

573: Think Bigger or Be Realistic?



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With Your Host

Jody Moore

[Better Than Happy](#) with Jody Moore

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When it comes to achieving what you want to and creating what you want in your life, there tend to be two schools of thought in the world of self-help. One school says, think bigger, set impossible goals, dream big. And the other school says, be realistic, take baby steps, be willing to play the long game and just take small incremental steps, and that's the way to be successful. So if you're like me and you've ever wondered, which is it? Should we be thinking bigger or should we be more realistic?

Well, today I'm going to tell you why I think both matter, but only if you use them at the right time. This is *Better Than Happy*, and I'm Jody Moore. Thanks for joining me today. Let's go.

Welcome to *Better Than Happy*, the podcast where we apply all the tools of psychology, human behavior, and mindfulness to live our best lives, navigate challenges, and achieve our goals. I'm Jody Moore and I'll be your coach today. Let's do it.

Hello, everybody. Thanks for joining me for the podcast. I get to talk to you today about a topic that I love talking about, thinking about, and helping you with, which is how to achieve your goals. The things that you want or desire to have or do or become in your life. How do we achieve them?

Now, one of the reasons I love talking about this topic so much is because it's actually a way that we grow and progress and become more of whoever we're capable of being. It's how we create better lives for ourselves, but it's also about growth and development, which is the point. It's the whole point of being alive as a human on planet Earth. And what I find is that if you don't have a goal you're going after, if you don't have something that you're excited about, that you're working towards, that you want to achieve or become or create or have, then your brain will need to go to work looking for some way to solve problems and be strategic, and you will start creating even more problems than necessary.

And the reason I say more problems than necessary is because problems are just a part of the human condition. Even though they're always created

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by us in our minds, there are certain things that we want to think, "That's a problem. What am I going to do about it?" and put our efforts and all of our resources actually—our minds, our time, our attention, our energy—to work on solving for it. That's going to be useful and create our best life in certain scenarios.

But there are many other things that I call made-up problems, even though, like I said, all problems are made-up problems. But there are things that I'm just like, why are you worrying about that? Why are you wasting your time thinking about it, even focusing on it? It's probably not either yours to own or not necessary or not even a problem that you could possibly solve. So let's not waste your time on it. The reason we do that, the reason we focus on things that if we take a step back and go, wait a second, that's not my problem, that's somebody else's problem to own or that's none of my business or that's not mine to control, right? The reason we do that is because we don't have a goal.

If you give yourself a goal, your brain won't have time for things that are not your problems, for made-up problems. How do we know this? Have you ever noticed that people tend to be really wrapped up in their career? This is not uncommon, anyway. Not everybody does this, by any means, but somebody will be really wrapped up in their career, really focused on it, and then they retire, and what happens? They suddenly start worrying about things they didn't worry before, right? They start being bothered by things that didn't bother them before. It's not because they've aged. It's not because they're just getting older and grumpier. It's because their brain used to have a useful problem to focus on, which was their job, and now it has a lot of free time, and so it's focusing on all kinds of other problems that it didn't have the time for before.

Okay, so if you feel like you have a lot of, quote-unquote, "made-up problems," and only you get to decide what that is, then you might consider setting a goal, which brings me to today's episode and what I want to talk about today. So, like I said, in the world of self-help, there are people who

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say, go big or go home, set impossible goals, 10x what you want to, whatever you think you want to do, 10x it and go after that. 10x is easier than 2x, right? My good friends Dan Sullivan and Benjamin Hardy have written a book about that. These are all beautiful, I think, great ways to think about your goal at certain times. It's going to serve you to think bigger at times.

Then there are other times when it's going to serve you to be realistic, to just take a baby step. And we hear this just as often in the world of self-help as well, right? We hear, just take little tiny steps and be realistic, and it's consistency over perfection, be willing to play the long game. You don't have to be the best in the world to create pretty awesome progression for yourself in your life, right? And I also agree with that advice, and I think there's a time and a place for that. So how do we know the difference? Which is best?

Well, I've got five talking points I want to share with you today. And the first one is the basic answer to that question, and it comes from an idea that, as far as I can tell, it often gets credited to Bill Gates, but we're not entirely sure who said it first. There's a lot of great thinkers who have said different versions of this. So, I'm just going to put it in my own words, which is that we underestimate what we're able to do in the long term, and we overestimate what we're able to do in the short term.

Okay, let me say that again. We highly underestimate what's possible for us, what we could accomplish, what we could achieve, what we could become. We highly underestimate what's possible for the long term, and we highly overestimate what we can do, how much we're going to get done, how long our to-do list should be, how much energy we're going to have, what we're going to do in the short term.

Okay? So, if we take that advice, and usually when I say that to people, and when the first time I heard it, and we stop and think about our patterns and our habits, and we all go, "Oh yeah, I think that's true. I could see that," right? It really resonates for a lot of people. So let's look at a few examples.

