

## 503: Wasted Wishes



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Jody Moore**

[Better Than Happy](#) with Jody Moore

## 503: Wasted Wishes

I'm going to give you a sentence and I want you to fill in the blank. Are you ready? I just wish blank. What would you put in the blank? What do you wish was different or better about yourself, the world around you, the people that you interact with regularly, what do you just wish for?

I think that noticing where things could be better, how we could improve, how other people can improve, how the world could be better is a very healthy and natural and normal thing that we all do. But if we're wasting our wish, then we are using this amazing part of the brain that God gave us in a way that is not useful. In fact, it can be very frustrating and build resentment and judgment.

So today we're going to talk about wasted wishes, what this means, why we do it, and how to stop doing it and use our amazing brains to create extraordinary lives and be who we want to be. This is *Better Than Happy*, episode 503, Wasted Wishes.

Welcome to *Better Than Happy*, the podcast where we transform our lives by transforming ourselves. My name is Jody Moore. In the decade-plus I've been working with clients as a Master Certified Coach, I've helped tens of thousands of people to become empowered. And from empowered, the things that seemed hard become trivial, and the things that seemed impossible become available, and suddenly, a whole new world of desire and possibility open up to you. And what do you do with that?

Well, that's the question... what will you do? Let's find out.

Sometimes, listening to a podcast is enough. But sometimes, you'll feel inspired to go deeper. If you hear things that speak to you in today's episode, consider it your invitation to a complimentary coaching workshop.

On this live, interactive Zoom call with me, you'll get a taste of the power of this work when applied in real life. You can participate, or be a silent observer. But you have to take a step if you want to truly see change in your life... two steps, actually. Head to [jodymoore.com/freecoaching](http://jodymoore.com/freecoaching) and register. Then you just have to show up. Your best life is waiting for you. Will you show up for it? [JodyMoore.com/freecoaching](http://JodyMoore.com/freecoaching). I'll see you there.

## 503: Wasted Wishes

What's up my friends? Welcome to the podcast. I am delighted that you're here. I have a message that I've had in my Notes app. I keep a little Notes app in my phone for podcast ideas. And when they come to me, I throw them into that app. And it's been in there for a little while now, and I'm just finally getting around to recording it.

So I'm very excited to share this with you. It comes up a lot in coaching, and I want you to think about and just start noticing when it comes up in your own life. And it's this concept that I'm calling wasted wishes.

So let's begin by what we mean when we say the word wish. Okay, I want you to think of a wish not like it's your birthday and you're blowing out the candles on your cake and you're sending a wish up into the sky. I think that's fine. I don't think you need to worry about wasting that wish.

I'm talking about the thoughts that we have and the sentences we say out loud that begin with the phrase, I just wish blank. Okay? A wish in this regard is a desire. It's a judgment, if you will. It's noticing a gap or a circumstance that we don't care for and a desire to have a different circumstance. It is a want, right? Something we desire.

So here's what I love about wanting and desiring and wishing, is it tells our brains what to focus on. Okay, we have this thing called the reticular activating system, which is the part of the brain that tries to filter out anything that is not relevant or necessary or immediately dangerous. And the things that we desire and want and wish for become relevant to our brain so that the reticular activating system will allow them into our awareness and not just filter them out.

Okay, so knowing what you want and desire, I think is very useful. I write about this in my book, *Better Than Happy*, in the chapter that talks about prayer, right? For those of you that are members of the LDS church, we have a certain structure of prayer and whatever faith you are, or however you pray, my guess is you have something similar, where we spend time in gratitude because that's useful to our brains, right? To focus on what we

## 503: Wasted Wishes

love, what we want more of. Literally, there's so much research nowadays about how useful gratitude is for our mental and emotional health.

But then the second part of prayer is asking for what we desire. It's becoming more aware of what we want. And I personally believe, this is just my own theory, but I believe that it's not because God needs us to tell Him what we desire. He already knows our hearts. He knows every hair on our head. He knows what we desire. It's because He wants us to focus and become more aware of what we desire and to you know by sitting down in prayer. It's sort of a meditation where we connect with Him. We have the opportunity to develop some faith and some belief that what we want is possible.

