

519: Connection in Your Marriage with Brooke Castillo



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Jody Moore

[Better Than Happy](#) with Jody Moore

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How are things going in your marriage or your primary relationship in your life? Could they be better? Are they pretty good but sometimes hard or maybe downright extremely difficult? Well, then I've got quite the episode for you today. We are going to be hearing from none other than Brooke Castillo on connection in your marriage. This is episode 519 of *Better Than Happy*. Let's do it.

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 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. I'll see you there.

Hello everybody and welcome to the podcast. If your marriage is perfect, then you can just go ahead and press stop and go listen to a different episode. There's 517 others to pick from. But if you have any room to feel more comfortable in your relationship, to love more completely, to feel more seen and heard and validated and appreciated, to be able to open up and be more yourself or to stop fighting and being frustrated and resentful,

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wherever you are, if you've got any room to grow, I've got a treat in store for you today.

This is an episode that I originally recorded back in 2017 when I had Brooke Castillo come on my podcast, and her work and the way she thinks about marriages and relationships in general impacted my life so significantly that I wanted to replay this episode because my guess is either you haven't heard it or it's been so long, you've forgotten. And I love the way Brooke describes and thinks about this topic. So, without further ado, let's hear this conversation with Brooke Castillo on connection in your marriage.

Jody Moore: So thank you so much for coming. I'm really grateful to you for coming on here. I talk about you all the time, so my listeners all know the famous Brooke Castillo, and many of them listen to your podcast as well. But I spend a lot of time with my clients talking about their marriages. Obviously, our marriage is a really important relationship in our lives, but I think especially part of LDS culture is that the family is really central to everything we do, and the marriage relationship is a central part of the family.

And at times, this can be - it causes maybe some challenges, right? Because we have a lot of thoughts around that it's that you don't just quit on your marriage. You don't give up on it, which I'm all for, but that feeling of trapped or feeling of I can't find the feelings I want. I can't be at peace. I can't have the life and the relationship I want because of who I married. So anyway, I have some questions here I wanted to ask you about, but I love the way you talk about your own marriage and the way you coach on marriage as well.

Brooke Castillo: Yeah. Well, it's absolutely my pleasure to be here. I'm happy to talk about marriage. I love marriage. I think it's amazing. And just to clarify, I think some marriages do end and are complete and that's totally

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fine, in my world anyway. I mean my philosophy is not that you never quit on a marriage is that you make sure you're happy before you do. So a lot of people will say to me, why would you ever quit on a marriage if you're happy? And I think that's where a lot of misunderstanding comes from in terms of what a marriage is there for.

Jody Moore: Yes. I love that. Okay. So, I want to have you answer a couple questions here if you don't mind. So, many women I talk to feel like they're unable to connect with their husbands because he doesn't open up and communicate. Maybe he's emotionally unavailable or he's unwilling to be vulnerable, right? And I know Brené Brown talks about connection coming from being vulnerable, but when it's your marriage and your partner doesn't open up or isn't willing to, then this is really challenging for a lot of my clients.

Brooke Castillo: Well, I think one of the big misconceptions about connection is that it comes from somebody else. So people say all the time, I want to feel connected to my husband, and so therefore he needs to make me feel connected. And even if he really wanted to do that, which by the way, I don't hear a lot of men saying that's their goal in life, but if he really wanted to do that, it's impossible, right? Because the feeling of connection comes from ourselves.

And we can have a conversation with someone and walk away and say, wow, I feel very connected to them, or we can walk away and say, I feel very disconnected from them. We think the reason why we feel that way is based on what our husband said or what they did or whether they were quote-unquote vulnerable or we thought they were vulnerable or not. But that truly isn't the case. Our connection and our feeling of connection comes from our relationship with ourselves first, and then how we choose to think about our husbands. So, I say all the time that our relationships are really just our thoughts about other people.