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If you have a business, I will often ask my entrepreneur clients, what do you want to achieve in your business this year? Or in the next three years, in the next five years? What are your goals for your business? What do you want it to look like in the future? So by long term, I want you to think a year or more, okay? Even three years, five years would be even better. And they often say things to me like, well, it would be awesome if I could just replace the salary I was making before at my corporate job. If I could just do that, that would be amazing. As though that feels so far out of reach, they can't even comprehend it, right? And I always say, of course you could replace your corporate salary. That's a no-brainer, right? Let's think bigger. So when we think long-term, our brains tend to go really realistic for some reason.

Okay, then when I say, "So what is it that you're going to accomplish this week in your business? What do you have down that you're going to get done?" They will read me this to-do list, "Well, I've got to do this and I've got to do that, and this has to get done, and this is due, and I've got to do this." And meanwhile, I also have to take care of the kids and I've got these things going on in my personal life. And they'll give me this big long list. I'm like, what are you talking about? That's insane. You're not going to do all of that this week. And they never have done that much in a week, right? They always tell me, "I know, you're right. It's super overwhelming when I even look at it. It just all feels so important, like it needs to get done right now." Can you relate to this?

Maybe this is with your family. Maybe you have ideas around like a home that you want to purchase or a vacation you want to go on. And when I ask people what kind of home do you want to live in, they'll often say things like, well, we just need a little bit more space. We don't need a huge fancy home. We just need a little bit more space because we've had all these kids or for whatever reason, we've sort of outgrown this home. So, very realistic, right, about their ultimate long-term goal. But their short-term goals, they have a million things on their to-do list.

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Same with our health goals, right? I'll say, what do you want to achieve when it comes to your health? If I could just fit back into the size I was wearing whenever, right, before I had this baby or last year when I lost this weight, that would be great. Now, again, I'm not saying you have to set big goals in every area of your life. If you just want a home that's a little bit better, excuse me, a little bit bigger than your previous home, or you just want to get back to a certain health level and you don't have any desire for anything beyond that, that's perfectly fine. You don't have to set big, unrealistic long-term goals for every area of your life. Just know that it's possible. It's possible, right?

Did any of you see Elizabeth Smart's Instagram lately? Elizabeth Smart, who was the victim of a child kidnapping in Utah years ago, right? And later was found and is just such an inspiration, I think. She's just a beautiful woman and person and mom, and obviously not perfect, but is doing such good work in the world. And she posted a photo recently on her Instagram of herself at a bodybuilding competition. She decided to not just go, "I just want to be healthy. I just want to fit into my jeans." She was like, what's possible with my body? How strong could I get? And she set a very what most of us would think was an unrealistic goal to completely transform her body. That is possible if you desire it.

And again, not that you should desire it, but if you do, it's possible. So, back to our original quote and the first point I want to make. If we tend to underestimate what's possible in the long term and overestimate what's possible in the short term, then we just need to apply that to our goal setting. We need to be setting bigger, more impossible, more 10x, or more unrealistic goals for the long term, and we need to set very realistic, bite-size, "I absolutely can do this," goals or project-based outcomes for the short term.

Okay? That's how I think about goals. That's how I recommend that my clients do, and that's how I see people have the most success. So, in other words, if you have a business, that seems to be the easiest example for me

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to use because I coach on that one a lot. If you have a business, I want you to think more unrealistic for the long term. I want you to go, maybe in the next three years, I'm going to be making a million dollars in that business. Not just maybe, but that's going to be my goal. That's what I decided. That's what I'm aiming for. Let's go for a million dollars in the next three years that we get to that benchmark. Or maybe in the next year, or maybe you're already at that and now you want to go for 10 million or 20 million or whatever. Think whatever stretches you, it's easiest obviously in a business to set a financial goal, but it doesn't have to be financial either. It could be an impact goal. You can have all kinds of goals. My point is I want you to think more unrealistic. I want you to think bigger when it comes to long term, the year or the three years or the five years or anything beyond that.

Okay? And then when it comes to short term, now, what am I going to do this week, this month, even this quarter? What do I need to buckle down and do? What am I going to accomplish? What's on my to-do list for the week? What's on my to-do list for tomorrow? I want you to be much more realistic and bite-sized with yourself about what goes on that to-do list.

Now, there will be some exceptions and nuances to this, but if you live your life and set your goals according to this, I'm telling you, you will achieve incredible results. Let's talk about why. So, the second point I want you to get out of today is that the reason that we tend to underestimate the long term is because we are operating from a place of doubt. We underestimate the long term because of our own self-doubt, right? So if you're just starting your business or you have a brand new business and I said to you, let's get it to a million dollars in the next three years, you might go, whoa, I don't know about that. I don't know that that's possible, especially not for me, right? Sometimes my client say, I know it's possible, but is it possible for me? That's a whole other level of trying to believe, right?

