

583: Parenting Adult Kids



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With Your Host

Jody Moore

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583: Parenting Adult Kids

If you find yourself waking up at night worrying about your adult kids, today's episode is for you. If you totally understand that you need to let them be independent and make their own choices and figure things out on their own and you've got to let go of the rope, but you also want to be a good parent. You want to make sure you're being supportive, that you're being encouraging, that you're saying things that should be said and that you're guiding and directing them in whatever way is your role, but how in the world are you supposed to know where the line is and what that means?

I got you. This episode is just for you. All my friends out there who are parenting adult kids, I hear you. I know it's lonely, I know it's challenging. I hear you when you tell me that it's harder than you ever imagined it would be, that it's lonely because you can't talk to your friends about it because you don't want to give away your kids' business and whatever they may be going through. I got you. I have coached so many people on this problem and today we're going to dive into it a little bit deeper. Let's talk about how to parent adult kids. Welcome to *Better Than Happy*.

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.

Mark: Hi.

Jody: Hi. How are you doing?

Mark: I'm good. Are you sick?

Jody: Yeah, I have a cold.

Mark: Shoot, sorry.

Jody: You know, when you get a cold and it's like 100 degrees out and you're like, what's happening?

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Mark: Yeah, dumb. Summer cold, very dumb.

Jody: Summer cold. Yep. Are you guys getting massive heat in Utah?

Mark: It has been very hot all summer.

Jody: It's been hot for us in San Diego, so I can only imagine there. Like 85 here. We're all dying.

Mark: 85.

Jody: We're so wimpy. So wimpy.

Mark: Is it true that there's quite a few people down there who don't have air conditioning because it's not really necessary?

Jody: It's true, actually. It's very common to not - we do have air, it doesn't work great, but it's very common to not have AC, yeah. And the humidity does intensify it a little, I will say. We don't have real humidity like some places, but we still complain. Well, I don't. I know what real severe weather is like. This is magic, you guys. Stop complaining. I feel I used to live in Narnia when I was in Spokane, where it was pitch dark all the time and anyway. How are you doing?

Mark: I'm well.

Jody: Yeah? Okay, good.

Mark: Yeah. No big notes.

Jody: No big notes? Should we just dive right in?

Mark: Oh yeah. Oh, before I forget, speaking of Spokane, yesterday I was at church talking to a guy who just moved into my ward. And you know him. He's from your old ward. Don Stafford?

Jody: I didn't know they moved to Utah. I love the Staffords. They're great.

Mark: They love you.

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Jody: They're great.

Mark: Yeah, it was great.

Jody: Last I heard when I left Spokane, they moved and went to Seattle, so.

Mark: Yeah, and they were there for I guess a year, maybe a year and a half or something, and then they moved here 'cause now he works for Zions Bank.

Jody: Oh, okay. The Staffords are great. They're a great family.

Mark: Their daughter's in Kate's women's thing, women's class. She's really great.

Jody: She's cute. Oh, well that's fun. Tell them I said hi.

Mark: I will.

Jody: Yeah, Don, they're big hikers. My main memory of Don is when he went to girls' camp and took us on a very hard hike. But I forgive him. Don, you forget your legs are twice as long as all of ours. Can we just take it down a notch?

Mark: He's just cranking?

Jody: Oh, he was just hauling.

Mark: Follow me, ladies.

Jody: Come on, up this hill. I'm one of those people that I'll do a hike, but you have to prep me mentally. I do not go for the whole, "Oh, this is going to be really easy. It's just a short hike," and then it's really hard. Just tell me it's going to be really hard and then I can get my head around it. Otherwise I'm going to be mad at you for life after, forever, if you try to trick me.

Mark: Yeah, I'm with you on that. Absolutely.

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Jody: All right, so we're talking about adult children today. And I was thinking about it as I was logging in, and I'm like, should Mark and I preface that we don't really or we maybe barely have adult children before we launch into this?

Mark: We can, but I have a lot of, I don't think you even realize this because we haven't been in that close of contact over the last few years, but a lot of my coaching practice is in this area now.

Jody: And a lot of mine is too. I've coached.

Mark: Oh yeah, of course it is. Of course it is.

Jody: We coach a lot on this. We do have adult children, but they're just barely entering that stage.

Mark: Yes, true.

Jody: I just wanted to put it out there that we're not claiming to be experts.

Mark: My son will be 19 in a month.

Jody: Yeah. It counts.

Mark: It counts.

Jody: I have an 18-year-old daughter and a 20-year-old son. It counts. Barely. But our expertise, I would say my expertise doesn't come so much from my life experience as my coaching experience. That I have a lot of. And being an adult child.

Mark: Okay, but can we start here? Can we start with the phrase "adult children" and recognize that maybe that's where we're getting off track is being like, "I'm having a hard time with my adult children"?

Jody: And as you said last time, "parenting adult children" is three words that should never go together.

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Mark: They don't go in sequence. They do not belong in sequence. We don't parent adults, we parent children.

Jody: True. Okay, so what are we going to call it? What we mean is my offspring who are adults now.

Mark: Okay, so it sounds like a word game, but if you want to start to clean it up for yourself a little bit, you start by saying, "parenting my children who are adults."

Jody: Okay.

Mark: And now then it already starts to loosen its grip where you're like, "Interesting. I'm parenting children who are adults, but if they're adults, why am I parenting them?"

Yeah. Or even saying I'm not the parent of adult children, because again, those words don't go together. It's...

Jody: I know, but what are we going to call it instead?

Mark: What do you call it instead?

Jody: Yeah.

Mark: Well, I think you stop saying that. And to me, I mean you know me, I'm not much of a thought worker, but I think thought work is very powerful, and I think if we look at how we're phrasing our thoughts or how our thoughts are expressing themselves, we learn something from it. And the fact that a person would say, "I'm struggling to parent my adult children," tells me that they did not experience the transition that, their children's transition to adulthood as the end of one thing and the beginning of another.

Jody: Yes. Okay, let's talk about that transition for a minute and dive in. And I'll just apologize because I'll probably still say the wording wrong.

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Mark: And I'm not going to correct you because we all say - it works. It's fine.

Jody: Yeah. But I do absolutely agree with what you're saying. And I do think words are powerful. Words in your mind and I always think the words I'm saying out loud means they're really happening in my mind because there's a lot in there I'm not even saying out loud.

Mark: I think that's very well said.

Jody: Yeah, I think that's important. But that transition that you're talking about, right? And I have this theory that we start out where we have babies, right? And they're down here in terms of their ability to do anything. They can't even hold their own heads up without our help, right? And so we're up here doing everything for them. And it should ideally, in a perfect world, naturally go like this, where they become more and more capable and we let go of how much we're trying to control or how much we're doing for them until at some point it kind of meets in the middle and then eventually we keep aging and maybe in some ways become less capable and they end up sort of taking care of us, if you will, to a certain extent depending on your circumstance. And so again, in a perfect world, the rate at which they are increasing in capacity and ability and independence and able to use their agency, we're also decreasing in how much we take over.