So when you wonder whether you have a good relationship with someone or not, that is based on how you think about them. So, I have a lot of, for

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example, Jody, I have a lot of amazing thoughts about you all of the time. I think you're the most wonderful person in the world. So every time I'm with you, that's all I'm looking for. I'm looking for all the ways that you're wonderful. I'm looking for all the ways that we're connected. I'm looking for all the ways that we love each other. And that's what I find because that's what I look for, right? And that helps me determine and interpret everything you do.

So right now, the way you're looking at me, I could be like, well, that's weird. I wonder if she doesn't like me. She's not even paying attention. She's very disconnected from me, right? Or I can interpret it as, wow, she's really fascinated and interested in what I'm saying. I feel very connected to her.

We don't realize how much power we have in those relationships. And I'll tell you, I see a lot of women especially doing this where they have what I call a manual. They have some guidelines on how they want their husband to show up to prove that he is connected. So, he may come and say, hey, I want to tell you my deepest darkest feelings because that's what you've asked him to do, but that's not coming from a genuine and authentic place for him. He's just doing what you've told him to do in that manual.

So you may feel more connected to him after he does this thing that you've asked him to do, but are you truly more connected? That's the crazy thing to think about. He's followed this script that you've possibly given to him, and then you give yourself permission to feel connected. And that's a huge mistake because it perpetuates the manual creation. Then you just want more of this script, and then the authenticity of your marriage becomes more awkward and contrived because he can't just show up as he is. He has to show up and in some ways pretend to be more vulnerable and connected than he is.

Jody Moore: What do you think is the difference between feeling connected to your spouse and feeling love for your spouse? Or is it the same?

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Brooke Castillo: I think it's different. So for me, it's the thoughts that cause it, right? So for me, connected means I'm open to what he says. I'm listening. I'm present to what he says. And for me, I think a lot of people think connected means he shows up and says things I want to hear. He pays attention to me, he has time for me, right? Whereas I feel like connected is I'm present to who he is and what he does in a way that is very accepting.

And I think love is something that I feel because of how I what I focus on with him, right? So I focus on all the things I love about him, then I'm going to feel love. Another mistake a lot of people make is they think love comes from another person, right? So they think in order for me to feel loved, my husband has to "love" me as if somehow his feeling of love will jump into my body when he does a certain action, right? Or if he says a certain thing.

And I think that is one of the hugest mistakes people make. And I think it's challenging to wrap our minds around because we're actually raised to believe that when people love us that we feel their love. And it's actually not the case. We actually they do things, they may feel love towards us and we interpret that and therefore feel our own love. What do you think the difference is between love and connection?

Jody Moore: Well, I agree. I think that connection for me, I like to teach my clients that they can connect with someone without the other person participating at all.

Brooke Castillo: Yes. So true.

Jody Moore: Yeah. Especially teenagers, for example, who don't want to participate many times, but to, I was just coaching a gentleman today who was saying, well my I talk to my son, he doesn't listen to me. He's not making eye contact. And I asked him, well what was he doing? He was on his phone. I said, what was he doing on his phone? Playing a game. And I said, do you know what game it is? No, I don't know. I don't really care, right? So I'm like, so you're also not listening to your son, right?

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So you're saying I'm important. What I have to say is important. You should listen. You should pay attention to me. You have no interest in paying attention to him, in understanding his world. What is it that he loves about that game? Why is he so fascinated in that game? Why is that game more important than what you're saying? So I think connection, I always also use the, I always say, no, I am best friends with Kelly Ripa. She doesn't know it, but I watch her hairstyle change. I, like I feel connected to her. She was on in the hospital room when I was giving birth. I remember being like, Kelly, it's time, my baby's coming.

Brooke Castillo: It was important for her to know that. Actually, that's actually a really interesting example because we're both teachers and we both have podcasts. And I have people tell me all the time that they feel very, very connected to me. Well, how is that possible, right? How could you feel connected to me if I'm not even at your home?

Jody Moore: Yeah, you're not listening to them.