So if you don't believe it's possible for yourself, you are operating from a place of doubt, and that is why your brain goes, what? Let's be real here. Okay? So you have to recognize this is due to a lack of imagination

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sometimes. Sometimes people haven't even considered what might be possible. So that might require imagination, it might require paying attention to what other people are doing in the world that seems to you something you desire to do. But you're going to have to wake up your imagination. It also is due to a lack of proof, right? Our brains want proof that something's possible for us before they tend to want to believe it. And finally, it comes from what I call "how greed."

"How greed" is that thing that lives within each of us that says, okay, but how? If I'm going to get my business to the million-dollar mark in the next three years, how would I do that? And if I give you a logical how that you can see the path to, it will be much easier for you to believe. But we don't need to have that in order to believe. I'm going to tell you how to do it in just a minute. "How greed" is like, I'm being really greedy, I'm not going to believe it until you show me how. And there's a reason why I don't want you depending on that I'll come back to in just a minute.

First, let's talk about the next thing I want to offer to you, which is the reason why we overestimate what's possible in the short term. And the reason we do that is because we're operating out of scarcity. We overestimate the short term when we are operating from a place of scarcity. We tell ourselves, this all has to get done this week, or this has to get done today. If it doesn't, there's going to be some kind of huge problem. And if you slow it down and really think through it, there is no kind of huge problem. But this rush that we're in is this fear-based, this stuff has to get done. Hurry, hurry, hurry. That kind of rush is always coming from a place of fear. I shouldn't say always, there may be exceptions, but most of the time it's coming from a place of fear. If I slow it down and go, wait, why does this have to get done this week? Your logical brain will recognize, well, it's okay if it takes a little longer. I just actually really would like it to be done this week. I would like all of this stuff done right now.

And when we really drill down and ask why, why, why, why, why, ask yourself, keep asking why until you get to the emotion. There's always an

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emotion driving it, because there's a positive emotion you want to feel, or a negative emotion that you're trying to avoid. That's coming from a place of fear, or what I'm calling scarcity. I'm going to tell you what to do about it in just a moment, but first I want you to recognize that. All of this feels so important. We just have to get it all done right now, right?

The other reason that we do this overestimating what we can do in the short term is because we have crappy relationships with ourselves. We do. We just, most of us have in so many ways damaged our relationship with ourselves by continually saying, yeah, I'm going to do ABC, and setting these really high expectations and then not following through on them and letting ourselves down. Imagine if you did that with another person, what would your relationship with that other person be like? Pretty bad, right? And so we don't even trust ourselves. We know that there's a good chance we're not going to do it and we don't even feel bad about it. That's not a good relationship with yourself.

If there was another person in your life who constantly told you they were going to do things and then pretty consistently dropped the ball, you wouldn't trust that person anymore. You wouldn't have a super solid relationship with them anymore, right? You might still have compassion for them, you might even still allow them in your lives, but they wouldn't be someone that you really trusted, that you really believed in, that you really counted on. That's what I mean by a crappy relationship with yourself. If I have a really solid relationship, if this is somebody I really trust and respect and admire, I'm not going to overpromise and underdeliver to that person. I'm going to say, what do you expect from me? And I'm going to try to be very realistic about what's possible because I don't want to damage my relationship with that person, right?

Okay, so let's move on to the next thing I want to teach you, which is that the way to improve this part of us, the way to aim for setting more big picture, sky's the limit, long-term goals is to choose belief. You have to get out of doubt and choose belief instead. You can call it belief, you can call it

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faith, you can call it trust, whatever you want to call it. You got to get out of doubt and you got to get into belief or faith. That's how you set more impossible long-term goals. Now, the reason I say choose it is because it is just a choice. People will say to me, "Well, what if I tell myself I'm going to make a million dollars in the next three years, and it's just a delusion? How do I know if I'm being delusional?" Well, my coach and friend, Brooke Castillo, always says it's always a delusion. Whatever you think is going to happen in the future is just your current delusion. Sometimes we're right about what we're deluding and sometimes we're wrong, right? But it's all just made up. Anything we think about the future is made up.

So you're allowed to make up whatever you want. And even if you don't entirely believe it, it's okay if a little bit of doubt comes with you. It will because you won't entirely believe it until you accomplish it. The day you entirely believe it is actually the day you will accomplish it. So it's okay if you have to work to believe it and the doubt sometimes comes up. That's okay. But just choose to believe it like for a moment. I like to ask myself, okay, what if there was a crystal ball? Somebody said I looked at my crystal ball, or what if God sent me a message? In some way, if there was like something I trusted, and somebody had seen the future, and they came back from the future, like in back to the future, and they said, "I've been to the future and I've seen what happens and you're going to make a million dollars starting in the next three years."