Mark: Of course.

Jody: Of course none of us do that perfectly. But that's what you're talking about is if the offspring has accelerated up here in their minds and we're not decreasing how much influence or control we think we're supposed to have, problems arise.

Mark: I like it. Yep.

Jody: Okay. So I love that you've coached on this a lot and so have I and we can just bring in lots of experiences to play with here. What do you think

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is the reason, I think it's interesting to dive into why we do this, why it's challenging for the parent. Let's just start with some scenarios.

Mark: Okay, that's a great. You can you can jump into the deep end. Big scenarios would include the kid has left home and is in college, so is at home part-time. Another big scenario in our culture, obviously, would be the kid has gone to serve a full-time mission and maybe is on the mission or has returned. Those are a couple of scenarios we could play with. A huge one is the kid has gotten married. Oh, baby.

Jody: Because they let children get married, it turns out.

Mark: They're just little tiny babies.

Jody: I get these wedding announcements, I'm like, they're letting children get married now. It turns out they always were, but yeah.

Mark: They always were. Although I was an extremely mature 24 when I got married, which at the time I will have you know I thought was so old.

Jody: That was old in Provo.

Mark: That was old in Provo in 2003.

Jody: I was 30 when I got married, Mark, because I was about to get kicked out of the singles ward. So was my husband, my now husband Jake, so we were like, we better hurry up.

Mark: I forget that you guys got married when you were 30.

Jody: We're old, yeah, very old.

Mark: Oh, there's such advantages to it.

Jody: There are really are. In hindsight, I'm so glad but that's another story. Okay, so yeah, so we have all these scenarios. I think, tell me, tell me if you agree or disagree. I think it's super challenging from the viewpoint of the parent to look at your child as an adult when they, just like we're joking

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about, they clearly look and in many ways act like children. There's just so much they still don't know.

Mark: We know the science tells us their brain doesn't finish forming until they're 25, 26. Their ability to think critically and reason and make decisions does not happen apparently until 25, 26.

Jody: Yeah, true.

Mark: So in a very real way, they're not they're not done cooking when the law calls them an adult.

Jody: It's true.

Mark: So I have compassion for parents who say, "Well, I understand that technically or legally, this child of mine is an adult, but they're still doing some epically stupid things that support my belief that I should keep involving myself in their decisions." I don't blame them.

Jody: And in many cases, we're still supporting them either 100% or at least significantly, financially.

Mark: Yes.

Jody: There's that whole other piece that comes into play, right?

Mark: Yes there is.

Jody: Which we need to dive into.

Mark: Well, we got to just pick one of these. Should we start there because...

Jody: Yeah, you start.

Mark: Okay, so what I want to say about that is that I do not have any strong dogma myself about how much financial support parents give their children as they transition into adulthood, whether that's paying for college

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or paying for vehicles or paying for housing. I don't have a lot of dogma there personally. A person could give no support and I would say that could work. A person could give total support and I would say that could work. By the way, I think if we look at something like the thought model, I think the thought model supports that too because we could look at those things as sort of neutral circumstances.

That's not terminology I come back to much these days, but I think it's real and it's like the fact that you do or don't give your kid a bunch of financial support does not determine their future necessarily because that's the circumstance. That's the neutral piece of this. What I have observed is when it goes wrong, it goes wrong because the parent feels in some way more entitled to be part of decisions because they are involved financially.

Now, there's nuance there because a parent might say, "Well, if I'm paying for the housing, I get a say in the housing." And I don't have a lot of dogma there either. I'm not going to say, "No, that's wrong," or "Yes, that's right." But I do think if you want your child to act like an adult and to actually become an adult that's completely distinct from you as a as an individual, then there has to be more collaboration about it, where it does definitely get weird is when a parent has the sense that because they're involved in the child's life financially at all, they have a say in any and all decisions.

Jody: Yeah.

Mark: Then we're in weirdness. Then we're in trouble. We're going to be in trouble. It's not going to go well.

Jody: Yeah, for sure. I've coached on this scenario a lot where, like the adult child is living at home, let's say, and they're maybe like early 20s or so, mid 20s, not doing the things, I end up mostly coaching moms, so I'll just say mom, but it could be dads, not doing what the mom wants, like not, they'll say things like, "Well he says he's looking for a job, but he really isn't putting in much effort. He sleeps in late. He's playing video games or

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whatever. He's not taking the initiative I want him to," which are you saying then or like what how would you advise in that situation?

Mark: That's a great scenario because in that case, the parent has to have an honest conversation with herself, himself, themselves, about what they are willing to be a part of. What decisions they can make and what actions they can take that they will respect in themselves. Because if the kid moves home or never left home and if you have an opinion about how they should be living, then you get to decide to what degree you want to participate in that scenario.

You can say, "Look, you can live at home, but living at home means you're going to be looking for a job." Now, you and I need to make sure we agree on the definition of looking for a job. You and I need to agree on the definition of what it looks like to be making an effort in life in general if you're going to live at home, especially if you're going to live at home for free. Now, if you want to pay rent, for example, I'm not saying this is the right way, but this is a way. Now, if you want to pay rent and if you want to just be a tenant, then we can figure out what it looks like for you to be a tenant and then at that point, do you.

Now, the parent might say, "Well no, I'm not okay with that either." And then we have to get into a conversation about, "Well, how do you feel about the fact that your kid has agency and they get to make of their life what they choose?" Because they may not make of their life what you would choose for their life and living under your roof for free may not have the impact that you're hoping it would.

Jody: Yeah. I like your preface of like we're not saying there's a right way or a dogma that's correct around these topics about what you should and shouldn't let your children do. I think we both coach that way like we don't know. But if someone brings me this, it means they're unsettled about it.

Mark: Agreed.

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Jody: Right? They're having resistance to it. And the way I see it is really similar to what you said, but I'm like, "Well, if you expect them to be an adult, you got to start treating them like an adult."

Mark: Yes.

Jody: If this was a random adult that moved into your house, you probably wouldn't just be okay with them, like you said, not paying rent, not doing whatever was the agreement when you decided they could live there. So what's hard about that, what I always in my own shortcomings and weaknesses try to acknowledge is largely the reason I'm not treating them like an adult is because I'm fearful. Like I don't want to have to reinforce the consequence of, "Okay, you didn't meet the agreement. You didn't job hunt like we talked about or you don't have rent or whatever. So you're out." And that's what that requires, right?