Brooke Castillo: Right. Exactly. I'm probably playing a video game right now. Right? But so think about this, you guys, like if you feel connected to me or you feel connected to Jody, how can that be if we're not following the manual that you have? It's because you've chosen to feel that way. And you can do that exact same skill, that is a skill, you can do that exact same thing with your husband regardless of how he shows up. I mean, I'm always saying like, I want to be in a marriage where my husband just gets to be exactly who he is. And I just get to celebrate exactly who he is all the time because wouldn't that be amazing?

I say this all the time, like if you were so in love with someone that everything they did was just a joy, wouldn't that be a great life? And that truly is a choice. Like you can celebrate everything that your husband does and you will feel more connected. Or what most of us do is we look for how he's not helping or not showing up or not connecting or not being vulnerable, and then we block any kind of connection that is available.

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Jody Moore: Well, that brings me to the next question is, I wanted you to talk about how do you make requests and communicate with your spouse things that would be useful or requests that you want to make without being disappointed when he can't or doesn't meet them.

Brooke Castillo: Yeah. So my philosophy has been, so I had a lot of therapy when I was younger, and one of the things they used to tell us in therapy was like, figure out what your needs are, and then communicate them to the other person and then wait to be disappointed was what I was doing. Right? And so you get into these marriages and you're like, okay, here's my list of needs. Now give me yours. Now let's spend a lot of time trying to fulfill each other's needs, which we're probably going to be terrible at.

And when I met Chris, one of the things that we decided was, hey, like we're both adults. How about you meet your own needs and I'll meet my own needs and we'll just get together and have a really good time. And that's what we do. Like, I don't rely on Chris to meet my needs. I think that is prison, right? Especially if it's not something that he wants to do.

Now, that does not mean that I don't make requests of him like, hey, it would be great if. I let him know what I love, but then I don't rely on him to do that in order to feel a certain way. So if I say to him, hey, I love to get flowers on Valentine's Day, which by the way, a lot of women have requests about things that they want, but then they don't even tell their husbands about them.

Jody Moore: They want him to know.

Brooke Castillo: Yeah, like he should just know. He's like, oh, I hope my husband does something great for my birthday. I'm like, I hope you told him exactly what that is. Chances are going to be increased if you let him know exactly what you want. So if I say to him, I would love a dozen roses on Valentine's Day, I don't make that mean that it's any less romantic than him thinking about that on his own. I think that is a huge mistake that a lot of women make because, you know, here's the truth.

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Like when it comes to Chris, like that's not his forte, coming up with great ideas of things that I would love that are super romantic. And I'm okay with that because I'm really good at coming up with things he can do that are super romantic, and I just tell him to do them and he does and it's fantastic, right? But if he doesn't do them, I'm totally okay with that too. Like if he doesn't buy me flowers, if I said, hey, I would love some flowers and he doesn't buy them for me, it's totally fine. Like I'm super happy anyway.

Jody Moore: So what is the thought you direct to? If you said, I really want you to buy me flowers and he doesn't...

Brooke Castillo: And he doesn't buy me flowers, what thought do you have?

Jody Moore: Yeah, what thought do you have that makes you okay with it?

Brooke Castillo: Oh my gosh, he loves me anyway. Flowers aren't going to determine whether he loves me or not and I'm perfectly fine without flowers and I'm going to make out with him whether he likes it or not. It's Valentine's Day, right? So I mean, I was just coaching someone the other day and she was talking about her marriage and she was talking about how resentful she is that she has to do everything.

So she has to like clean the house and take care of the kids and it wouldn't occur to him to go buy diapers. It wouldn't occur to him that we're out of, you know, baby food and all this stuff. And she said, am I missing something or does it really suck that he doesn't help? And I said, well, there's two ways you can look at it. You can look at it that it totally sucks that he doesn't help and he should think more about baby food, or you can just decide that you're the one that's going to do the baby food and the diapers and you're the best one to do that and I mean that's what I kind of think.

