

580: “Don’t Worry” Is Terrible Advice



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Jody Moore

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“Stop worrying about that” is terrible advice. Have you noticed? It's not helpful. It almost even makes you feel worse. I'm going to tell you why that's terrible advice. I'm going to tell you how to think about all your problems and challenges instead. Welcome to *Better Than Happy*. I'm Jody Moore. 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.

If I had to guess, I might say that worry is one of the top things I coach people on. They don't want to be worried. They know intellectually on some level that it's not useful to be worried, but they have no idea how to stop. It's a very human thing that we do to worry. Worry about other people, worry about things happening in the world, worry about potential future disasters. We worry about things that we realize we have zero control over, zero idea if they're even going to happen, and yet we worry anyway. Have you noticed? And when people say, "Well, just stop worrying, just don't worry about that," it's not useful at all, right? Because if you knew how to not worry, you'd do it. If you knew how to turn it off, you would do it.

So, what I'm going to teach you today is that there's a reason why you're worried and it's coming from a good place, but I'm going to teach you how to get some leverage over it. And then I'm going to invite you to join me for what I call The Worry-Free Challenge. We're going to spend five days together not worrying at all. And you're going to experience what it feels like to control this part of your psyche. It is controllable. So I'll tell you more about that, but first I want to share with you just some quotes from some people that people have written, somewhat well known. Some of these names I actually haven't heard of, but I'd heard of the quotes. And I think they're all pretty good. And I want to share them just to give you a little inspiration. Maybe there's one that you'll grab that you'll think, yeah, I like

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that, and it provides me a little bit of relief whenever I'm feeling worried. And if not, just ignore these. Just toss out anything you don't like.

But first of all, I love this quote, which I think I've been attributing to Eckhart Tolle, but as I looked it up and did some research, it was attributed actually to a gentleman named Dan Zadra. So I don't know who first said it, but the quote is, "Worry is a misuse of the imagination." That one is fun for me. Worry is a misuse of the imagination because it immediately tells me to apply my imagination in a more useful way.

Anyway, here's another one. This one is from Eckhart Tolle according to the internet, which never lies, right? It says, "Worry pretends to be necessary, but serves no useful purpose." It pretends to be necessary. Again, we're going to dive into that a little bit more today, and I'm going to tell you how to get some leverage over it and why it feels necessary.

We're going to go to the next quote I have is from Corrie ten Boom, and it says, "Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow. It empties today of its strength." Ooh, that's a good one, right? Let me say it one more time. "Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow. It empties today of its strength."

Here's another one from Mark Twain. Mark Twain says, "Worry is like paying a debt you don't owe." Ooh, interesting. This one is from Erma Bombeck. Erma says, "Worry is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do, but it doesn't get you anywhere."

Okay, thanks for that one, Erma. Here we go from Will Rogers. "I know worrying works because none of the stuff I worried about ever happened." I love that one. A little bit of humor is always good for us, right? And then finally, from Seneca, one of the great Stoics, says, "We suffer more in imagination than in reality." That's what's happening in our minds when we're worrying, right? We're suffering in our imagination with what we're thinking about.

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Okay, so let's dive in. The reason that you are worried is not because of what's going on outside of you. It's because of what's going on inside of you. Worry is an emotion. It happens in the body, and it's created by thoughts or sentences in your mind. Okay, that's the first thing that's really important to know. Now, it makes sense that you have the thoughts and sentences you have. It's totally justified. It's probably even rational to some extent. Some of it is very irrational, but some of it may be rational. And so it's not to shame yourself. Not only do I not love, I don't even allow the word should or shouldn't for my clients when we're coaching. Those are toxic, terrible words that are not helpful at all. So it's not that you shouldn't be worried. It's just that you don't have to be. It is possible to have things going on in your family, in your life, in the world, that you view as not ideal and still not be worried.

But the reason you do it is because there's part of your brain and part of my brain that thinks that worry is the same as wisdom. Wisdom is our ability to assess a situation, to take whatever knowledge we have, use our intuition, and make educated decisions and wise, thoughtful decisions about what we might do to make life better. To prevent disaster or to solve for a problem. Wisdom, super useful. Worry, not useful. Not ever, right? We heard all those quotes I just shared with you about worry.

So today I just want to teach you what the difference is because just understanding the difference might help you to redirect away from worry over to wisdom. And if you notice as we go through these seven things that you've got quite a bit of worry about any topic in your life, then you're going to want to join me for The Worry-Free Challenge. It's a five-day challenge, very inexpensive, \$29. You can go to JodyMoore.com/worryfree to register for it. It's happening soon, but I want to go through these seven things, and even if you don't join me for that challenge, listen up here, my friends. This is going to change everything if you pay attention.

Okay, so first of all, worry feels like lack, and it comes from lack or scarcity. I'm sorry to use an overused word in the world of coaching, but lack or

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scarcity. Wisdom on the other hand comes from abundance or enoughness or completeness. Notice those two things are opposites. Some of what I'm going to give you today about worry and wisdom are going to be opposites like this. Some of them are going to be similar but different in various ways, okay? So this is one that is an opposite.