And so either you prepare yourself for that, but so many of these kids aren't motivated, right? Why would they be? If I'm living at home, why wouldn't I just stay in my comfort zone, right? So you've got to give them a reason to be motivated, or stop thinking that they should be doing it differently. And I'll tell you, there are probably more times than is what's serving my kids that I chalk it up to, "Yeah, it probably would be better for my kid if I was tougher on them in this way or I reinforced this thing and I just don't have it in me." Like there are times when I just chalk it up to, "I just want to take care of them in this way and I feel okay about it for whatever reason."

Mark: So that I don't want to take us on a tangent unless we feel like it's productive, but I personally, and as a coach, I don't have any problem with what you just said, especially if you take an unspoken thing and make it a spoken thing. So you could say to your kids, "By the way, in the long run, there's a chance you're worse off because I'm not holding a certain line. I'm not holding this line, that line, or the other line. You might actually be worse off. I'm doing this partly because I want to, partly because I'm staying within my own comfort zone. But I just want you to know that it might not be in

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your best interest to take advantage of me in this way. You may end up wishing you hadn't."

Jody: Yeah, I love that. I'm really big on being honest in relationships, as we've talked about before. And I think even with our kids, even before they're adults, as much as is appropriate. But certainly as they age, it's appropriate. I try to say things like, "I don't know if this is what's best for you," exactly like you said. "In fact, this might even be hurting you. To be honest, I'm just uncomfortable doing the thing that might be better parenting." And just, yeah, the honesty is huge. I just had a situation actually last Friday we had a bunch of people here in town. We did an in-person VIP Power Coaching day. It was really fun. We had a situation where actually we had several like this.

But you know, they're trying really hard not to control. They know that's my thing. I'm always like, "You can't control these kids, these people, these young adults. You can attempt to discipline them. You can have consequences and rewards and boundaries and all of that, but you're not meant to control them, first of all. You'll set yourself free the day you really realize that, but you really can't even control them in most cases." But you can be honest. So a lot of times they think I'm saying, like one of them has a daughter getting married and she's not crazy about who the daughter has chosen to marry, for example, right? So she's like, "I know I can't control them and I'm just trying to you know, she's trying to like dance around it and say the right thing, but she's really concerned."

I'm like, "Okay, yeah, you can't control, but you can be honest." You can say, "Listen, I love you so much and this is probably a really exciting time for you and so I'm delighted for you. Like how exciting. And to be honest, it's also terrifying for me as your mother. And I'm not telling you that to try to manipulate you or anything. I trust whatever decision you make and I'm going to be by your side no matter what. But I don't think I would be being the kind of mom I want to be if I didn't share with you that I also worry about this, that, or the other thing or I see some concerns. And yet, I don't know

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who you should marry. You do." You know what I mean? Like it's difficult to do and not get in there and manipulate, but I'm always like, "Why don't you just..." 'Cause she's like, "I mean I don't say that to her. I just smile." Like, "Well, why not? Why are you not saying some of this?" They the only alternative they can think of is either...

Mark: By the way, your daughter's tracking you 100%. She went back to her fiancé and she was like, "My mom did the thing. She smiled. It was the smile. You know the one smile? And I know what this..."

Jody: Well and they know that.

Mark: What's that?

Jody: Yeah, my clients always know that. They're like, "I know, I know." And it's disconnecting, right? Because now we're pretending, now we're lying even.

Mark: Now we're lying. It's and make no mistake, Jody, it's lying. We can dress it up however we want to dress it up. We are lying.

Jody: Right.

Mark: So in that scenario, I love what you're saying about honesty. I think it's crucial. Sometimes our clients will hear the word honesty and they'll be like, "No, I was honest. I told the truth with love." And I'm like, "Somehow I feel that you didn't do that." My anxiety is rising right now, but okay. But it's more like, are you willing to share your concerns and then hear their response and collaborate with them in that interaction and say, "Hey, Jimmy's a great kid. I think. We don't know him that well. We're not sure you know him that well. We have these three experiences. When this happened and that happened and the other thing happened, here's the story that we wrote from those observations."

Jody: Yes.

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Mark: "Do you see any of those things?" And by the way, I'm going to tread lightly here because I actually don't know whether I think this would be right or wrong. There may be a scenario where Jimmy's part of that conversation. And I don't, I'm holding that very loosely.

Jody: Yeah.

Mark: I don't have a rule, but the more honest we can be, the better off we are.

Jody: Yeah.

Mark: The more that the truth is part of our relationship, the stronger the relationship is.

Jody: Absolutely. And I think again, back to like my whole analogy, like we're talking young adults who are actually more capable than I think I know that I tend to think they are in many cases. And so to allow yourself to also be vulnerable is okay. To say, you know, in this particular scenario where we were coaching, I was like, she said, "I'm afraid that this guy's going to pull her away from our family. I feel him kind of trying to do that and I'm afraid that's going to get worse." And I said, "Well, have you said that to her? Have you said like, "Hey, I might..." to your point, "I made it mean this and maybe I'm insane. Tell me I'm insane, but I feel like he doesn't like us. I feel like he's trying to pull us, pull you away from us. Tell me I'm crazy." You know what I mean? Like I don't know if that's the right way to say it, but it's okay to - you don't always have to be the wise expert who's like, "I have more experience, I know better than you. Here's what's going on." But to your point, hear them out. Tell me why you love this guy. Tell me what I'm not seeing.

Mark: Yeah, and also, I want to talk to that client of yours because a sentence like, "I'm afraid he's going to pull her away from our family," could be it could be a pretty clean up idea, but if I could talk to that client, I would want to understand how that client is feeling about the change in her family dynamics with a child getting married at all. How do you feel about your

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child leaving your nuclear family to form her own? How is that impacting your sense of self? Do you know who you are when you're no longer her mother in the way that you've been her mother for 18, 20, 30 years? Is there a really strong identity that persists after that little piece of the identity graduates?

Jody: And what if you uncover that no, she is really struggling with that, this is like deeper-seated just life changes, identity change type work.

Mark: It's the best and the worst news. It's the best news because it means that her daughter is actually not in charge of her emotional state. That's great news. It doesn't seem like great news, but it's great news. The worst news is, well, it's also kind of good news, but the worst news is now you just get to deal with yourself. This is internal work at the end of the day. Who am I? Do I feel strong in who I am and in the life that I'm creating independent of my children? Because if a child getting married represents kind of an existential threat to your own identity, you're going to have, you're likely to find a lot more problems with their fiancé, with their significant other. You're going to find a lot of problems with the whole thing and you don't know whether they're actually problems or whether it's just your current identity fighting for its life.

Jody: Yeah. It's that's a really valid point. It kind of speaks to like clean pain versus dirty pain a little bit, which is like there's going to be, the bad news is there's some clean pain here, but which is painful, but appropriate, healing, useful.

Mark: Yes.

Jody: You'll move through it. Dirty pain, that's what we tend to grab on to.

Mark: Yeah.