But again, he's given us this reticular activating system that says, if I become more aware of what I desire, I'm more likely to notice opportunities to achieve it or fulfill it. And so that can be a really useful thing, right? Depending on, again, what your belief system is and how comfortable you are with what some people call the land of the woo-woo stuff. I personally also believe that it's sort of, you know, focusing and thinking about what you desire or wish sort of sends a message out to the universe or God or however you wanna describe it.

Abraham Hicks would say it launches a rocket of desire. And those desires get answered and we just have to then line up with the answers to see them manifested in our own lives. So I don't know, some of you might like that stuff like I do and some of you might be like, that's not for me, that's cool. I just think there are a lot of benefits is my point to wishing or desiring or wanting and to becoming aware of what we want and desire.

But I do see a lot of people wasting their wish I'm gonna call it on things that are not useful and here's what I mean. The reason I call it a wasted wish is not because I want you to be in scarcity, like I only get so many wishes. This isn't like a genie in a lamp that says you only get three wishes. I just mean our brains are only capable of focusing on a certain amount of information at a time and it's a pretty limited amount of information, right?

## 503: Wasted Wishes

If you're like me you have five million things you want to achieve and then you just feel overwhelmed and shut down when you try to focus on too much or solve too many problems or achieve too many things at once. So it's a waste in that what my brain is looking for may or may not be something that is serving me if I'm wasting my wish. I'm wasting my brain power, you might say, by wasting my wish, okay?

So I'm gonna go through five situations where I feel like we are wasting our wishes. And as I speak to these, my guess is it's going to sort of become obvious how to not do it. But just in case I have a couple pieces of advice. Anyway, I'm going to give you in the end of what to do instead. Okay?

So the first thing we do is we waste our wish on things that are not our business. I'm labeling it that way because I love what Byron Katie says. She says there's three types of business. There's my business, your business, and God's business. And she says, I try to stay out of your business or God's business. I try to just stay in my own business. Right? Such a cool way to think about it.

So if I'm wishing that my husband just kept his car cleaner, it's not really my business unless I want to clean his car, right? Whenever I'm wishing for other people to be different or even sometimes it's it doesn't sound like judgment. It sounds like I just wish he was more confident. I wish he could see his value. I wish she would just go after her potential. She has so much potential. She's just not fulfilling it.

I just wish he understood or she understood how amazing they are. That sounds so lovely, right? But it's a waste of my wish because for other people to feel differently, think differently, behave differently is not my business. It's their business.

And what happens inevitably when I wish that my friend understood how amazing she is, let's just say, is my reticular activating system kicks in and starts noticing all the times when she doesn't recognize her value and her worth. And this really is a form of judgment, right? And I'm gonna become irritated or frustrated or sad for my friend. Listen, I want you to love your

## 503: Wasted Wishes

friends, but I don't think you being sad about them being sad is creating more happiness. It's creating instead more sadness, right?

So when I'm wishing for something that is not my business because it's other people's business, it's a waste of my wish. When I'm wishing for something that is God's business, like I just wish it wasn't raining right now. That's what we mean by God's business. It means like not within our realm of possibility to control.

So sometimes I use this to show people how they're wasting their wish. They'll say something like, I just wish that my dad was healthier or something. I wish my dad wasn't an alcoholic. I wish he didn't get so angry, whatever. Okay. And I'll say, I know, and I wish that I could eat whatever I want and not gain weight, but I can't. Or I'll say something even more ridiculous than that, like, I wish I could fly without getting on an airplane, like just use my arms and my body to fly from here to LA so I didn't have to drive in traffic. That's what I wish.

But I don't spend any time thinking about that because I know I can't. That's what I mean by God's business. It's just not possible given the laws of nature, etc. that we operate by. And so I don't spend time wasting my wish on thinking about how cool it would be if I didn't have to take a car or a plane or anything and I could just fly or get somewhere, right? And that's what I'm trying to illustrate when we're focused on something that's not our business.

Now this gets tricky because some of us are teachers, mentors, coaches, parents, leaders, and we get confused about what is our business. Feels confusing, right? I wanna offer to you that it's not. You being the best version of you, the best parent you can be, the best teacher, the best leader, the best coach, et cetera, whatever you are, I'm all for that. But whether or not your student, child, employee, et cetera, chooses to thrive in that environment is not your business.