So if I am worried about, let's say, my financial situation, it's probably coming from lack. I'm worried that we don't have enough or we might not have enough, we might run out of money at some point if it's around finances, right? And I'm going to feel worried about that. It's going to feel like fear. It's going to feel like emptiness. Wisdom on the other hand might be, "Let's look at our money and make wise decisions about how we want to spend it or what we want to earn or think about things that might be coming up in the future that we want to plan for." It feels very different.

It doesn't have the fear behind it. It feels like us being empowered, making decisions, having some forethought. Worry often for people looks like hiding, right? If we feel like there's scarcity, like this is what I used to do with my money. I used to just never look at my bank account because I knew it was going to bring up worry for me, and I was maybe even going to have also guilt and whatever other negative emotions I didn't want. They were all rooted in lack and scarcity. Whereas now, I look at my money regularly, and I make wise decisions about it as much as possible, and that's coming from abundance. Like, we have enough. We can choose to get more if we want, and we will always have enough. There is more than enough and to spare. Okay, so lack versus abundance, worry versus wisdom.

Number two, worry feels like fear. We just talked about that a little bit, but wisdom feels like faith. Okay, so I want you to notice that both fear and faith are emotions that we feel about unknown things. Okay? If we know exactly what's going to happen, we often don't have fear. Think about it. A lot of our kids are getting ready to go back to school here, right? Or maybe they just started school by the time you're listening to this episode. So there's a lot of

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fear at the beginning of the school year because it's unknown. The kids don't know what their teacher is going to be like, what the new routine is going to be, what their classmates are going to be like, etc. You send your kids off to college, you send them out on a mission. They feel some fear sometimes because of the unknown. You might feel some fear because of the unknown.

Unknown is scary to the brain, right? But faith on the other hand also has an element of unknown. We don't need faith about things that are completely known. Faith is I'm just going to choose to believe that everything's going to be okay. I'm going to choose to trust that things are going to work out, that there's a higher force at play here looking out for us, or that we will be able to navigate challenges or right, you can put faith in all kinds of things. You can put faith in a higher power, but you can put faith in yourself. You can put faith in other people. You can put faith in your ability to problem solve, and it feels different. So wisdom is still about the unknown, right? It just feels a lot more peaceful. It actually feels kind of expansive. It feels kind of spiritual, maybe. Fear versus faith.

Okay, let's go on to the next one. Worry is a feeling of confusion, whereas wisdom is a feeling of clarity. Okay, so let's say you have a kid who's struggling with their health in some way. They have a health condition, and if you're in worry, you're going to have a lot of thoughts like, "I don't know what to do. I don't know what's going on. I don't know who to call. I don't know the best path to follow or the right treatment, or I don't know who I should listen to, or I don't know." It's going to have a lot of "I don't know." That's what creates confusion, right? Wisdom on the other hand is going to feel and sound more like clarity.

Now, let me be clear. It doesn't have to be all the way to "I know. I know exactly what's going on here," although it may. Sometimes you get a health diagnosis, and there's still a whole bunch of unknown future things exactly. We don't know exactly what to expect, but we have some information, some guidance, then become a lot calmer and start saying, "I know what

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we're going to do. We're going to try A, B, C, and we're going to see how that goes."

Okay? But you don't even have to go to the health diagnosis to decide, "I know what to do. I'm going to go talk to these people, or I'm going to put out feelers for anyone that knows someone in this situation, or I'm going to do some research." "I know where to begin." You don't have to know the whole path. You don't even have to know what's going to happen next, as long as you choose to know where to get started. "I know where I'll dive in first." And then I will continue to figure it out from there, and I will continue to know, which goes back to faith, right? So notice the feeling of confusion versus the feeling of clarity. Worry versus wisdom.

Okay, this leads us to the next one. Worry keeps us stuck. Wisdom keeps us moving. I recently heard Seth Godin on a podcast say that the idea of being stuck, when we are stuck, it's because we want two opposing things that can't be true at the same time. So for example, I want to be healthy, but I don't want to change my eating habits. If those two things can't exist at the same time, if the way in which you want and need to get healthy has to do with the foods you eat and you aren't willing to change your eating habits, you're going to say, "I feel stuck around my health," right? And that's often what worry creates because it's confusing, because we're not thinking clearly about what is worth sacrificing and what we truly want.

Wisdom on the other hand gets us moving. It gets us moving. That doesn't mean it's all solved right away. That doesn't mean it doesn't require lots of trial and error and experimentation, but we take some kind of useful action in the direction that we want to be going. So I used a health example, so let's just stick with that. Stuck is "I don't know. It's just so confusing." Again, confusion's going to come in, right? "I don't know what to try. I don't know how to solve this problem because this is too hard. Changing my food is just too hard. I don't know what I would eat or how I would cook for my family," etc, right? Stuck, we don't do anything. We just think about it, feel bad about it, but don't actually make changes or make very small,

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inconsistent changes. Wisdom on the other hand says, "Well, one thing I know I can do is this." "One thing I know I can do is start drinking more water. I'm just going to get good at that for now, and then I'll figure the rest out as I go." Notice how that wisdom is totally different than the worry.