Jody: Might keep you stuck and not useful. So let's just process the clean pain, let go the dirty pain. That's a really good point.

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Mark: I like that framing because there is clean pain in grieving the end of this chapter with each kid, with all your kids, whatever. It's, you know, my kid's leaving in six weeks or something for a couple of years. And he's right now having to deal with a lot of parents, his parents, who are wanting to do a lot of like, "You were so cute when you were five," and we're doing a lot of that to him right now and wanting to just sit on the couch and snuggle him. He's 6'1", 230. He doesn't, he's not that...

Jody: Get off me mom and dad.

Mark: He'll snuggle his mom pretty well. He's not that interested in snuggling his dad. It's clean. It's like, "Oh man, you're doing it. You're doing it." But it's sad. It's something to be grieved.

Jody: Yeah. So I wanted to ask you about if you have any mantras. I know like there's not one right way to think about this or do this, but how do you think about your kids or how do have you found any useful like mantras? I don't know if that's the right word.

Mark: It's a really great question. I don't. None are coming to mind as sort of a like a mantra to kind of reset myself or to offer to a fellow parent as like a quick reset.

Jody: Yeah, let me give you some examples and then I'd love you to push back on any of them too if you're just like, "That's ridiculous." So I'll start with some probably lighter ones that you'll probably agree with and then I'll give you some of my more extreme ones that I like for me. I'm not saying these are for everybody. I'm just saying for me. So the first one that brings me so much peace is I just decided long ago that I am not the puppeteer controlling my kids. It feels like that when they're little, because when they're little, you kind of can to a certain extent. But as they get older, and I see this a lot too, I don't know if you saw the, you're not on Instagram that much, right?

Mark: No.

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Jody: There was this meme that went around that was so funny. It was like a text thread of soccer moms, okay? Like a soccer team, all the moms. Some random woman apparently, I don't know if this is real or not. Some random woman got added to the group text and there's all these texts going around about soccer practice and everything and she pipes in and says, "My kid's the best player on the team." And people start replying, "Wait, who is this?" And she doesn't say anything and they're like, "Why would someone say that?" And then she just says, "And the snacks have really sucked lately, by the way."

Again, I have no idea if this is real, but it's hilarious. So at first people are just like curious, trying to figure out who it is. "Why would you say that?" And then she just keeps dropping things like, "I think it's really generous of my son to keep playing with you guys considering he's been scouted by all these pro teams and everything." And pretty soon they start getting really defensive and just lashing back. And by the end, one of them says, "I talked to the coach and we're discussing this today at the team meeting."

And it's just hilarious to see how if you think you're the puppeteer, as your kids get older, that's only going to get messier, right? You're going to get into their drama, you're going to try to control all their experiences. So anyway, my mantra is that I am just watching the play, like of each of my kids. Like my daughter, Macy, I'm just watching the play of Macy. I used to say it was like a movie, but I decided no, it's a play because I'm in the audience and I can yell out every now and then like, "Don't go out that door. There's a bad guy out there." And she may or may not listen. The actors may take my advice. I can shout out something, but mostly I'm just with popcorn like, "What's going to happen next?"

And I guess I'm a side character in that play. Sometimes I get to give her advice, you know? I get to offer some of what I think and believe, but they may just completely ignore it and I'm just sitting there going, "What's going to happen next? Can't wait to see." And that has set me free from trying to control all the things because I figured out I couldn't control it a long time

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ago. And it works a lot better because my kids are much more willing to talk to me and open to sharing things when I'm just a bystander in their life. And I'm cheering for them, right? Like they're the star of the play and so I'm always in support of them, but I'm not there to control it.

So it went from like my daughter coming to me going, "Mom, this thing happened and these girls are being mean at school or whatever," and me wanting to go, "Well, did you say this? And maybe we should have one of them over and then you should just try opening up. Maybe you need to apologize or maybe whatever." It went from that to she would say, "Mom, this thing happened," and I'd go, "What do you think you're going to do? What do you think you're going to say?"

Mark: So you didn't say, "Oh, I have her mom's phone number, I'll sort this out"?

Jody: I'll call her mom and we'll figure it out, no. When I switched from giving all my advice, even though I still had it all in my head, I still had ideas of what she should do and say but I just always lead with, what's going to happen next in this play? And sometimes she'll ask me. What would you say? And then I will tell her. But mostly, I just keep watching the play and it's set me free in so many ways.

Mark: I really like it. The reason I like it is the way you're presenting it, I'm not tracking that you're doing the thing where you think it's a perfect metaphor.

Jody: Oh no, not at all.

Mark: And every piece of this is unassailable. It's just something that kind of released you from some pain you were having and you're like, no, I'm in the audience enjoying the show. I think that's awesome. And I like how you're saying you can cheer for them, not that I think you're giving this impression. A person could take the spectator thing and they could go all the way of like, I don't tell my kid anything, I don't ever comment. That's not you and that's not what you're promoting.

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What I really believe is possible, and I think it models the right thing for our kids as they transition into adulthood is open, honest conversation, which sounds so cliché but however old our kids get, we can say I want to talk with you about something, I want to share with you my ideas about that thing, are you up for that? If we've had a certain kind of, if we've set a certain tone or had a track record of that kind of conversation where they felt like they could, they feel like they can engage with that and not be threatened by it, then it'll be fantastic.

A long time ago, one of the things that I have done well as a parent, and it's not that long of a list, but one thing that I've done well as a parent, and I thank coaching for this, is a long time ago I sat down with my son, and I said, "I want to have a conversation about conversations." Because when I come to you and I say I want to talk about something, you seem to freeze up and get defensive and get nervous and seem to get scared. And I'm just curious, what is that? Do you think I'm mad at you? Do think I'm going to get mad at you? Do you think that I'm punishing you? Or what's going on for you when I say I want to talk?

And then he said, "Well yeah, I kind of think maybe I'm going to get in trouble." And then I say, "Is that because you've gotten in trouble in the past?" He said, "No, that's not really your style. I don't know, I just get nervous." And I said, "Okay, being nervous isn't a problem. I just want to be able to have conversations with you where I share ideas and, you know, you share ideas and whatever." From that conversation forward, if I said, "Hey son, I want to talk. It's not going to be the funnest talk, but I want to talk." He'd be like, "Alright."

Jody: Okay. Yeah, that's right. You'd laid the groundwork. What I love about the way you approach that, but I think is important for people is that you are, you're genuinely curious about what he's going to say. I think some people go into a conversation like that. This goes back to the thought work. If you haven't cleaned up your head around it, it's going to be a manipulation.

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Mark: 100%. Yes, it is.

Jody: Right? So I can always tell when we're coming at it from manipulation because my client will say, "I tried that and it didn't work."

Mark: Yes.

Jody: Do you ever hear that, right?

Mark: Yeah, the implication being...

