, think, what do I want my life to look like? And mostly, I just feel super resentful about, like, I had a lot of ambition when I was like a young adult. And I like, I didn't pursue a lot of it so that I'd be like, more appealing. So I have this whole story of blaming the LDS culture for not pursuing my dream and instead of going to med school, doing other things.

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So now I'm in this kind of just mad that I only get a little bit of time and I should be excited about it, but I'm not. I just kind of-

Jody: Because I can tell you're on death's door just about.

Anonymous: Oh, I am. Oh yes. I am super old and I have two years left.

Jody: No, just notice your brain being like, now we don't have much time left, but really you're still a young adult, okay?

Anonymous: Well, kind of, like I'm like going through like perimenopause and there's all this crazy stuff and I'm like, yes. I feel a lot of scarcity.

Jody: How old are you gonna be when you die?

Anonymous: 100, I like your idea. Like I'm just gonna be 100.

Jody: 100. How old are you right now?

Anonymous: I'm only 37.

Jody: Okay, so, if we look at a timeline, I like to look at it visually, okay? So, if you're gonna die at 100, here's birth, here's 100 when you're gonna die, you're right about here, 37.

Anonymous: I got time, I could go do the stuff, right?

Jody: You're saying now we only have a little time left because we wasted this time having babies.

Anonymous: And now my degree is like useless and no one would hire me.

Jody: All for nothing now.

Anonymous: And yes, all for nothing. Right. Yes. I definitely go to the extreme. And like, and it's all everyone else's fault and it's all the.

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Jody: Church and all the, it's all that. Yeah, I'm in. The problem is how do you feel when you think all that?

Anonymous: Oh, I feel miserable and I have so much self-pity and I just like, want to cry. And then I'm like mad about the stuff. Like I know in my head, I have like so many great things in my life, but I'm not enjoying a lot of them because I'm like tied to them, you know?

Jody: So what if we try something here? I think that this is one of those examples where you have been given like a gift, which is some desire. And you say, when I was a young adult, I had all this passion and ambition. And I'm like, no, you still have that.

Anonymous: I don't quite believe that. I feel like it's been like anxiety out of me. I'm like, I want to do that, but I like have this like rock of anxiety about it.

Jody: Well, you definitely still have ambition and passion and desire. I don't know what it's for. It might not be for the same goals, but you do, or you wouldn't be feeling this way. The reason you feel discontent with your life is because you have a lot of other ambition and passion and desire. But you've taken the gift of ambition and passion and desire and you've turned it into a poison that you're like beating yourself with, instead of letting it be a gift. Like it is. You've turned it into, uh-oh, my life, I took, I picked the wrong path.

Anonymous: That's really true. It's actually kind of making me cry.

Jody: But you didn't pick the wrong path.

Anonymous: There's a lot of good things.

Jody: And it's not too late. You do have to find a way, I think, to allow space for your own ambition and passion and desire. I think that you have so

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much potential and so much possibility, and you're not allowing yourself any way to realize any of it.

And that's why it's slowly eating away at you. But you can do that at any time. We don't have to go back and take a different degree program or change the past or any of that. And just like, oh, I see what's happening here. I'm very capable and very driven and very curious and very passionate and very ambitious. And I haven't been allowing any place in my life for that. But I can, I can start right now allowing it.

Anonymous: Yeah, I guess, yeah, that's true. That's true. It's kind of, it's kind of scary to think about it like that.

Jody: Why? Why is it scary?

Anonymous: Just because then I'll have to like make sacrifices. And what if I fail? And what if my family hates me? I know it's like totally extremes.

Jody: No, it's all legitimate. Don't judge your brain for what it's, just trying to protect you. Even if it is extreme, it's coming from something totally understandable and realistic, okay? So what if my family hates me? That's what you said. What do you mean by that? What are we afraid of?

Anonymous: What if I sacrifice too much and then my family suffers and they blame me for it? I don't want to be the reason of someone's suffering, particularly my family.

Jody: When you say family, are you talking about your, like your kids? Do you have more than one? You have one child.

Anonymous: I have four kids.

Jody: You have four kids. Okay. Is that what you mean? Like if one of your children suffers or something or your husband or what do we mean when we say family?

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Anonymous: Yeah, just that like my husband's unhappy, my kids are unhappy, and I'm pursuing this dream. And then, like, I mean, and I know that like pursuing the dream, like doesn't give me happiness. So I'm also like, what if I am also not happy, even though I'm pursuing a dream and like, fulfilling, like that part of me.

So I guess it's kind of the core like what if I do this and then everyone's miserable and right now most of my family is like most of my family is fine and like I don't know...

Jody: Just you're miserable.

Anonymous: Just me, yeah.

Jody: Listen it's a valid question to ask yourself but I think we should explore the answer for a minute okay so first of all when you say sacrifices what would that look like? What kind of sacrifices are you going to have to make that might result in unhappy husband, unhappy kids.

Anonymous: Just that my time wouldn't be spent on things for them. But that's kind of what I do.

