

521: Friendship Is a Thought



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With Your Host

Jody Moore

[Better Than Happy](#) with Jody Moore

521: Friendship Is a Thought

Ah, friends. Such an amazing and complicated part of life, right? Starting when we're about six years old, we start learning that there's such a thing as friendship, and it can either make our lives a lot more comforting, a lot sweeter, a lot more fun, or it can add a lot of drama and challenge.

And so whether you are an adolescent, a young adult, a more mature adult, whatever phase of life you're in, maybe you have challenges with your friendship groups. Maybe you have had friendships end, or maybe you want to make more friends. Whatever the situation, we're going to tackle it today. This is *Better Than Happy*, episode 521: Friendship Is a Thought.

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.

Hey there, everybody. How's it going? Today is July 4th, and I'm getting ready to go hang out with friends at their pool and have some good food and then hang out with family and then see some fireworks. And I hope that you are doing something fun to celebrate if you celebrate this holiday or

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that whatever you're up to, you're having a great summer with lots of good memory building.

Today, I want to talk about friendship for two reasons. First of all, I have a group of amazing coaches that I'm training right now. And we just did an assessment as we wrapped up the first phase of their three-part training. And in one of them, we kind of identify which of these sentences are facts and which ones are stories. And the one that was missed the most often was this sentence that said, "We have been friends for 10 years."

Okay, a lot of people listed that as a fact. And I would argue that's a story. So I realized I haven't done a very thorough job of teaching that concept, and I thought I would just teach it to everyone here on the podcast, why I believe friendship is a thought, friendship is a story, and why thinking about it in that way has made my life and my friendships and my other relationships so much better. And let's see if that's the case for you as well.

The second reason is because we had a question come in a little while ago from one of you that I'm going to go ahead and play here. Let's listen to the question, and then we'll dive into this topic on friendship.

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Caller: Hi, Jody. Thank you for all that you do. I was wondering if you could do a podcast on making friends as an adult. This is something I've really struggled with. About three years ago, I had a traumatic event where, you know, I probably needed my friends the most, and I had three what I considered good friends that decided right at the time not to be friends with me for what I considered stupid reasons. Two of them because I didn't want to vaccinate my kids, and the third because I voted for Trump.

And, you know, I don't care about politics, so I don't choose friends that way, but now it's like, I don't want to waste my time. I live in a liberal state, and if people are going to hold that against me, like, I don't want to put so much effort into friendships if, you know, they're going to just end it with because of that or because of any other stupid reason. And I have a lot of

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social anxiety, and so it's like really hard for me to do. I own a business that's very profitable, and I have two little kids, and so I easily just put all my time into that. But, you know, I don't have any close friends for the past three years, and it does feel like I'm missing something from my life, but struggle to get my brain to take that next step. Thanks for your help.

Okay, thanks so much to the woman who called in with that question. By the way, if you have a question, you can always call and leave it on our hotline. It's 1-888-HI-JODY-M. It's Jody with a Y and M as in Moore. But I want to talk about friendship today in the context of this question and why I say friendship is a thought and just give you a bunch of things I've coached people on a lot when it comes to this topic of feeling left out or struggling with friend relationships.

The reason I say friendship is a thought is because if you've listened to me very much, you know that one of the things we will do, a tool that we will sometimes use in coaching is to separate out facts from stories or thoughts. And when we say something like she's my friend, or we've been friends for 10 years, that to me is a story because how do we know that you're friends?

There's no way to clearly define it, right? We couldn't make it factual enough to prove it in a court of law because everybody has a different idea of what friendship means. Even though it's a story or thought that serves us, most of us, most of the time. If we have a thought, she's my friend, that usually gives me some positive thoughts, or it helps me notice what I like and approve of about her. It helps me feel maybe safe around her, might help me open up in a way that I want to have better connections. And it also, hopefully, allows me to think about her and how I might validate her, support her, be there for her.

The idea of friendship is a really useful concept, but again, there's no blood test. I couldn't take you to the doctor and be like, can you draw blood for

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these two women and let's see if they're really friends? We can't prove it scientifically, right? In fact, some of you so kindly will say to me all the time, we're friends, you just don't know it. You don't know me, but I know you, right? You feel like you have this connection with me because you listen to me here on this podcast. And I can relate to that. I feel that way about other teachers and leaders and people that I follow. I feel like we're friends, even though I know we're not.

We just want to begin from the premise, from the understanding that friendship is just a thought. And it's important to know because just like we all grow up with different ideas about what marriage is going to be like or should be like, what a husband should be like, what a wife should be like, what a spouse or partner should be like, we also have these unquestioned usually, even unaware stories about what a friend is. We have these expectations of friendship.