Jody: I'm like, "What do you mean it didn't work? There's nothing to work. We're just having a conversation." And what they mean is he didn't change.

Mark: He didn't do the thing that I was trying to get him to do without saying it. I didn't want to tell him what to do because my life coach told me I can't tell him what to do. So what I attempted was a convoluted manipulation. And when the convoluted manipulation didn't work, I felt frustrated.

Jody: Yeah. I'm like, what do you mean it didn't work 100% of the time. All we're doing is having a conversation, right? So, that's how you know you're you haven't gotten your head straight about it, which is like, you have to let go of thinking you know the right way for your kids to live their life. And here's another mantra that helps me is like, I have to remind myself on the regular, my kids are supposed to suffer, sometimes be miserable, make sometimes mistakes and terrible choices. All the things that I wish I could prevent are an important part of their life experience. It doesn't mean I don't try to prevent them, but only to a certain extent.

And again, I don't profess to know what that is for anyone other than my own self and my own children. But when I find myself questioning like, am I being overly controlling here? I go back to like, really, if I could just lock them in a room and pump happiness into the air nonstop, then my brain could just settle down, but that would really minimize their life and would not serve them. So what's the next level? Okay, we're going to let them out of the house. We're going to let them leave the house, right? Are we going

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to let them drive cars? I don't know, it took me a while to wrap my head around that's a good idea. Are we going to let them move out of the house? Are we going to let them go on dates? Are we going to let, like all of these things are terrifying, really. They all can be dangerous.

And again, I don't profess to know for anybody, even for me, it's a case by case basis. Like if my daughter says, "Mom, I want to take my car and drive from Provo down to Las Vegas with my friends for the weekend." Do I grant her the permission or not? Could I stop her if I wanted to is another question, but I go back to like, I don't know. Like, I'm limiting her life, but maybe sometimes that's the right choice and sometimes it's not. But my kids are supposed to sometimes be unhappy and suffer and even because of things that could have been avoided. Even because of things that I do sometimes. Not intentionally, but I'm going to do things and they're going to look back and go, "When you did that thing, it caused a problem for me." So that might not sound like a peaceful thought to some people, but to me it really is because again, it allows me to just relax a little and keep watching the play, even though there's stressful parts of the play. You know?

Mark: Yeah. Are you asking for pushback?

Jody: Yeah, yeah, please.

Mark: I don't have a lot of pushback on that. Supposed to isn't a phrase I really use.

Jody: Okay.

Mark: Let them is also not a phrase I really use. Kate laughed at me not too long ago because maybe one of my things is that I will actively coach against the word let. When somebody's like, "Well, I know I just have to let them." And I say, and then Kate's laughing, she's like, "Do you know who Mel Robbins is?" And I said, "No."

Jody: You don't know Mel Robbins?

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Mark: I think I've seen like, I have not watched a Mel Robbins video.

Jody: Okay. You'd like her, but anyway, continue.

Mark: I don't know. I might have heard little bits here and there and I was like, we may have stylistic differences. But apparently she wrote a book called Let Them.

Jody: Uh-huh. Let Them, yeah.

Mark: And Kate's laughing. She's like, "Your whole thing is don't use that phrase and she wrote a book called that." And I was like...

Jody: A bestseller.

Mark: Yeah, I have no doubt. I have no doubt that other people are taking things I disagree with and writing runaway bestsellers with them.

Jody: Yeah.

Mark: The idea of let them implies that you have control that you don't have.

Jody: Yeah.

Mark: It implies that you are allowing something that you could disallow. You cannot disallow it. If they want it in their life, they will have it in their life. They may have to wait longer until they feel that you represent less of an impediment, but there is no let them, not let them. There is, I can be part or I cannot be part. I can participate or not participate. But the letting idea, it's part of a, now I lean hard on this and I'm not trying to project this meaning onto everyone who ever says let, because it's just part of our vernacular. It's not a problem. But if I'm talking to a parent who's struggling with the desire to control the uncontrollable, then I will push hard on this idea of let because you do not have the ability to allow or disallow this thing. You may have some influence over its timing, but if smartphones have taught us nothing else, it's that there's no such thing as control for parents. Well, like

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whatever, whatever filters, whatever locks, we did all the, we've done all the locks and all the filters and all the everything. Guess what we learned.

Jody: There's a work around.

Mark: For every single thing.

Jody: Yeah.

Mark: Every single thing. So it's really just a question of time. But if the desire is there, they will satisfy that desire. So you can either be part of the conversation about the desire or not, but you're not preventing anything.

Jody: It's true. I 100% agree with that. But the whole, and I do think, you know, we're talking about thoughts here. A mantra is just a thought. And I think that thoughts are personal. And so if it provides you the relief or the letting go or whatever that you're seeking, it's useful. If it doesn't, if it causes you to push back and argue against it, then it's not useful. So I want to be clear. But the idea behind the Let Them theory, and when I say they're supposed to is it's a redirect for my brain, right? So if my brain is like, we can't no, we can't like - Mel Robbins' example in that book is she talks about her teenage son going to prom and I can't remember what ever ridiculousness was going to happen and with dinner and pictures and something and she was like, "No, that doesn't make any sense." And her daughter's just like, "Mom, just let them. Just let them like waste money or not get good pictures or whatever she thought." I'm getting the story a little bit wrong, but it was just she didn't think it was going to turn out ideal and her daughter was like, "Just let them, Mom. Let them." She's like, "Yeah, you know what, you're right. I don't need to worry about this."

And so the point is that like your brain can stop spinning on it, fixating on about it, forming opinions about it, trying to intervene when you just say, I'm just going to let them. And it reminds me of one of my favorite thoughts I learned from our friend Brooke Castillo, which is, I just give people permission to judge me. And it's such a ridiculous thought because of course they don't need my permission. They're going to judge me all day

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long if they want to. There's nothing I could do to stop it. But when I tell myself, no, no, no, it's fine. Because my part of my brain is worried, "Oh no, what if they don't like you? What if they think ABC about you?" And I just go, "No, no, remember, I just give everyone permission to judge me." Then I just let go of thinking about it. But it is, you're right. It's like all based in the lie that we could prevent any of it, and we really can't.

Mark: Here's the reason I love the example you just gave. And I agree with everything you just said about the little semantic, the little word games we play because we all do it.

Jody: Yeah.

Mark: I love Brooke as an example. And I'm going to use her words, what the time that she and I were collaborating and I made a comment about the way she was attempting to control. And she said, "I know that I'm a control enthusiast."

Jody: Yes.

Mark: And I had never heard that. I was like, Brooke, that's the funniest thing. Control enthusiast. She was like a control enthusiast. I was like, you're so, I love that.

Jody: It just sounds nicer.

Mark: It just sounds great. She's like, I know I'm a control enthusiast.

Jody: Yes.