Jody: Now. Okay. So you might leave the home to do what?

Anonymous: I might, well, I'm a biological engineer. So like, I would go to like, a typical engineering job is like you go to work for 60 hours a week.

Jody: Okay, so if you had a job or something, for example, and you weren't home so much because you went to work, right? Is that what you're saying? That would be an example of a possible sacrifice, right? Okay.

Anonymous: But I wouldn't be there when they got home from school or they wouldn't be able to do extracurricular. I wouldn't be there to like talk about the friends that hurt their feelings today, you know, mom stuff.

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Jody: Okay, so first of all, let's just be realistic about it. Like you would be there. It just wouldn't be right when they got home from school. That would be bedtime, they would tell you about the friend thing. Like we're not like choosing whether we're going to get a job or we're going to be a mom and abandon our family. Okay. Just keep it in check.

Keep that part in check. What we're saying is they might have to wait a few hours to talk to me. They might have to get rides with the carpool I lined up for them. Like instead of going, they wouldn't be able to do any sports and no activities and no one to talk to. No, I, they might have to ride with a friend's mom to soccer practice instead of me. And yes, there would be sacrifices, but don't overdramatize them for just a minute. Okay.

Now then your brain's like, what if they're unhappy? Okay. I want you to picture a scenario where your kids are like, I wish mom was here. Want to talk to her about this. And you come home fulfilled and excited and energized because you're doing something that challenges your brain unless you use your education and your skills and all of that, your ambition.

Anonymous: I'd be a lot kinder. I wouldn't be as impatient. I'd be like, okay, get to the part where I need to like solve something?

Jody: Hurry, what's the problem?

Anonymous: That's super loving when I say that. Right.

Jody: You would be a totally better mother. I know this from experience because I've been where you are in my own version of it. And I realized one day, okay, it's true, brain, my kids might not like it, but I'm pretty sure my primary responsibility is my happiness, and their happiness is their responsibility. And I've got it backwards. I'm taking responsibility for theirs and totally neglecting mine, and then I'm unhappy with my life. And the truth is, sometimes they will be happy whether I'm home or at work, and sometimes they will be unhappy whether I'm at home or at work, because

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they're responsible for their happiness. But I know for sure that I'm responsible for my happiness, which I've been highly neglecting, right?

Anonymous: Yeah.

Jody: So just be careful, because when your brain's like, well, what if maybe I'm not there for them? And then they suddenly like, they feel, they're like their mom's not around to talk about the friend thing or whatever. And then, just play it out. Like hear your brain out.

I'm like, okay, tell me, what are we afraid of? What might happen? And then they might say, I wish my mom was there to talk about it. I'm like, yeah, okay. And then I would feel sad for a minute, but right now I'm miserable. And then the truth is it would be an opportunity for me to talk to my children. Are any of them girls?

Anonymous: Yeah.

Jody: Or even your sons, right? To be like, guess what? Moms have lives too. And every mom gets to choose her own life. And some moms choose that their life is that their home full-time with the kids. That's a beautiful life. And other moms find that what they want their life to look like is being a mom and also having a job.

And it's important that moms and women also, I hear you, patriarchy and all that, but why don't we step up and do our part then? To say, guess what? It's not just a woman's job to run a household or the community and be the volunteers at school. It's the whole community's job. And this is what it should look like a healthy environment. And I'm so sorry I wasn't there for you today when you got home from school, but I'm here now.

Anonymous: Yeah. No, that's really true. Like I just need to prioritize more, like my own happiness.

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Jody: Yeah. And the other thing, cause you kept bringing up, like, what if I'm unhappy even what if I don't like it? Listen, half the time you're going to be happy and half the time you're not. In the best case scenario. But right now you're mostly miserable. It sounds like you're miserable more than half the time. Because you have this gift that's been given to you of this ambition and drive that you're just like ignoring and it keeps like pounding on your skull a little bit.

Anonymous: Yeah, but I can't even like visualize like how it could look.

Jody: I know.

Anonymous: And so I just need to kind of...

Jody: You just have to open the box.

Anonymous: But the box is making me so sad.

Jody: Why? What do you think when you look in there?

Anonymous: I'm disappointed.

Jody: But remember, you didn't do any of it wrong. This is exactly what it was supposed to look like. Disappointment comes from thinking something's gone wrong.

Anonymous: I had a hard time thinking that it didn't go wrong.

Jody: Okay, why do you want to think it went wrong? Tell me the upside.

Anonymous: Cause then maybe I'll prevent it. Like part of me is like, oh, then it won't be like that for my daughter. Cause I'll tell her it went wrong. But I don't know if that would actually work if it's someone else's fault. You know?

Jody: Well, here's what you're doing right now. You have this thought, something went wrong and this is about your past, right? And whatever,

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whatever you heard at church or from family or whatever, right? And the decisions you made, and then you feel miserable. And so you're frozen, you can't even look in the box. I'm like, what's in there? What are you excited about? What do you wanna explore? What's your ambition? You're like, I can't even look in there.