As soon as in my mind I label someone my friend, then I probably have just put expectations on them without them knowing it of how I think they should behave, and expectations on myself of how I expect myself to behave around them. Now, I'm all for you having expectations, but if those expectations are unmet, then we have an interesting situation to take a look at, right?

So, ideally, when we have a friend, both she and I have similar enough expectations that we have a lot of overlap, right? She shows up for me the same way that I hope that she would, and I do the same for her, probably in many cases, and then it works well, right? And sometimes some of those expectations or norms are kind of developed as we spend more time together, but still, in most cases, they are unwritten, unspoken, sort of assumed expectations.

Again, nothing wrong with it as long as people are meeting for the most part our expectations. My friend is meeting mine and I'm meeting hers, and then we're happy, and we call each other friends, and we don't have a problem. But if at some point somebody doesn't meet that expectation,

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right? So let's take this caller's example where, first of all, she said a lot of things that I want to point out are also just stories or thoughts.

It's okay that she has these stories and thoughts, but they're not facts. She thinks she's describing to us what's happened with her and these three other women, I assumed they were women, I think she said that, in her life. But what she's telling us is her interpretation of what happened, her version of the story. And I'm not saying it's wrong or inaccurate, I'm just saying it's not factual, right? So for example, she said, they decided not to be friends with me.

Okay? Now, I want you to pause for just a moment. When you hear that description, they decided not to be friends with me because I chose not to vaccinate my children and because I voted for Trump, right? What does that mean? You probably have a guess in your mind. I have a guess in my mind about what happened. In my mind, I'm picturing that they just sort of quit reaching out to her, maybe stopped responding or maybe they were just really slow to respond or they were really short and cold in their responses if she ever reached out to them. And she started to get the feeling they don't want to connect with me, they don't want to, they don't want to be friends anymore, right?

Or what else could have happened? Maybe someone came right out and said to her, hey, we're not comfortable being friends with you anymore because of your political views and some of your decisions. Or maybe one of them, you know, was overheard talking to the other one about her and how they don't like her and don't want to be friends, and somebody else heard and they told her. Like, we don't even know what happened, right? We don't know the facts. We know her interpretation of the facts. They decided not to be friends with me, okay?

Now, just interesting to notice, this is just our interpretation. Now, just like the thought we're friends can serve us, this thought, they decided not to be friends with me, is probably in her mind creating some kind of feeling of

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rejection, and also she is probably without even being aware of it choosing not to be a friend to them either.

This is what we do, right? If we feel like people are not responding, they're not, you know, reaching out to us, they're not supportive of us, we stop responding, we stop reaching out, we stop being supportive of them. Now, again, I'm not saying you shouldn't. I'm just saying we become the very thing that we accuse other people of. They're not being my friend, so I'm not going to be a friend to them, but I'm going to feel bad that I don't have them as friends because what I really want is for them to be my friend. So I'll stop being a friend in the way that I define it.

Do you see how this is crazy? It just like contributes to the very thing we're saying that we don't want. That is how the human brain works. Okay? The other thing I want to point out in this caller's question is she said, I'm just kind of leery now about making new friends because I don't want to put in the effort. I don't want to waste time if it's going to end this way. I have social anxiety, it's not easy to do. I don't want to do the work if it's not going to pay off in the way that I want.

In other words, what her brain is telling her is, hey, your expectations about what friendship means weren't always met in the past. That could happen again in the future. To which I say, absolutely, it probably will happen in some form or another in the future, right? That someone won't meet your expectations at some point of what friendship should be because we all have our own interpretation of that.

So, does that mean that it's a waste of time? And what do you mean by putting in effort? What is the effort that you're putting in? And what is the payoff you hope will happen on the other end? So, the solution to all of this, and I'm going to talk more about kind of maybe meeting people. We can maybe dive into that a little bit, but I think what meeting people usually isn't the challenge, right? You can be in the grocery store and meet people. Anywhere you go, you just start talking to someone, you're going to meet people.

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The challenge is in getting to know people on a deeper level, actually connecting with people in maybe social settings or other situations where you can really get to know each other and being open and vulnerable enough and finding people that are also willing to do the same so that you can connect on a deeper level. That's what we truly crave usually when we talk about friendship. People that we feel like know us on more than just a surface level, who we know on more than just a surface level. And therefore, we can be somewhat real if you will, let down our guard around them to a certain extent, and that we feel supported around, right?