Mark: So this idea of I'm going to give permission, people permission to judge me is the most on brand thing that Brooke could ever say because Brooke Castillo, Hicks. She lives in a world where she thinks that her permission is relevant.

Jody: No, she doesn't.

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Mark: 100 million percent.

Jody: No, I don't, I disagree.

Mark: It betrays like that's so authentic. I'm not even mad about it. It's so authentic to Brooke. If Brooke were my coaching client, I'd be like, your permission is irrelevant. You have no control nor influence over what anyone does ever.

Jody: I think she knows. Well, yeah.

Mark: Maybe influence is not quite right. But release it. Release.

Jody: Which is what that thought does for so many of us. And with back to our kids, I have a lot of thoughts like this about my kids that release me of just the worry and anxiety. Thoughts like they're going to have the life they're meant to have. There's very little I can do to interfere with the experiences they're supposed to have. Like whatever trials and again, not everybody likes these thoughts. They don't provide comfort for everyone. So I get it. But when I just, I do love words like supposed to. You know?

Mark: Yeah, I mean, absolutely.

Jody: And it just makes my brain go, "Oh, okay. Well, then we don't need to worry about that."

Mark: Okay, that I think is a very important point because if you notice after you reach for those tools, and this is the power of thought work as you've taught, if the relief comes, then it's as you've said, it's a good tool. In my experience with clients, let them and supposed to are very often brought up in the context in a sentence that sounds like this. "I know I need to let them, but," "I know they're supposed to have their own experience, but." So, in those cases, which is not your case, in those cases, reaching for those tools is just another way of expressing their desire for control and their fear.

Jody: For sure.

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Mark: And in those cases, I'll say, look, dude, like it's not a question of let. There's no, there's no let.

Jody: Then they're taking a, it's either not a useful thought for them at all. I would agree with that in many cases, it's not. But also it's sometimes taking what could be a useful tool and now weaponizing it.

Mark: Amen.

Jody: Yeah. As soon as you add should, which is what you're saying, I know I need to or I know it's supposed to. I should let them. I should stop trying to control them. You're in just as much trouble as trying to control them. It's just a different kind of trouble.

Mark: It might be worse trouble to your point about weaponizing it, because that client could tell themselves sort of, well, I'm saying the thing that I was supposed to say, but it's not giving me any relief.

Jody: That's right. And that is how they bring it to me. They're like, "I already know what you're going to say."

Mark: Yes.

Jody: Great, I can't wait. Why don't you just tell me then? "You're going to say I'm not supposed to try to control them."

Mark: Yep.

Jody: I'm like, "Why would I say that? No, tell me what's going on." Because to your point, it's so individual and personal. But what would you say to that client then that says, "I know I need to let them make their own choices, make their own mistakes."

Mark: I would work with that client around their desire.

Jody: Okay.

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Mark: Because if they say, "I know I need to," I would say, "Could we talk about the fact that you don't want to? And could we just let the fact that you don't want to be like, I just said it, didn't I, let. Could we could we embrace your lack of desire and just be with it? I don't want my kid to make certain decisions. Okay, let's hang out there for a second. Let's not fight it. You don't want that. Okay."

Jody: I actually really like that.

Mark: Once...

Jody: I didn't think that's what you were going to say.

Mark: Oh, interesting.

Jody: Sorry, continue.

Mark: I want to hear what you thought I was going to say, which is fine.

Jody: I didn't know what you were going to say, but I didn't want to interrupt you though. Once they what? Once they sit with that desire.

Mark: Once they're able to sit with desire because something I'll share with my clients as well is that when we reach for the word need, it often reveals, oh man, we get to be, we're going to be so coachy. We're going to use coachy words. It reveals like a disempowered state. I need it means like I'm sort of a victim of it or I'm a victim of its lack or I'm powerless in this state. But if someone says, I want or don't want it, agency has been reintroduced. I have influence over this. I can choose my way of approaching this. I can choose how, I can choose what I say, I can choose what I do, I can choose what I desire as opposed to I need or I should or not used in the way that you said earlier, but or I'm supposed to, if they're using supposed to in a should way, it shows where they're feeling or playing the victim.

And if we go to desire, then we can get them back into their own agency and say, well, it's, so you seem not to want X or Y or Z. Can we just sit with that? You don't want that. Okay. It loosens its grip from the moment it's

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acknowledged. Like the pain that they feel seems to ease a little bit as soon as they say, I don't want that. And often in session, I'll see them transition from the pain of resistance to more like the pain of acceptance. So I'm not saying there's no pain there.

Jody: Yeah.

Mark: Well, your words. I think it's cleaner pain versus dirtier pain.

Jody: I was just going to say, this reminds me exactly what we just talked about that it now becomes inner work.

Mark: Yeah.

Jody: instead of external trying to, like it's not even about the kid, it's about so do you ask if they say, "Yeah, it's true. I don't want that." Do you ask them more questions like, why?

Mark: Absolutely.

Jody: Because I feel like often what comes up is I don't, again, this goes back to my mantra. It often comes back to I don't want to see my kids struggle or suffer needlessly is almost always at the root of it and I'm afraid that's where they're headed. Which goes back to my mantra of like, but it's okay for them to struggle and suffer. In fact, they're supposed to at times.

Mark: In fact, it's crucial.

Jody: It's crucial, right?

Mark: So you can jump there and I think sometimes a client is ready to make that leap with you and I think it could be amazing service. Sometimes if a client says, well, I don't want my kid to suffer needlessly, then we could spend a whole session talking about what does suffering mean to you? Why do you use the word suffer? Not because I'm trying to get them not to say suffer, but I want them to know their own mind as it relates to this idea. Very often in that situation, they'll tell a story. "Well, when I was a little bit

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older than that person, I made a certain decision, it caused me so much pain. I don't want them to feel that pain, etc., etc." And I just want to give them room to run with all of that. "Tell me more. Tell me about it. What happened? How did it feel?" Often, if that person has enough time and space to revisit the decisions they've made, the pain they've felt, then they can find new meaning in that pain or in those experiences such that their desire to like hold tightly to their kids' behavior or somebody else's behavior, it just loosens naturally.

Jody: Yeah. This is what I love about coaching, is that process that you're talking about taking someone through, which takes some time and it takes a lot of patience on the part of the coach, which I have to say, I think I've just been coaching long enough that I want to cut right to the chase. Okay, but they're supposed to experience pain, right? Let's move on. And that does not work. That's the equivalent of, your friend saying, "Well, it's all for their good, right?" You're just like, "Shut up. I don't want to hear that." But that is what we're saying in the end.

Mark: Yeah, but okay, well, I'm not that you need this from me, but 10 years into our relationship, I know that you and I do have very different styles. You're going to be more the cut-to-the-chase style.

Jody: Yeah.