Then I would go, huh, interesting. And maybe they even say, I can't tell you how you're just going to have to wait and see. I don't want to spoil it for you, but you get to the million-dollar mark in the next three years. Huh. Okay. Well, let's go. Now I'm believing it without knowing how, without having any proof, without any evidence. I just chose to believe it, right? And you're allowed to do that. Did you know this? You're allowed and I highly recommend it because whatever you choose to believe about your future, your subconscious brain goes to work, and depending on what you believe about God or the universe or quantum physics or anything else, there are all kinds of unseen forces that go to work trying to help you, too, if what you

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want is good and righteous and you truly desire it for all the right reasons. Then your amazing spirit and soul and brain and the forces that be go to work making it happen.

If you believe it, as long as you believe it more than you don't believe it, those forces go to work in your favor, and you start finding solutions in the most unexpected places. You start finding pathways. You start finding people. Connections start happening, and the how will be something that will reveal itself as you take action towards it.

Okay? Albert Einstein is famous for saying, "Imagination is more important than knowledge." Why would Albert Einstein, who's a scientist, who has a very high, who had a very high interest in knowledge, right, and brought us a lot of knowledge, say that imagination is more important than knowledge? Because imagination comes before we discover the knowledge. The knowledge is discovered based on what you're seeking, what you believe is possible.

Okay? Now, if you need help believing it, I highly recommend you get a coach. This is the work that good coaches do. They are able to help you believe in impossible things. A good coach will even believe in you more than you can believe in yourself, and you can borrow from their belief. That's what I love about coaching, one of the many things.

Okay, next, let's talk about how to be more realistic about the short term. Well, if we're unrealistic because we're operating out of scarcity, then we get to be more realistic by shifting into abundance. Shift into abundance, or faith or trust or love or whatever you want to call it. You got to shift out of the fear-based, scarcity-based place that we are in into abundance.

Abundance sounds like, I am going to achieve this at the perfect time. I don't need to be in a rush to get there. Do you know why? The way I think I'm going to feel when I get there is available to me right now. I don't have to wait to achieve this to feel that emotion. I can generate that emotion right

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now. And in fact, the best way, the most likely way that I'm going to achieve the goal is to be operating from that place right now.

Okay, let's look at some examples. If I'm trying to write and publish a book, and I think once I get this book done, and maybe you have big goals. I want you to have a big goal, like not just write and finish my book, but it's going to be a bestseller or you're going to do something really amazing with that book. Okay? Once I have this best-selling book out in the world, how do I think I'm going to feel? I'm going to feel fulfilled. I'm going to feel confident. I'm going to feel proud of myself. Okay? Well then I want you to feel fulfilled and confident and proud of yourself as you write your book.

Okay? And I want you to give yourself very realistic short-term to-do list type things. Maybe it's this week I'm going to complete a chapter, or I'm going to write for 90 minutes each day. And what's realistic for you depends on your life and your schedule and your skills and all of that, right? But if that's realistic for you, 90 minutes a day or one chapter this week, then when you do that, every day when you write for your 90 minutes, you have to go, I'm so proud of me. Thanks me for showing up and doing that thing. Well done. This is going to be great. You're right on track.

Okay? That is the way that you generate the emotions in the short term that you think you're going to feel in the long term. Don't wait to get to the end. Generate them as you go. Let's say you are trying to work on a financial goal, and you think that once you have the money you want to make, that your life will be more fun. If that's the emotion, like free and fun, then you have to generate that emotion as you make the money. You have to find ways to make money that are fun for you, or make it fun, the work that you're doing to earn the money. Make it fun, make it free, make it light. Take the pressure, take the heaviness off. That's the way that you're going to get to the goal of making the money is by using the emotions and the state you think you'll be in to get there. Then we don't have to be in a rush. It's okay if it takes a while, because we're having fun along the way, right?

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Maybe you're trying to find a partner. Maybe this is a relationship goal, and you think, once I find that person, my person, my spouse or my partner or whatever that is, then I'm going to feel really worthy and loved and complete. Then guess what your job is, my friend? To feel worthy and loved and complete right now, without the partner, as a single person, to understand your own worthiness, to understand how to complete yourself and how to love yourself and how to get better at loving others. You do all that, and your odds of finding the partner go up significantly.

Okay? So, just to summarize everything, set unrealistic long-term outcome-based goals. Set very realistic short-term to-do list goals. Okay? Do that and remember that the only reason you have a tendency to be too small long term is because you're operating out of doubt. Move into belief. And the only reason you have a tendency to load up your short-term to-do list too much is because you are operating out of scarcity. Clean it up and get to abundance, and I promise you that what you can create in your life will be beyond what you ever imagined in the past.

Thanks for joining me for the podcast today, everybody. Again, please make sure that you're following or subscribed and share the episode, and I'll see you next week. Take care.

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