So that comes from a deeper level of knowing. And if knowing someone that way is going to come for you with a caveat, then you're right, it's not going to be worth your effort. So, my suggestion is that you loosen up your grip on your expectations of what friendship is. And I'm not saying let people take advantage of you. I'm not saying that you wouldn't want to have boundaries or even clearly communicate your desires and expectations to your friends.

Do that all day long. But if you're going to give over the control over your emotions to whether or not people behave in the way that you think they should, that's when you may be setting yourself up for problems. It's not people's behavior that creates the problem. It's your expectation that they should be different that creates the problem.

Okay? So what do we do in a situation like this where this woman talks about having known these people for I don't know how long. Can't remember if she said that or not. But now suddenly, you know, due to their discomfort with her political opinions, for whatever reason, I don't know what happened again, but they seemed to have changed the way they're interacting with her, right?

What do we do? Well, first of all, one of my favorite go-to tools so that you don't just become the very thing you're accusing them of, right, of sort of avoiding and being cold and distant and not reaching out and all that. Instead of that, I recommend you begin with telling the whole truth. What is

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the whole truth? The whole truth is usually somewhat contradictory and messy. It doesn't exactly make sense because it includes your desires, your experience, right? A little bit of, man, I was really surprised at this. I was surprised at that behavior. I wasn't expecting it. I was really disappointed to be honest because I really wanted us to stay close, and I was kind of confused even.

Notice how I'm trying to give them the benefit of the doubt here. I'm not accusing them. I'm just sharing these were my feelings. Maybe even I felt hurt because I expected a certain kind of reaction that I didn't get. That's part of the truth is your experience, your maybe even your desires and your wishes. I wish that we could be open and honest. I wish that we could understand our differences and not let it come between us, right?

But the second half of the truth is about how much you care about them, right? It has to give them the benefit of the doubt, and you have to spend some time thinking about this, by the way, before you say it out loud if that's appropriate to do. And so you have to try to see it from their point of view. You have to try on, I understand that maybe that felt really threatening to you, or maybe you have really strong political views and my opinions feel like a violation of some of your values or morals even. I understand people have strong opinions about Trump and vaccines and things, right? I totally get where you're coming from, and I get that maybe that felt threatening or uncomfortable to you or that, you know, for whatever reason, you didn't feel safe around me anymore. I can see where that might be possible. Now, this takes some real maturity, you guys, because the brain wants to go, what? That's ridiculous. It's just politics. Who cares?

Why would they feel threatened by it? You have to let that go and try to go, of course, it makes perfect sense that they feel how they feel, right? Or you also can own part of the truth is usually like, I could be wrong about what's even going on for you. I'm making some assumptions that might be totally wrong. All I know is I miss you and I care about you. And I think that we're all doing the best we can, and I think we do a good job, and then some

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days and other days we don't. And I would just love for us to be able to be close again at some point.

Right? Just telling the whole truth. And maybe you don't want to be close again, and maybe you don't even want to tell the whole truth to them, but for your own healing purposes of moving past friendships that suddenly have changed or what you might consider ended, telling the whole truth, which is the part where you have desires and feelings and experiences, but you also can totally understand where they're coming from, and you want to keep caring about them. Whether they want to be in your life in the same way or not, it's going to feel so much better to you if you move on and still wish them well and hope the best for them and inside you just send them love.

That is going to serve you, my friend, so much better than carrying around bitterness or hurt or what you called trauma, because now that's preventing you from making new friends. Your brain is telling you it's not safe to care about people and to let people care about you because they may not behave according to your expectations. And what I am saying is it's the best life to care about people and to let them care about you when they choose to, and they may not always meet your expectations, and that's okay.

It's also okay to feel disappointed and hurt when that happens. But don't let that change you in a way that makes you harder or more guarded or less open to loving others. Let it refine you in a way that makes you softer and more open and more understanding and curious and compassionate with others. That is the ideal, right?

So, last thing I want to say about this topic because I've coached a lot of people on this topic, whether they're feeling left out. Again, tell the whole truth, first and foremost to yourself. Get to love and compassion for everyone in the story. Let go of or minimize your expectations. Understand that other people have different expectations, and it's totally fine that we all have different ideas of what friendship is. Communicate it anytime you want

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to, set a boundary when you need to, but let go of thinking that you have the right way, the right definition of friendship, because you don't. You just have a definition of friendship. I have a definition of friendship. It's not the right one. It's just mine. It's the kind of friend I want to be. It's not the same as the kind of friend that everybody else who I'm consider a friend chooses to be. And that's okay.