Mark: I'm going to maybe stretch that thing out over three 50-minute sessions. But there's just no question at this point that your way of being has served a ton of people massively. So I think you should coach in the way. I think you should carry on, whatever my opinion is worth.

Jody: Oh, thanks. Yeah.

Mark: And I think people get benefit from they'll be like, "Oh, I'm a member of Jody's thing, and Jody has a certain style, and this is how Jody's voice sounds in my head." And then they'll come do a few sessions with somebody, Mark Butler or somebody like Mark Butler, and it just ends up all serving them.

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Jody: It's true.

Mark: In the direction of where they want to be.

Jody: Yeah, it's true. But I do think that process because you're taking them more internal and having them discover things, you know, and I listened to on one of on your podcast recently, a coaching call that you did. And you have really amazing questions, I feel like. And you're you're so patient. I kept wanting to jump in to be like, "Okay, so we see this, right?" But anyway.

Mark: By the way, I think it's boring too. I don't think the meaning, I'm not bored in session, but I have often thought an observer could find this so boring because it's slow and I'll kind of go down paths and there'll be dead ends and we'll kind of walk back. I mean, you heard it. I tend to find I tend to be riveted in those sessions.

Jody: I don't find it boring at all.

Mark: I've often thought, boy, this is some bad TV. Like what I'm doing right now is not good TV.

Jody: You know, I looked into one time, I was considering, I was like, "I want to have a TV show." And I talked to somebody who knows a little bit about that industry, and then I learned I don't want a TV show at all. Because I couldn't do what I'm doing authentically because they said exactly what you said. Well, we need something really sensational, really dramatic. We need to like blow up everything as much as possible. And I was like, "Oh, so I have to have an agenda with everything I do." And the agenda becomes getting viewers rather than actually helping the client. So, I don't know, not going to have a TV show today anyway. All right. What are we, what are we missing about adult kids? I feel like we've talked about some useful things, but...

Mark: Oh gosh. A lot. We're missing, we're missing so much.

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Jody: I know. This is the problem is every episode could go on three hours.

Mark: Well, and we can revisit, but I think one thing I would want to make clear, although this may reveal that I'm attempting to change the emotional state of the listener, so I have to own that. But this is messy business. I mean, in an unrecorded conversation, I think it was, I've said this to other people, but in an unrecorded conversation with you recently, I think I said, and I won't share the details, but I said, if circumstances were different right now. Now hear me, I'm Mr. Life Coach. If circumstances were different right now, I would be melting down. I would be having a panic attack. I would not be okay. That's real.

I know you've had the experience 10 million times of having your clients think that you're judging them or criticizing them. I have too. I don't feel that way about my clients. I don't feel that way about the parents who are listening to this. It is messy business to be in relationship with children who are transitioning into adulthood.

Jody: Yeah. Can we speak to the fear of losing them? Because I feel like with the moms, especially that I'm talking to, that's the greatest fear. Like, are they - not only like something tragic happen and losing them that way. There is that fear sometimes, but it's more often like, are they going to cut me out of their life? Are they going to distance themselves from me? Again, is this spouse going to really pull them away or are they going to get really upset? And there's a lot of then dancing around the truth and what are probably necessary conversations in the name of keeping the peace. And I that's a tough situation.

Mark: What's your thought or thoughts?

Jody: Well, again, it goes back to the mantras I like, which is I stopped a long time ago trying to be a good mom, quote unquote, because it made me a worse mom. If you play that out, for me, that's what happened. And I think even as adults, and I hear this like, "I just want to be the kind of mother-in-law that, you know, that they like, that they want to have around

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or they kind of mom or the grandma or whatever." Well, I coach just as many women who say, "I wish my mother-in-law cared more about what's going on in my kids' lives and came to their games and would come and visit us as much as she visits the other kids," as I do women who say, "I wish my mother-in-law would give us some space and didn't think she just needed to be at every game and come and see us all." Like, you can't win, it turns out, as a mother-in-law these days.

And so, again, and I ask myself these questions all the time, what would I do in that situation? I could end up in that situation one day. It goes back to like, I have to be what feels like me being the best version of me, which is always going to have problems and shortcomings, but like who do I want to be here? And who I want to be is someone who is respectful of what my adult children and their spouses requests. I care about their opinion. That matters to me but I worry that I'm going to be the one who never shows up. They're going to be like, why isn't our mom or a mother-in-law, why doesn't she care what's going on with my kids? I'll care, but I don't know. Partly, I think I'm not going to be overly involved and they may not like that. Am I going to alter myself? Again, open to requests, maybe I will to a certain extent, but I can't betray myself too much in the name of somebody else and think that's going to serve any of us well in the end.

Mark: Yeah, absolutely agree. If being a certain way feels like a betrayal to who you are, to who you are, it's not going to work. They're going to feel it. It's not, it's not going to work. So I completely agree with you. I also know that you know that our desires can evolve over time and if we make room for desires, we might discover we're going to be a totally different in-law or totally different grandparent than we ever thought we could be. We might find ourselves feeling a desire for more or less contact in a way that's completely surprising to us. So I think holding a lot of openness around, I wonder what this evolution is going to look like, I think would help, helps all of us a lot.

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I have one idea that's maybe not crazy and one idea that might strike people as crazy. So the not crazy one first would be, I always want to be operating in the space of desire. What do you want? Why do you want it? Do you like your reasons for wanting it? And are you willing to share those desires with the person with whom you're in relationship? That's all relationships. So if it's an in-law relationship, it's, are you willing as the mother-in-law or father-in-law to go to your son or daughter and your son and daughter-in-law, whoever, and to say, "This is actually the relationship I want. I don't need you to tell me that it's okay. I don't need you to become a different person. I just want you to know what I want and what I'm available for. But I'm not asking you to maintain me."

Do you know how many married couples, by the way, like when I coach people around this sort of thing, if I say, "So you have that desire. Have you shared that desire with your spouse?" And they're like, "Well, I could never do that." And I'm not talking about like, it's not like in the sexual realm. It could be, but it could be anything. It could be like, "Have you ever thought about sharing that desire or lack of desire about whatever miscellaneous part of your life with your spouse?" "Well, I couldn't do that." "Oh, you couldn't do that?" And then there's a lot of coaching to be done around that. But every relationship is going to be its strongest when the honest, fair, and kind desires of the people involved are in the open and being dealt with directly.

Jody: That's right. And what I find is when I ask that, "Have you shared that?" Like, again, classic. I had a woman who was the mother-in-law say, "My daughter-in-law, she doesn't even call to ask me if I can watch the kids. She just texts me." Which she thinks is very rude and disrespectful. You're not supposed to text that, you're supposed to make a phone call, apparently.

Mark: Apparently.

Jody: Well, again, when I ask the question, "Well, have you ever shared that with her that you really prefer a phone call over a text?" And she's like,

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either they say, like you said, "No, I couldn't do that. That's a given. They should just know that."

