

557: What Being Nice Is Really Costing You



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With Your Host

Jody Moore

[Better Than Happy](#) with Jody Moore

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The real problem with being too nice is that it's lying. It's anywhere from pretending at best to lacking in integrity or lying at worst. Today we're going to dive into why that's true, why people still do it so much anyway, and how to get rid of this toxic part of your life. Welcome to *Better Than Happy*: What Being Nice Is Really Costing You.

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, everybody. Welcome to the podcast. Thanks for joining me today. I have a great topic in store for you today. It's been coming up left and right all over the place. It's especially problematic for women because women are so nice, and it comes up the most in like church settings or maybe at your job or maybe in your interpersonal life or in your marriage or with your kids or in your friendships, or actually it can come up all over the place. We're going to dive into some of those examples today. I'm going to talk to you about what it's actually costing you because we need to prove to this

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part of your brain that thinks it's useful that it's really not. And then I'm going to give you some tips and strategies to try to move out of operating from this place.

So, I call this episode What Being Nice Is Really Costing You because I think there are some obvious costs. Most people who have this problem of being overly nice too much of the time recognize that it's a problem. They often say to me, like, I know this isn't serving me. I know I need to be more honest and I need to speak my mind or they might say I need to stand up for myself or things like this, right? But what they think it's costing them is that people are taking advantage of them. People are walking on them, they might say, right? They feel walked on. And that is a problem. That is a result of it. First of all, if you have this problem, don't be shocked when people behave this way around you, in a way that you might call taking advantage of you, or that they continue to ask you for favors or for help or for service.

If I have a friend who almost always says yes to me whenever I ask her for something, I ask her to drive me to the airport, she works it out. I ask her to help out with something with my kids, she finds a way. Then my brain memorizes that and the next time I need a favor, I don't think about the people who say no, the people who aren't willing to help me, the people who seem like they're not willing to, I think about the ones that say yes. That's how a healthy human brain works. So if you ever find yourself saying things like, gosh, I've already done so much for the school. I've already given them so much or I've already served so much at my church, why do they keep asking me for more? The answer is in the question. It's because you give so much. It's because you serve so much, and we go to the ones that we think are most likely to say yes, okay?

So that's just number one. Take that on and own like, oh, I've created this dynamic where I'm always the one getting asked. Good news, I can create a different dynamic if I choose to. All right. Next thing, there is an amazing Taylor Swift song about her grandma called Marjorie. And there's a couple

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statements in there that fit really well with today's episode. I'm assuming these are things that Taylor's grandma used to say, really good advice, like, never be so kind you forget to be clever, and never be so clever you forget to be kind, right?

So, think about it. People who are clever, what do we mean by that? Maybe people who are lots of fun, people who can joke around and have a good time, people who maybe have clever ideas. They think outside the box in some way. They're able to be present and playful typically is what we think of, right? And if I'm being too kind, I lose access to that clever side of me. At the same time, we don't want to be so clever, so funny, so up for a laugh that we forget to be kind. I know you understand this. I'm just breaking it down because we're talking to a primitive part of your brain that thinks it would be best if you just pleased everyone all the time, as though that's even a thing. And if you didn't upset anybody or offend anybody or whatever, and we need to, again, retrain that part of the brain.

Marjorie, Taylor's grandma, also says, never be so polite you forget to wield power. And never wield so much power you forget to be polite. Brilliant, right? Being too polite is powerless. It looks like, uh huh, yeah, okay, that sounds good. Yeah, no, thank you. No, thank you. Right? You know that feeling? Gosh, I hate when I slip into that version of me. I do it at times. We probably all do it at times. When I meet somebody that I think is extremely smart or successful or important, or who I really hope to impress in some way, or who I really respect and admire, maybe I've put them on some kind of a pedestal in my mind, I become so polite, I'm suddenly this powerless little cowardly mouse. Do you do this or is it just me? Okay? We have to remember like that is not a very powerful stance. It's actually not very attractive. We're not drawn to people who behave that way. It's certainly not serving me and it's probably not even serving the person I'm meeting.

So, how do we wield a little more power? One of the things I learned from Dr. Benjamin Hardy that helped me a lot was he talks about a powerful yes and a powerful no, right? A weak yes looks like us just saying yes without

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even thinking about it. A powerful yes is, hmm, maybe, let me think about it if necessary. Let me really consider this and asking lots of questions.