Like I'm the one that should do these things that I'm doing because I want to do them and my kid needs some food and I'm all-in on taking care of him and I'm not going to be resentful that my husband doesn't do it. And if I ask

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him to do it and I tell him that I would like for him to do it and he doesn't do it, I'm still not going to be mad about it. And you know what that gives me is the opportunity to never be mad. And that's what makes my marriage great.

Now, people will stomp their feet and say, but that's not fair. He should do half of the work. But only if you think he should. And I think that I mean, really, people don't understand that when you think he should do half the work, you create misery for yourself immediately. And when you change that thought to, he should do the work he's doing and I should do the work I'm doing, then all of a sudden you're in a much happier marriage immediately just by changing the one thought.

Jody Moore: Well, it's the example you and I were talking about earlier where my husband's out of town and like I have to do it all now, but it's in some ways not as stressful because I don't have that expectation. I don't have the thought that he should help or he should know which he does help a lot, but it's different when I just know.

Brooke Castillo: Yeah. Right? This the same exact thing happens to Chris, my husband with our teenage boys. Like we drive in, we've been on a date, we drive into the garage and this is what he says to me. He goes, I really hope they've cleaned up the house. And I said to him, I said, I can't even imagine a worse thought to think right now because it's pretty, I mean it's like a 150% guarantee that they haven't. And so even just saying that, it's like an immediate setup for disappointment.

So it's like I don't expect that will happen because it never happens. Right? It doesn't mean that there's not a consequence for it not happening. It doesn't mean that we don't, you know, which is different than with a husband, right? With a child, you set an expectation and there's a consequence for not doing it. But I always expect that they won't do it. And then if they do, it's like a pleasant surprise, but most of the time they don't and that's okay and here's the consequence. So I think that kind of channeling those expectations, the less expectations you have about how other people should behave, the happier you're going to be.

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Jody Moore: Now, I completely agree with you, but I'm just trying to get in the head of some of my listeners right now who are like, hold on a second. You're saying I should just do everything and be fine with it and not expect any help from him, and how can that be okay?

Brooke Castillo: Well, what you're doing now is doing everything and not being okay with it. So what you're saying is I should do everything and be okay with it? And you want me to say, no, you should do everything and not be okay with it. Like if those are my two choices, I'd rather do everything and be okay with it. Because you're going to do it all anyway. Let's be real. Like you're not going to let your baby go without diapers. You're not going to let your baby go without, you know, food and cleaning the house and all of that, and you might as well be, I like to feel, I used to go through this more with my business, like, why am I the one that has to create the business? Why am I the one that has to create the strategy for the business? Why am I the one that has to like set all the goals and everything?

And I was telling this to one of my friends and she's like, who better than you to do that? And it was like one of those moments where I was like, oh, yeah, I should be the one that does that. But I am going to be the one. I was already doing it but just complaining about it. And all I did was still do it and just stop complaining about it. And when I stopped complaining about it, I started giving myself credit for it and I started feeling proud about it. I started feeling good about it. I started doing a better job at it and I stopped like ragging on my husband about it and getting mad at him that he wasn't doing it. It changed everything. So I think people think, well, I'm only going to do this with resentment. Okay, but you're going to do it anyway. You might as well drop the resentment.

Jody Moore: So good. I also think that it's such a waste of our brain power and our energy to spend it on that, on trying to change him, whereas why not get more creative about how to make it easier, how to get your kids to help, how to hire some help. Like there's a lot of other options, but you're

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not seeing any of them when you're just fixated on that one thing that has to change.

Brooke Castillo: Well, and I think it comes from this place that life should be fair and that we should do an equal amount and that people should be different than they are and that this man that I married should be different than he is. And we love him and, you know, honor him and all of that, but it would just be great if he just wouldn't be him. Right? And we don't, it's such poison. It's like we don't understand. And we do the same things to ourselves, by the way. We beat ourselves up for who we are.

And I feel like when we can find this space where he really genuinely gets to be who he is. Now, let me just tell you, in my marriage when I started just accepting Chris exactly how he is and not expecting him to be any different, that's a really beautiful space to live in. And from that space when I would make a request from him to ask him to do something, the chances of him doing it were like so much higher because it was coming from a loving place versus from this resentful awful nagging kind of place.