Like, well, we're certainly not gonna be open to finding ways to fit this in our life if we won't even look at it. And you're telling me the result is that you keep living the wrong life. I don't mean it's totally wrong. I mean, it's incomplete.

Anonymous: No, I can, yeah. I hadn't thought of that.

Jody: What I'm saying is what if we're just like, nothing went wrong here. That was exactly the path. I was supposed to get married and have kids and not go to med school. And even if you wanna keep the idea that like you made those decisions because of counsel you were given that you don't agree with anymore.

Anonymous: Yeah.

Jody: Is that kind of what I'm saying?

Anonymous: Yeah.

Jody: Which is fine. I'm with you. I'm like, oh, that counsel that I followed, I'd made some life choices based on, because at the time it sounded right, and I thought it was the right thing, and I wanted to be this person. And now in hindsight, I don't think that was the right counsel, but I was totally supposed to receive the wrong counsel and follow it and end up where I am right now. How do I know that?

Anonymous: If this is where I am.

Jody: If that's where I am. And as long as I think something went wrong, I have to keep spinning on the past in my mind, and dissecting it and being

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mad about it and trying to figure it out. But I'm done thinking about the past. The past is in the past. So I was supposed to get bad advice and follow that bad advice.

Anonymous: I hadn't thought about that. That's a lot lighter. I'm not taking full responsibility, because sometimes I'm like, I should have been smarter, I should have understood more.

Jody: No. Those sound like really lovely thoughts but they're poison. That's how you're beating yourself up with your ambition and your awareness and your knowledge.

Anonymous: Yeah, that's the way it was supposed to happen. And now I've learned a lot.

Jody: And I've learned a lot and you may not have discovered what you discovered had you not made those "bad" advice choices, but now you know, and there's a lot of good that came out of it too, right?

Anonymous: That's true. And it's hard to see the good when I'm so wrapped up in, this is the wrong, this is the wrong.

Jody: And if you would have chosen med school or something different, right? We could be having this same conversation. And you could be like, now I'm a doctor and I'm so important and I make all this money and I'm very ambitious, but I'm kind of lonely and I don't have, I kind of wanted to have children and I'm getting older. And I like, we could be having this different flavor of the same conversation, no matter what path you took.

So in the end, listen, life's about choices and every choice has good and bad with it, pros and cons, okay? But even if, again, like I'm with you. I think some of the counsel I was given, I just don't agree with it now. But that was totally the path I was supposed to go down.

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And now what? Who am I going to be now? That's all that really matters. What do you want to do in the future? Now we can look in the box. It's not scary anymore. There's a lot in there.

Anonymous: And it's not one or the other. I think I get caught up in like either I'm gone all day every day or I'm not and there's - harder to find, you know different opportunities that I've never seen before. Like I don't always know where to look but it's not impossible.

Jody: No, it's not and that's the other thing is you have to give yourself permission to not know how. You don't have to know how or what it's gonna look like in order to believe, listen, there's a way for me to live out my own ambition and be fulfilled and and help contribute in the world the way I want to and be challenged and be the kind of mom and wife I want to be to my family. There's actually women that do it all the time. Do you know this? Yeah. Even engineers.

Anonymous: I wish I knew some of them personally, though.

Jody: I know but also like you just trust in the idea that it's possible and you're going to discover it, but you're not going to discover it by focusing on what went wrong in the past. You're only going to discover it by making peace with where you are and then opening up to a future.

Cause there's clues everywhere. You're just not seeing them. The reason you don't know those people or see those people cause your brain doesn't think that's relevant to look for. It's filtering it out right now. It's looking for why your life went wrong and you can't have what you want. But if you're just like, hey, maybe I've been wrong about that all this time. Maybe my life went exactly how it's supposed to and I can have everything I want. What?

And you're suddenly gonna start to find that around you. Cause it's everywhere. But your brain's looking for, the eye sees what the mind looks for. Okay? I'm so excited for you.

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Anonymous: Thanks.

Jody: You're just getting started.

Anonymous: I got tons of time.

Jody: You do.

Anonymous: Would you say like the first step is just to like, start writing? Because I, like, what would be my first step? Writing down things that sound fun? Or like...

Jody: That's a good step. Start journaling what i really really really really really want is, and when your brain's like that's not possible that doesn't exist you can't have that you're too old there's not time that like just ignore that part be like i know we're just living in dreamland okay?

And then start exploring it in your mind but also exploring it in the real world get on the internet start reaching out to people, start looking at things online, start talking to people in whatever, engineers, if that's of interest to you, start looking in the real world, but from the belief that it's possible to find.

Because you'll find it. It'll be hard to find, it will be. And if you don't believe it's possible, you'll just try two or three things and then you'll give up. But if you're like, no, I know it's possible, you'll keep going and keep going and keep going and keep going until you find it.

Anonymous: And I got time, I got a lot of time.

Jody: You got tons of time.

Anonymous: Yeah, well, thank you, Jody.

Jody: Okay, you're welcome, take care.

Anonymous: You too.

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