I remember my daughter years ago, a couple years ago anyway, she was in high school and they asked her at church to do a special volunteer position because they were starting a social media account. And they wondered if she would be one of the youth that was in charge of this social media account. And I'm so used to just going, oh, sure, yeah, I'd be happy to, because I think I'm supposed to say yes and I want to be helpful, right? My daughter didn't do this. She was such a great example of asking lots of questions. She asked questions like, what do you think it will look like exactly if I do this? How much time do you think that will take? What will be expected of me? Who else will I be working with? Will there be other meetings I'll be expected to attend? She asked all of these questions and then she said, yeah, that sounds great actually. I really would love to do that. It sounds interesting to learn. I think I could bring something to this role. Thanks for asking me. I was like, whoa, that's what Marjorie talks about when she says, never be so polite you forget to wield power. But also, never wield so much power you forget to be polite.

Okay, so my simplified version of Marjorie's advice is just never be so nice you forget to be honest. And never be so honest you forget to be nice. There we go. That's what we're going to dive into a little bit more here today. So, the problem with being too nice is that it is dishonest. It is pretending at best and lying at worst. It looks like, sure, yeah, okay, I'll do that. I'll watch your kids. And inside you're thinking, I do not want to watch those kids. I don't have time. Those kids are rowdy. I don't even like kids. Why is she asking me to do this? But I guess I'll just say yes because I feel bad saying no, or I don't want her to be upset with me. I don't want her to not like me. We have all kinds of bizarro reasons that we do it, but do you see how it's lying actually? Or it's at least pretending.

Let's think about the clerk at the grocery store when you're checking out, who, bless their heart, is just trying to be nice, okay? This is not in

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judgment of anyone. I'm just saying, how do you feel when you're checking out at the grocery store and the clerk is being nice? What do they say? They say things like, how you doing today? Do you have any fun plans for the rest of the day? Such a nice thing to say. Why do we hate it so much? Because it's fake. It's pretend. It's what we say when we don't want to have to think of what to actually ask the person when we're not genuinely interested in the person. We just think we should be. We're trying to please a little bit. We're trying to be nice. Now again, there's a time for being nice, but we don't like it. We don't prefer it. We prefer somebody who gets really real, somebody really honest with us, somebody a little bit more authentic. That's what we are drawn to.

So, when people are very nice, we feel uncomfortable, we don't trust them, right? We are also uninterested or bored by people that behave this way. Crazy to think about, don't you think? Okay, so I want you to imagine you're doing your church calling. So in the LDS church, we get asked to volunteer and it's called your calling. It's just your job that you're going to do. You're not going to get paid for it. You can say no, but some people think you're not supposed to. Anyway, most people will say yes a lot of times, not always. Anyway, church assignment, church calling. I want you to imagine that you're in a meeting, okay? And there's an objective that we're trying to accomplish in this meeting. We're trying to plan an activity or an event or we're trying to figure out how to best support the people that we work with. And everybody shares one opinion and you disagree. Do you speak up and say, I don't know about that. I think we should consider this as well. Or do you play devil's advocate in that way? Or do you just go along with it because you want to be nice?

Because if you believe that your church calling is inspired, as we believe, then you're there for a reason. Maybe you're there to be the opposing voice because what happens when we have opposing voices? We create more extraordinary results. That is the truth, my friends. We need people to have differing opinions. We need people to not just sit around and agree with each other because they want to hurry and get out of there. We need to be

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able to think critically. We need to be able to evolve what we're doing and have innovative ways of doing things, and that requires different opinions. That requires us speaking up and being honest even if it doesn't sound quote unquote nice. Don't smile and go along with it all the time if you don't feel that way.

Now, sometimes this being nice just looks like a shield or a wall that goes up, right? I feel like when I'm in a one-on-one conversation with somebody, that's when either myself or the other person at times has this wall that goes up. And all of a sudden you realize, oh, I'm not talking to the real person anymore. I'm talking to their representative that they are allowing to speak on their behalf because what they really think, either they're afraid of or they don't even know or they're afraid for me to see it. They're afraid of what I'm going to think. I notice I behave this way again around people that I really look up to and respect. I just start agreeing and smiling and yes-ing and going along with whatever they say because I think, who am I to have a different opinion here? This person clearly knows better than me. Interesting approach, right?

Now, what is the problem with that? Well, the problem is that it does not allow for true connection. True connection, according to Brené Brown and all the other behavioral scientists, true connection comes from vulnerability. If we can't be real, if we can't be vulnerable, if we can't let that shield or guard down, then true connection is not even an option. So, think about your friends that you are the closest with. I have a handful of women that I'm really close with that I can just have so much fun with. I laugh super hard with. I trust them. I believe they trust me. We know each other on a much more intimate level. Why is that? It's because we're able to be real with each other. We're nice at times and kind at times, but we can get real. We can call each other out on our stuff at times. Those are the people that I feel the closest to. Those are the ones I would choose to hang out with if I could choose. Some of them are family, some of them are friends, and that is how true connection, our best relationships happen from that letting down of the guard.