It doesn't mean you're not aware of it. It doesn't mean you don't do everything in your power to influence them for good or to parent in the way



## 503: Wasted Wishes

that feels like you being the best parent, but how they receive it and whether or not they thrive in that environment is a waste of your wish. You see what I'm saying? We'll come back to what to do instead, but that's number one. If you're wishing for something that's not your business, you're wasting your wish. It's a waste of your brain power. It's a waste of your focus.

Let's go to number two. Whenever we're wishing for something in the past to be different, it's a waste of our wish. And I hear this all the time. People say, I just wish I would have made a different choice back 20 years ago when I, I don't know, married this person or chose to stay at home and raise kids instead of continuing working or going after my goals and desires. I wish that I wouldn't have listened to this person.

I wish I wouldn't have followed this advice. I wish I would have followed this advice. I wish I would have done something different. I wish this person would have done something different. I wish I would have known or that they would have known or that we would have made a different choice or done something different. We waste a lot of our wishes on the past. Why is this a waste?

Well, those of you in The Lab know I'm constantly saying, if only we had a time machine, then this would be a useful thing to think about. If we had a time machine, we could go, you know what I wish? I wish that 10 years ago I would have made a different choice and I wouldn't have eaten so much sugar, I wouldn't have gotten a sunburnt that day, etc. And let me get in my time machine. Let's go back in time and change it. But since we don't have a time machine, wasting your wish on the past, not useful. Not useful, right? It's a waste of your wish.

Alright, let's go to number three. Sometimes we waste our wishes by using them to keep ourselves in a place of inaction. Okay, here's what I mean. Let's say that I wish my business was more successful, whatever you define as success. I wish I had a more thriving business right now. I just wish that that was the case. Okay. I can sit there and wish for it, and that's

## 503: Wasted Wishes

a lot easier than just going out and growing my business, and making it more impactful, more successful, figuring out how to do that.

It feels so much more comfortable to just sit back and wish, and we say it and we talk about it and we think about it and then we sort of fool ourselves into thinking that we're progressing in some way, but we're not. We're just sitting back wishing. So when I hear the word wish around something that is your business, right? If I wish I was healthier, I wish I was stronger, I wish I was more knowledgeable about a certain area, then sometimes, and I'm not saying every time, but just check yourself, right?

Sometimes saying, I wish I knew more about that. I wish I knew how to grow a garden. I wish I was a better cook is a really convenient way to not develop ourselves, to not go learn and grow. It's a waste of a wish. Don't wish for that. Just go do it. Go make it happen or decide it's okay that you're not good at that. It's okay that you don't know how to cook. It's okay that you're not a great gardener. And stop sitting around wishing for it if you're not willing to do anything to change it.

Embrace instead that you're not good at that and that's fine. There's probably other things you're good at. You don't have to be good at everything. That's another area where we commonly waste our wish. We keep ourselves in inaction, and instead we just kind of feel bad. We just kind of use it to downplay ourselves. I don't find that to be useful.

The fourth thing we do, and this is a little bit of an overlap into number three, but we use it as a limiting belief, right, when we say, I wish I was smarter, I wish I was stronger. I just wanna sort of add on to, in number three, I talked about not taking action in the world, But in number four, we use it as a way to just write ourselves off, if you will, to keep ourselves small overall.

As I'm saying it out loud, maybe this is the same as number three. I don't know, when I was making my outline, it made sense to separate them, but we use it to make an excuse, if you will, right?



## 503: Wasted Wishes

If somebody comes along, like let's say my dentist, I'm saying this for a friend, not that I can relate to this, wink wink. If my dentist were to say, You know, it would be better if you flossed more often. Your gums would be healthier and we wouldn't have some of the potential problems that we see happening in your mouth right now. And I say, yeah, I know, I wish I could get myself to floss too, but I just can't. Right? I just can't get myself to do it, Doc. I don't know what to tell you. I've just, I've never been a consistent flosser.

It's just sort of a convenient way to write off what might be a useful thing to embrace. We are designed as human beings to grow and to continue to learn and to go through hard things, to experience hard things.

I was just listening to a reel that popped up on my Instagram. It was somebody talking about cold plunging. It was a guy and he said, I don't really even care about the health benefits.