The next one. Worry is inaction, and wisdom is action. Again, this is very similar to being stuck versus moving, but sometimes you might be able to identify it with different words in different areas of your life. I see entrepreneurs when I'm coaching entrepreneurs, my coaches who are building their coaching businesses will say things like, "I'm just not posting online like I want to be. I'm not putting out offers like I want to. I'm not talking about what I do. I'm not inviting people, or I'm not publishing my podcast or my content," or whatever. They're not doing things, at least not doing them consistently. It's inaction versus wisdom which says, "I'm going to try this. I'm going to go all in on this thing."

And one of my favorite things that I always feel so proud of my clients for is when they say, "I'm doing this thing. I'm posting consistently, or maybe it's I'm sending that weekly email, or I'm doing this workshop, this live every week, and I don't even know if it's creating the results I want, if it's helping people in the way I want, or if it's growing my business in the way I want. I just know it feels like the right thing to be doing right now, and so I'm going to keep going." Notice the energy of that, the momentum of that. They're going to, if nothing else, learn some super useful things and build some kind of traction and momentum, even if they don't stick with this plan long term. So wisdom looks like action. Worry leads us to inaction.

Number six. Worry causes us to show up, pretend at best, even lying and dishonest at worst, right? Worry is fake. It pretends. Wisdom on the other hand is honest. So I see this a lot in relationships. When I'm coaching people who are really worried about their adult kids, which is common. They've got ideas, judgments, opinions. They're worried that their kids are raising the grandkids wrong, or that they're overly stretched thin, or that their finances aren't right, or their marriage is struggling. Whatever it is

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you're worried about, you're going to have to somewhat pretend because if it's filled with judgment like that, which it is when you're worried, then you probably know better than to just say that outright, right?

You know that your adult kids don't want to feel judged by you. So instead, you have to overly think about the words, craft the message. You type the email or the text five times and ask somebody to look it over because you know that what's true isn't very kind. And it creates a disconnection then in your relationship because there is no connection without authenticity. Also, we're not even very good at hiding it. So usually the other people on the receiving end of it still feel the judgment, even though we tried to take it out. And therefore we have this fake facade that is leading our relationships, not ideal.

Wisdom on the other hand can be very honest, honest and kind. I don't mean you have to share everything on your mind. I don't mean you have to be honest to the point that it's unkind, but honesty is, "Hey, I'm worried about this, but I also know that I don't know what's right for you and your life, and help me understand where you're coming from. I want to understand your point of view. And I also just want you to know I'm here for you and I support you and I love you and I think about you all the time." Right?

Wisdom allows so much room for honesty because, and this leads us to the seventh thing, worry is loaded with judgment, whereas wisdom is just about you having personal preference and knowing it's your personal preference, but that doesn't make it the right way. This is a tough one, my friends. I understand your brain just like my brain thinks it knows the right way. And you will find proof for it. You will find validation for it. You will think that you know the right foods people should eat and the right way they should take care of themselves physically or the right way that someone should be talking to their kids or raising their kids or the right way a marriage should be and how spouses should talk to each other. You're going to believe you have the answers, especially if you're anything like me and you've been on

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this planet Earth for 50 or more years and you have some life experience. You probably do have more wisdom than some of the folks that are younger than you, but it still doesn't make it right for them.

When you get very clear that your personal preferences are great for you to have for yourself and your life, but they are not magic solutions that are best for everyone. Even if your ways would mean less suffering for your loved ones, guess what? Your loved ones are supposed to suffer at times. They are meant to suffer and struggle and learn lessons through their life experience. We want everyone to just learn from our words. "You don't have to go through hard things, children. I will just tell you because I've been through the hard things and I've learned it, and I will just tell you and then you can save yourself the suffering." If that worked, I'd be all in. It doesn't work because people don't learn through words. People learn through life experiences.

Okay, so worry is judgment. Wisdom is just personal preference that you apply only to your own life, and you let everybody else decide what's best for them. Okay, so we've talked a lot about the difference between worry and wisdom today. I hope that helps you, but I want you to come to the Worry-Free Challenge at JodyMoore.com/worryfree because we are going to spend a whole week together, not worrying. That's why I called it Worry-Free. You know how some people go gluten-free or sugar-free and they cut gluten out altogether, they cut sugar out altogether. I don't think you need to cut it out forever. You could, but you don't have to. Okay, we're not trying to turn you into a robot. I just want you to experience what it's like to go five days worry-free. And I'm going to teach you how to do it, and we're going to do it together. I'm going to be right there holding your hand. And you're going to experience how everything gets better. You feel better, you show up better. Your life only gets better. We're going to keep the wisdom, but we're going to drop the worry.

Come and join me for that. I'll see you there. Thanks for joining me today, everyone. Have a beautiful rest of your day. Bye-bye.

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