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Another area I see this come up is when I'm a student or a teacher, okay? So if I'm teaching a class, maybe I'm teaching my clients something in Better Than Happy the Lab or I'm teaching my coaches something about how to coach or how to build a coaching business, or maybe I'm a teacher, I'm teaching a lesson or again, I might be a student in a lot of different scenarios as well. When we are being too nice, it looks like, oh, I know the answer to this. I read this or I remember listening to this or I remember hearing this, I can give the right answer. Now, it's not wrong to give the right answer, but I want you to imagine a scenario where people constantly give the right answer versus one where people constantly raise their hands and ask questions and poke holes in things and say, I don't understand this part or I'm not sure I agree with this part. And we have a lively discussion around the topics at hand. Which one's going to make for a better learning environment? Obviously, the latter.

And so this does come often with maturity. This is why you get to be my age in your early 50s and you start realizing like it's so much better to just not care what people think. Because not only does it set you free, it makes you available for connection, it helps you learn more and it creates more interesting, more fun, and more dynamic learning environments for yourself, but maybe other people if they prefer it too. And you start realizing that's such a better way to live my life. I'm going to stop pretending and just being nice all the time.

All right, so in most religions, and again, I know we have a variety of listeners here, but within the LDS church, right? Or even any traditional Christian religion, we have like the basic 10 commandments, right? There's no commandment that says thou shalt be nice. But there is one that says thou shalt not lie. Whoa. What does that tell us about the importance of integrity? And again, in the LDS church, there is an interview that we go through. If we want to go to the temple, we just need to, it's totally done on honor system, but we need to answer some basic questions about whether or not we believe in God and living our lives in a basic way. And one of the questions is, do you strive to be honest in your dealings with others?

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There's not a question that says, do you strive to be really nice and polite and make everyone feel good? And ideally make them all like you. None of that, right? Just are you honest in your dealings? Mm, interesting to think about.

So this is going to show up. This is going to show up in your interpersonal relationships. It's going to show up in companies, in families, in organizations. Being the right balance of honest and kind will serve you and everyone around you best. Now, what is that balance? That's what you got to figure out. It's going to be different for you maybe than it is for other people. So, not that we're not considerate of what other people think and feel, but remember, my goal is to operate what is for me the ideal balance of nice or kind and honest. And other people will like it a lot, but sometimes they won't. Sometimes they won't. And I got to learn to be okay with that, right?

Dan Sullivan, who is an author and coach of entrepreneurs, is well known for saying, all progress begins by telling the truth. All progress begins by telling the truth. Isn't that brilliant to think about? I want you to think about a time when somebody told you the truth and it helped you make progress. I have several examples for my own life. So I used to work in corporate America, and I had a boss one time who cared enough about me to not just be nice, but to be honest with me. And he sat me down and he said, "Jody, you're really good at many things that you do here. You're good at this, you're good at that. I admire how you've done this thing and that thing. And he pointed out my strengths and he said, but your attitude sucks. Your attitude sucks. You like to be snarky. You like to make fun of things. There are certain basic guidelines we have around here that you don't follow. And at some point, that will prevent you from achieving what's really possible for you. You know?"

He basically said to me, I see that you have potential to move up and do really well, whether it's at this company or somewhere else. You have the capacity to do some pretty cool things in your life, but your attitude sucks

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and it's going to get in your way. And I remember that was hard for me to hear and it was probably hard for him to tell me that. And I was so grateful that he did, because it caused me to take a second look at myself. And I've thought about it in so many scenarios in my life, not only at that job, but in other jobs and in my business and in my church callings. Wow, my attitude sucks there sometimes, right?

And when I recognize like this is my tendency is I succeed in many ways. I'm good at many things, but I tend to have a kind of snarky attitude. And maybe that's okay at times, but sometimes it's probably getting in my way. It's probably preventing ultimate success in certain ways. I've tried to keep that in mind as I've had employees too, at other jobs and in my business that sometimes I have to stop being nice and I have to just tell them the truth. And that's not easy to do if the truth is something that I'm thinking they may not want to hear, right? I try to do it because I care enough about them to be willing to do it. Not because I'm trying to call anybody out or make anyone feel bad or punish anyone, but just because my job as a leader is to yes, be nice, but also sometimes tell you the truth that might be hard to hear. I care about you too much not to tell you the truth.

What's the alternative, right? When we don't tell the truth, and I'm guilty of this as well. I don't know if you are, but I'm guilty of sometimes of not telling the truth. I just smile and go along with it. Maybe it's in a relationship, maybe it's in a church calling or whatever. And then instead of just being straightforward and honest, I talk about those people behind their backs. I seethe in resentment and build a case in my own head for why they're doing it wrong or they should be better in some way. I find others who share my same opinion, we start gossiping about it, right? Maybe I complained about it to people like my husband or whoever. This is not ideal behavior. This is not me at my best. It might seem nicer because in person I'm smiling and polite and kind, but wouldn't it be better to just tell the truth?