Like he wasn't denying there could be health benefits for your nervous system and your whatever else it does for your biology, but he's like, I do it because it's super hard to do. I don't ever want to get in. And I get in anyway, and then once I get in, there's a mental challenge as to how long I'm gonna stay there. And I stay there even though I really don't want to, and then I stay even a few seconds beyond that.

And he said, that's why I cold plunge, because I'm overcoming my own brain and my own self. And I was thinking about it, and I'm not saying I'm against cold plunging at all. If you want a cold plunge, I'm sure there's lots of mental and physical benefits.

I was just thinking like, we're supposed to just be doing hard things in the world. Right? That's how we're designed. That's how God created us is to go out and do hard things. And because we don't have enough hard things, because our world has become pretty convenient and pretty easy, we have to get in an ice cold bath in order to get that experience of having to do something that we don't want to do, but we know would be good to do. And then keep doing it even when we've started and it's hard and not fun.

## 503: Wasted Wishes

And I just think it's fascinating. I think the same thing actually whenever I go to the gym and we're all on treadmills jogging along and lifting weights and I'm like, we're supposed to be doing physically hard things in the world. That's how we were designed, but our world has become so physically easy that we got to go in these rooms and pick up weights and run on treadmills like a hamster on a wheel in order to keep our bodies healthy.

And so I don't know it is what it is, I'm all for like whatever keeps you physically mentally and emotionally healthy and strong. I just always want us to connect back to like, yeah, because the way we're designed is for challenge. That's how we grow. And we will know if we're getting enough growth or not, because if we're not getting enough, we'll feel stagnant. We'll feel like we're not living into our purpose. We'll feel like something's missing. We'll feel like we're capable of something more.

We'll feel bored maybe. Maybe you don't feel that way at all. Maybe you feel overwhelmed and exhausted, which might mean you're getting too much challenge or it's not the right kind of challenge that's going to light you up.

So anyway, there's a lot to unpack there, but my point is wishing, just simply stating or thinking, I just wish I was better at that. I just wish I wasn't this kind of person. Those are limiting beliefs. Those are excuses for inaction.

So let's go to the fifth reason. I sometimes - this one, I don't see as much maybe because I work with adults. I think it comes up more in youth, but it can come up for us as adults as well. And this is using our wish as like a bid for pity or attention.

When we wish that people liked us more, right? I'm thinking about, you know, kind of some of the stories I hear that circulate amongst young people, et cetera, like I just wish people liked me more. And I actually, now that I'm saying it out loud, there's a lot of adults who feel this way too. I wish I was more accepted. I wish people thought I was smarter or prettier

## 503: Wasted Wishes

or more fun, the in-laws wanted to spend more time with us and not the others.

Now, this is only a bid for attention or pity if you're saying it out loud to people who you sort of think, and usually this is a somewhat unconscious thing that we do. We don't usually sit down and plan out, you know what, I'm gonna go tell people today that I wish they liked me better, and then they're gonna jump up and like me better. We do it somewhat unconsciously. We often do it passive aggressively, okay?

But what we're doing is wishing that we had more attention, wishing that we had more approval usually, wishing that other people would rescue us in some way. And we play these little passive aggressive games or we say it out loud and we try to manipulate people into making us feel better about ourselves.

Okay, so if you think maybe you've done this or you are doing it, don't feel bad about it. It's okay. Just pause and notice, like, this is a waste of my wish, maybe. Like, what do I want to wish for that would be so much more exciting than this?

And if you notice other people doing it, that's what, as I'm saying it out loud, I'm realizing that's what's going to come up for most of us is like, oh yeah, that's what such and so does. That's what this person does. And please don't use what I'm teaching you today as a way to judge others because the truth is we've all done it at some point and if you have people in your life who are doing it more than others it's okay. It's coming from pain and hurt and it's not something that I want you to judge others for. I want you to use this to assess yourself.

What do we do instead? How do we stop wasting our wishes? Well first of all, if we go back to the first one, right, where we talked about getting outside of our business into other people's business or into God's business, it's a pretty simple fix. Bring it back to what is your business?

If I am running a company and I have employees and I'm thinking, I just wish my employees did a better job of whatever, fill in the blank, then

## 503: Wasted Wishes

instead of getting in their business, I stop and go, wait a second, what is my business? What's mine to own in this situation?