So, I understand where your listeners are probably going to be coming from like, well, oh great, I have to do everything. I have to take responsibility. and I shouldn't have to. And if you can shift that to, yeah, I'm the one. I got this. I'm going to take responsibility. I'm going to manage this because I'm a woman and that's how I roll, then you can really start building your own capability and confidence versus feeling sorry for yourself, which I'll tell you what, if you're in any kind of self-pity when you're in a marriage, you're going to have a much, much harder time with everything you do within that marriage, for sure.

Jody Moore: Awesome. Okay. Last question is, I loved your podcast called Someone to Love. I'll link to it in the show notes. Really good. Tell us in a nutshell, I love when you talked about the question like if this is true, if I'm just doing it all, why even be married?

Brooke Castillo: I don't know what I said. Was it great?

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Jody Moore: I'll remind you then you can allow.

Brooke Castillo: Oh no, I know. My purpose for being married, is that what you mean?

Jody Moore: Yeah, why get married? If I'm just going to do it all and he's not going to help.

Brooke Castillo: Yeah. So I talk about this and you guys can listen to it in the podcast, but I love the idea that Chris's only job is just to be there for me to love him. Right? And I got this idea and I really do believe that he's just the source of my he like, you know how a lot of times we look in a marriage and we say, oh, they just trigger everything that makes me angry. Like what if your husband could just trigger everything that made you feel love? Like if every time you saw him, there was just another reason to love.

And I honestly, when I was learning this idea of unconditional love and recognizing that unconditional love is something that we do for ourselves. I mean, it's kind of like when you think about your relationship with God, right? It's all about loving and being loved. And I mean, for me, it feels like I'm doing all of that work for my own sake. Right? It's not like, I don't feel like I'm loving God so he'll feel good. He's good. He's all set, right? I'm loving him because it feels good to me, right? Amazing to me to do that.

And so, and that's the same thing, that's what I feel towards Chris, is I just feel like he's just there to give me an opportunity to love someone. And it's kind of like when you have a pet, like why do you have, I mean, I do compare my animals to the people in my house. They are all people in my house. But like if you think about like an animal, like every time you see them, you're just delight in them. You just love them and how wonderful that is for you. And the dog does the same thing back. Like it's just like if all relationships could just be like, I haven't seen you in five minutes. Oh my god, hi. So great. You're still so cute. Right? If that's how we could be in our marriages, we would just enjoy them so much more.

Jody Moore: Did I remember anything I said?

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Brooke Castillo: Yes, that was perfect. Thank you.

Jody Moore: Okay. Okay. Well thank you so much. Anything, I do just want to say actually that I think everyone should study Brooke's work because as everybody knows, it's she's the one who trained me. I just love everything that you create. It's helped me so much. And I know you offer a lot of help through your Self-Coaching Scholars program. Is there anything else that you want to share with anybody listening about how to find you or get help from you?

Brooke Castillo: Yeah, I mean, go to thelifecoachschool.com. I would love to have you come into self-coaching scholars if you want to take all this work to the next level. I mean, one of the things that Jody and I discussed is that she's a lot nicer than I am. So...

Jody Moore: It's true. I won't lie.

Brooke Castillo: What if you want a coach that's really gentle and lovely, I'm not your girl. But yeah, no, I would love, I love everything you're doing, Jody. I'm so proud of you and so excited for what you've created. So, maybe everybody start there. And then if you feel like you're just not getting pushed hard enough, then come on over to me.

Jody Moore: I'll break you in, then you can go.

Brooke Castillo: Exactly. It's just a little warm up.

Jody Moore: Right. Well, thank you so much, Brooke. Thanks again for your time. I appreciate it.

Brooke Castillo: Thanks for having me.

—

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 you might be like me; insatiably curious about people and life and potential

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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 to register. That's JodyMoore.com/freecoaching.