But finally, this will change everything for those of you out there trying to meet people, trying to make new friends. First of all, this is one of the things I love the most about being a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is it provides such a beautiful natural environment for making friends. So, go to church. Whether you go to the church I go to or you want to go to another church, find a church, go to church. It's a great place to make friends because people are usually there because they're trying to better themselves, they're trying to connect with God and spirituality, and it's about love and connection. It's just a good place where you're probably going to find, you know, especially if you are a member of a church, you're going to find people that have similar values and things to you which makes for a really natural, ideal friendships in many cases.

Or if you don't belong to a church, go to the LDS church. We would love to have you, and tons of people will approach you and want to be your friend if you go there. But if you don't want to go to a church, maybe keep an eye out for other situations. You know, do your kids have moms that you could become friends with? Do your kids play sports that you could become friends with the other parents of the kids on the teams? Do you want to volunteer somewhere? Go do some kind of activity or event or get your family involved in something where you're going to be around people and meet people.

But as you're meeting people, here's the key to all of this. Stop thinking about yourself. Because that kind of nervous social anxiety that we have comes from our brain's default setting, which is to think about us. Oh, did I say the right thing? Did that sound dumb? I shouldn't have said that. I

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shouldn't have worn this outfit. They probably think I'm stupid. I shouldn't have made that comment. I think I might have offended them.

This still happens to me all the time, by the way. I don't know about you, but even as a more mature now woman who has a lot of experience and a lot of knowledge about this, my brain still offers it up all the time. You shouldn't have said that thing. I'm pretty sure they didn't like it when you said that. I'm pretty sure they talked about you later saying, can you believe she said that? She's kind of difficult or she's kind of whatever. That still happens to me on the regular, okay?

But what I do is I go, oh, you thought this was about you, Jody. No, this isn't about you because, first of all, you're not for everyone. So, it might be true. Maybe you did say something you shouldn't have said, and maybe it's something you want to apologize for, or maybe not. Maybe it's something you stand by and it's just okay that they didn't care for it, right? But you're never going to please everyone. It's okay.

This is about them. What is interesting about them? What are they worried about? What's amazing about them? What's fascinating about them? What's cool about them? What can I get to know about them? How do I get to know this person better? What is unique about them? Everybody is interesting, you guys. Everybody is, and everybody's lovable. And the more you get to know someone, the easier it is to love them.

If you are having a hard time loving someone, it's probably because you don't really know them. And you don't have to get to know everybody, but if you want to make some friends, go try to get to know some people. Drop your agenda about what they're going to do for you, how they're going to show up for you. Some of them aren't going to be anything like what you want a friend to be. And that's fine. You're going to get to know that person and have a moment of connection and then maybe move on and maybe that's the end of the relationship. But others will have similar overlapping ideas about friendship, and it will be a natural fit.

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But if you go out into the world looking for what's lovable about people, what's amazing about people, what's cool and interesting and unique and fascinating and heartbreaking about people, you will never want for friends. There will be more friends than you know what to do with. That is my wish for you. Is that you will direct your brain away from worrying about you over to thinking about and being curious and fascinated about them. Because loving other people, supporting and being there for other people, there's no better feeling than that.

And if your brain's like, but what about me? I need people to support me and love me. And I say, yeah, of course you do. That will happen naturally though, the more you go support and love other people. And the best part is, you'll still want that sometimes. You can reach out for that when you need it, but you won't need it very often because when you're good at loving other people and supporting other people, you have to also be good at loving and supporting yourself.

I still believe, I've said this before, but I'll say it again, that we cannot love and support and appreciate other people more than we love and support and appreciate ourselves. So wherever your limit is at loving on yourself is going to be your limit at loving on others. For those of you in the lab, our July workshop, which by the time this episode airs, I will have already taught it. So if you missed it, go listen to it on the replay, but it's all about how to enjoy being you. We've got to work on you loving you so that you can do a better job of loving other people. That's how it goes with human behavior.

All right, you guys, thanks for being here today on the podcast. I've got some fun announcements coming up in some future episodes. So, we're going to be doing some opportunities to come and hang out with me live this fall. I'm kind of into live stuff lately, if I'm being honest. I just like being in the room with you. I like seeing your face. I like getting to know you.

And I don't know, maybe it's the world of AI or post-COVID or something, but I just, I want to be with real people in real time. And so we've got some

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opportunities coming up for that. Stay tuned. Otherwise, thanks for being here. I love you. I'll see you on the next episode. 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 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 to register. That's JodyMoore.com/freecoaching.