I wish I was doing a better job of holding them accountable. I want to do a better job of articulating my expectations, being more specific and clear about my expectations, having clear consequences or rewards for when people are meeting expectations, incentivizing and motivating people, lighting a fire under people where they can feel inspired and excited about achieving the work that we're trying to do here in this company. I wish I was better at that. I'm gonna take that back and get better at my job as a leader instead of wishing they would just be different and better.

And as you can see, that would apply in so many situations as parents, as teachers, as friends, as spouses. Instead of like, I wish my sister was different, how about I'm gonna be a different kind of sister. What kind of sister do I want to be in this situation?

That is a question that I ask myself all the time when I'm doing my own self-coaching work. It's a question I'm asking my clients all the time. Who do you want to be? Instead of wishing that the circumstance was different, who do you want to be?

I think it's on Netflix, the Martha Stewart documentary, which I've only finished half of. I need to go finish the rest, but it was so good. Martha Stewart served time in jail, right? She went to prison for, I won't get into reasons why, tax evasion originally, but it ended up not even being that in the end. You can go watch the documentary and draw your own conclusion about whether or not she should have been there. I don't think she should have been there. And she was there for, I wanna say seven months.

And she was scared going in, and it was really hard on her, it sounded like. But by the end, you know who she was? Martha Stewart. By the end, she was growing a garden there on the prison grounds. She was working with other women, teaching them about gardening, and she was helping them understand how to take the prison food and make it better and do

## 503: Wasted Wishes

something creative with it. And she was like, she's Martha Stewart. You put her in prison, she's still going to be Martha Stewart. Right?

And now, let's not say she's perfect by any means, but she, in any circumstance, is herself and she can be if she chooses is what I'm saying. And she did at one point there, right? And we all have that same capacity within us. Who are you in any circumstance? It's easy to be Martha Stewart when you're living on in a beautiful big house with a big garden, but can you be here in prison? That's the question, right?

So bring it back to what is your business? All right, when we talk about being past focus, what we want to do instead, of course, is become future focused. Okay, so instead of wishing that the past could have been different, I want to offer to you to just make peace with the past. If you want help with this, to just say, listen, the past was perfect. That is the reality. That's the truth.

That's where if I'm coaching you and it's on a past issue, I'm gonna try to get you to the place where you understand that the past, nothing's gone wrong. The past was always meant to be exactly how it went. It was not supposed to be any different. And if you can get there in your head, love it.

If you can't come to [jodymoore.com/freecoaching](http://jodymoore.com/freecoaching) and I will take you there. Cause it's sometimes a little bit of a journey to get there. But the reason we want to make peace with the past is so that we can instead think about the future because the future is ours to change. We can make new decisions. We can create anything we want in the future. And it's such a waste of our wish to wish for a different past because then the brain is tied up arguing with the past instead of using that brain to create the future you want.

What do you want in the future? Now, a lot of people tell me, I don't know. I don't know what I want in the future. And that's why they'd rather just stay in a wrestle with the past. Okay, but again, with a good coach, you can discover what you want and create what you want for the future. It's such a better use of your desire, of your wish, than wrestling with the past.

## 503: Wasted Wishes

Number three and four, I kind of combined on you there, right? Living in inaction or creating limited beliefs or excuses. This is such a waste of a wish. So what we want to do instead is make peace with who we are and where we are. That we don't have to be, there's no shoulds or shouldn'ts around what's going on. And we're not behind on anything.

It's not that we should be good at this by now. We should have figured that out by now. I used to do a lot of this, right? I was like, I should know how to cook a little better. I mean, I'm a 50 year old woman. I should be more patient with my kids. I should be more organized in my business, I should understand this stuff.

Okay, well, that's a waste of a wish is what it is, right? I wish I was better at these things. If I stay in that place, again, my brain's gonna go to work finding all the proof that I'm not as far along as I should be. And what's the upside to that? Nothing. It's just judgment. It's just frustration. And you know what? I think I'm going to create something different now, if I choose that. Right?

Make peace with the things that you don't want to even be better at, and the things that you do, decide to take action. I got to say that again. Take action towards what you want. It's going to be scary. You're going to be worried you're taking the wrong action. You're going to be worried that you're not good at it and people might judge you and you might "waste" time or money. True, but we can do that or we can get in an ice bath.