I got another great example of this. So, I have an older brother who I'm pretty sure wouldn't mind me sharing this story. This was years ago. He

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had somebody from the church reach out to him and say, have you done your home teaching? So we had this program called home teaching, visiting teaching, where we would go and visit each other, different members of the ward were assigned to each other, just to take a message, make sure they're doing okay, see if they need any service. The program has changed a little bit since this time, but we still have it in a different version.

At any rate, my brother was kind of trying to decide how active he was going to be in the church at the time, and this person, you know, called him and said, I need to report on whether or not you've done your home teaching. Now, for those of you that are members of the church, you know this, but for anyone who's not, this is the kind of thing where most people, even if they haven't done it, they feel bad, so maybe they avoid the conversation, or they just kind of politely say, oh, you know what, I'm going to get to it, and they just try to be nice about it, right? My brother decided to just be honest. He said, no, I haven't done it. And let me just be straight with you. I'm not going to do it. I don't really have a lot of belief in this program. I'm not interested in it. You should just take me off the list. I'm not going to be doing it in the future either. And the person was so shocked. You know why? Most people don't tell them the truth that way. Most people pretend. Now, the part of the reason is most people don't even tell themselves the truth. They tell themselves, no, I'm totally going to do it next month. And then they just continue to not do it.

So, interesting that my brother first of all had told himself the truth, second of all told this other person the truth. How would you like being on the receiving end of that? I don't know, but I personally am like, thank you for just telling me the truth. We can change it up. We can assign your people to someone else who is willing to do it. Thank you for being honest with me. I respect that person and that honesty so much more than the person pretending to go along with it just believing they're going to make me feel better. Am I right? Just saying.

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I had a dad who was pretty good at this. He would tell us the truth, balance it out with kindness. He was paying for my college tuition at one point when I decided to spend a whole semester just having a really good time, going out with friends, staying up late, not getting enough sleep, not making it to class too much, and my grades reflected it. And when he sat me down and he said, Jody, I love you, I believe in you, but this is not okay. I'm investing in your education, and that is an investment for me, and I expect to see a return on that investment, which means you need to get decent grades so that you can get a job or whatever you're going to do with this degree one day. So, this is not allowed going forward, or here's what happens, and you will need to pay the tuition for those credits that you just lost, right?

So, as parents, this is our job. I don't know about you, but this is actually difficult for me to do as a parent. I tend to err on the side of being overly kind with my kids, overly nice. I'm super biased. I don't think that they've ever done anything wrong. I think they're just kind of perfect, even though I know they're not, right? And I certainly don't want them to be uncomfortable because then as their mom, I'm uncomfortable, and I also have a hard time separating out my own agenda of what I think they should do from knowing that they actually are there to create their own lives. And so I tend to err on the side of being way too nice and kind. I'm going to work on it in this area of my life. What area of your life do you want to work on it in? I've given you a few examples. I'm going to give you even a few more.

I have had on many occasions coaches tell me the truth, and it's been such a gift. I remember one time telling my coach about all these difficult things that were going on in my life. And I had told this same story to several other people in my life who went, "Oh my word, that sounds so hard. I'm so sorry. I don't know how you're doing it. That must be awful." And they just totally validated my pain as I wanted them to and as a friend should. But when my coach heard the story and said to me, "Don't start feeling sorry for yourself." I was like, what? And she said, I can hear that you're dropping into a lot of self-pity and really feeling sorry for yourself. That's not going to serve you. That's not going to create what you want. And I remember being

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a little shocked at it at first, and then so grateful because I hadn't seen it. I hadn't seen it until she pointed it out. This is what I love about coaching, is people come to me, they are asking me for the truth, and I get to tell them, and I try to balance it with kindness, right? But all progress starts from telling the truth, just like Dan Sullivan says.

Okay, so I want you to pick an area of your life. I want you to pick an area where you want to work on being more honest and less kind, or maybe you need to be less kind and more honest. My guess is that's not most of you, but that might be some of you. And next time you feel worried or stressed or frustrated, you're going to just ask yourself two questions. That's it.

Number one, what is true for me now? You have to understand first of all what's true for you in the moment. And usually what's true is a complicated mix of positive and negative, of kind and unkind, of polite and powerful, of kind and clever even, right? So what is true for me now? And then, number two, how can I be a little bit more honest but still be kind? Or how can I be a little bit more kind and still be honest?

That's it. And then you go test it out and you figure out what works for you until eventually you get better and better at it. I promise you can do it. Give it a try, my friends. And I'll see you next time on another episode. Thanks for listening today. 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.