Either way, our brains need to be challenged and we are designed to go do things that we kind of don't want to do but we want to have the results of and we're designed to stay in that ice bath once we get in which is now I start on learning this thing and it's actually even harder than I thought it was going to be and there's things I didn't even know I didn't know and can I keep going anyway? That's how we're designed. That is what this life is about. Because on the other side of that is extraordinary growth and development and success and contribution and all the things that we want in this life.

## 503: Wasted Wishes

And then finally, if you notice yourself sort of creating this bid for attention, bid for self pity, bid for approval. Again, whether you're doing it really directly and obviously, or more indirectly, passive aggressively, we might say, sort of manipulative kind of thing that I know I've done in my life. I don't know about you. When you notice that, what I want you to do is pause and ask yourself, what do you need, self?

So I do this all the time, I'm like, hey, Jody, what's going on? What are you needing? What need is coming up for you right now that you're not getting enough of in your life? Is it connection? Is it approval? Is it fulfillment? And I'm always gonna try to give it to myself first and foremost, and then also reach out in healthy ways through healthy means of getting it from others when I can, not in a passive manipulative way, but in a direct, vulnerable, open way.

Okay? So sometimes I do need to pause and look at myself in the mirror and go, Hey, Jody, I love you. I think you're doing a good job. Thanks for the things that you did today or last week or last year or whatever. I'm not mad at you, right? For the areas where you fell short or you didn't follow through. I'm not mad at you. It's okay. You're doing a great job. Let's keep going.

And I might need a little approval and validation of myself. But I also may reach out to a friend or a family member or a coach or someone and say can you talk me through this? I'm just kind of struggling right now. Is it all right if I open up and vent a little bit? Would you be willing to just listen? Or would you be willing to remind me that I'm doing okay?

It's perfectly okay to want some approval from others. Just be clear about it. Be honest about it, right? Don't be passive aggressive, manipulative, et cetera about it. That's a waste of a wish. I just wish people liked me better. I don't know about you, but I've heard that thought go through my head before. Just wish people saw my value. I wish people believed in me. It's such a waste of a wish, right?



## 503: Wasted Wishes

Believe in yourself, love yourself, and then go do something in the world if you want to do something in the world to help people. And ask other people to help you meet those needs in healthy, clear, direct ways. Not passive aggressive, manipulative, self-pity, etc. kind of ways. You see what I'm saying?

If you feel like you don't fit in somewhere and you wish you had more friends, reach out to people and say, I'm really trying to get to know more people. Could you invite me the next time you guys get together? I would love to be part of your group instead of, poor me, people don't like me. I don't fit in. You see what I'm saying?

All right, my friends, last but not least, instead of wishing for things, what if you just dreamed of things? What if you let yourself dream because dreaming is fun and creative and you can have giant dreams and you can go after them or you can not go after them as long as you're having fun dreaming about them?

What if instead of wishing for something you just decided to go make something happen? What if instead of wishing you committed to figuring something out and to sticking with it for a certain amount of time until you achieve a certain result until you become a certain person? Or what if instead of wishing you just played in your mind with what's possible or in the world with what you want to try out and experiment with? What if instead of wishing you imagined and explored?

Desire is a beautiful thing. I want you to allow for desire. I want you to have a good relationship with your desires. But desire with a faith in yourself, and a divine power, and lots of action-taking on your part, creates an awesome life. But wishing tends to be passive, lacking in belief and lacking in action.

Be open, be curious, keep learning, Keep trying, but stop wasting your wishes. Thanks for joining me today, everybody. I'll see you on another episode next week. Take care.

Oh wow, look at that. You made it to the end. Your time and attention is valuable, and I don't take it lightly that you made it this far. In fact, it tells me

## 503: Wasted Wishes

you might be like me; insatiably curious about people and life and potential and connection. Maybe you have big dreams but a small budget and no time. You're tired, but bored. You're content, but dissatisfied. Sound familiar? Come to a free coaching call and see for yourself what's possible: [JodyMoore.com/freecoaching](https://JodyMoore.com/freecoaching) to register. That's [JodyMoore.com/freecoaching](https://JodyMoore.com/freecoaching).