Mark: They say, "She should just know. She should just know."

Jody: Yeah. Or, "Yeah, I did." And then I say, "Tell me exactly what you said and when and how." And it's either, this happens in marriages, right? It's either coming from resentment and bitterness and so then it's not well received or what they said was so convoluted, it wasn't direct and clear. I'm like, "She didn't get that's what you meant. I guarantee because I don't know that's what you meant."

Mark: That's so true. Yeah.

Jody: So, yeah, and that's where to me the thought work comes in. If you're if you haven't cleaned up your head and you're not, you have to make peace with, it's okay for me to have this desire and I'm not trying to manipulate this person. I just want to communicate openly and honestly. Then you say it, since we're talking about Brooke today, one other example, I had this happen when Jake and I had been working in the business together for a couple years and I was doing webinars every month to fill the programs and I just got burned out on it and it was like kind of time to scale, but I said to Brooke, "I don't think Jake's..." She's like, "Don't do webinars anymore." I was like, "I don't think Jake's going to like that. I don't think he's going to be comfortable with that. I don't know what to say to him. I don't know how to tell him that." And she's like, "You just look him in the eye and you say, 'Jake, I love you so much, and I am never doing a webinar again.'"

Mark: I can hear it in her voice.

Jody: You can hear it, right? So I went home and I said my own version of that, but I just I was like, "Oh, you just say it? You just say it like that?" But like the I love you is where you start with like, "I'm not angry at you. I'm not on the defense. I know you're not going to like this." And so I just laid it out there and he was like, "Okay." Like now I know that doesn't always happen,

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but it's crazy how many times when you just clean up your head about it and you just communicate clearly, these things resolve themselves.

Mark: Also, when somebody reacts like Jake did, then you get to realize, "Oh, I was just projecting. I'm the one who's scared of getting rid of webinars and I was projecting that onto Jake," which is a thing we all do.

Jody: For sure. Yeah, you're right.

Mark: Can I tell you my crazy thing?

Jody: No. Oh yeah, tell me the crazy thing. I can't wait.

Mark: Okay, so this one, and I don't, it's a little bit heavier, but it's actually quite powerful.

Jody: Okay.

Mark: If a person is really struggling like, if a parent were feeling totally panicked at the idea of, quote unquote, losing their child, losing that relationship. So when Kate was diagnosed with cancer in early 2023, I took a day, one whole day, and for that day, I grieved Kate as though she had died. Did I tell you this?

Jody: No.

Mark: I, and I'm going to kind of like, I'll laugh about this, but I mean, it was real. I just sort of, I worked, I kind of worked all day. I probably put a sad song on repeat.

Jody: Like you wanted to draw out the grief.

Mark: And I just sort of worked and cried all day long because Kate was dead. And I think there're going to be plenty of people in the audience who are like, "You are insane."

Jody: I don't think that's insane at all. I think that's super healthy.

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Mark: But as I did that, I started to kind of imagine a life like, okay, well, then what would that life be like and what would I do and how would I do it and what about parenting and so on. And I just sort of let myself with probably some like cheesy early 2000s emo music playing on repeat. I just sort of let, it's probably Dashboard Confessional. That's probably what it was because that's how old we are. And I just sort of was like, "Okay." And then the beauty of it was at the end of that day, Kate wasn't dead.

And it is no small miracle and blessing that she's healthy and happy today because that's not often the case with families who go through a cancer diagnosis and cancer treatment. But I think sometimes if we're really gripped by the fear of a loss, one of the strongest things we can do is try to experience the loss before it happens and then realize that we would survive, and then we'll approach the situation from completely, maybe, hopefully, from completely different energy.

Jody: Well, because that's a pretty extreme version of what I call "making peace with worst-case scenario."

Mark: Oh, there you go.

Jody: Like you, and I think I love that you allowed yourself to actually feel all those feelings because you showed yourself, "I could do that if necessary." It's not how you'd want to spend every day, but if something happened to Kate, you would want to grieve for a while and you showed yourself that you could do it. And when you open up to it and invite it, it's a lot less painful than the resistance of it. But also you got to just a little bit, you know, again, I always say, let's just make peace with worst-case scenario. What would I do? For me, I used to do this around money all the time. What if we don't have any money? What if we, what if we go broke? What if we can't pay the bills or whatever?

And I used to just find peace in the thought, "My parents have a big house, and I could probably just move in with them for a little while if I need it." Now, the rest of me was like, "I don't want that. That would be hard. We'd

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have to move." And I would feel like a failure. And there would be a bunch of other stuff to figure out that I'm not going to figure out today. But I wouldn't die, and we wouldn't even be homeless on the street, most likely, because I have enough family members that are kind that would take me in. So we don't have to freak out about this. And I do think that's a really powerful, just like kind of calm the nervous system, if you will. But I think it's really, I really respect that you would just take a whole day and grieve it and let yourself, plus to like, just allow yourself to feel all those emotions is pretty, pretty bad A, I think.

Mark: Yeah, because what I know, I know you teach this, I know you've been teaching this for over a decade. What we all tend to fear is an emotion. We tend to fear a feeling. That tends to be what we're resisting. And so then if you'll lean into the feeling and realize that it doesn't kill you. What I want to give is that mother, if it's a mother, if she's really feared of afraid of losing that relationship, if she'll feel all the emotions that she thinks will come from the loss of that relationship, then when she approaches the relationship again, she's going to approach it differently. People can feel your need and your desperation and your anxiety, and they will start to retreat from it as a self-protective move. But if they start to track in you like, "What's going on with your mom? She seems so relaxed." They'll track that too, and that's attractive and magnetic and it draws people in instead of repelling them. So I think it's really important to feel those feelings ahead of time.

Jody: I love that. And I think also when it comes to our kiddos, I feel like I can interfere with their own, call it intuition or the Spirit or whatever you want to call it. If they, let's say my daughter's not feeling good about the guy she's dating, is she going to know that's her gut or is she going to think this is because my mom doesn't like him?

Mark: That's such an important point. Oh, I'm so glad you said that. It's such an important point.

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Jody: Yeah. So not that I won't have opinions and she'll be aware of them from time to time, but I'm trying really hard to be like, "Listen, I'm just your biggest fan, no matter what. I got your back, no matter what. And I trust you, and I think that you know the right decision to make more than I do." Hard for me to say that out loud, but I do believe that. So whatever happens, I'm here. And I'm hoping that will allow her to then hear her own judgment, her own intuition, the Spirit, whatever you want to call it.

Mark: Amen. Yep.

Jody: Yeah. So. All right. Well, gosh. Maybe we'll have a part two of this. If people maybe, why don't we do this? I'm going to tell people if you have questions, because my guess is our listeners are having questions as we're discussing these things.

Mark: Yeah.

Jody: Feel free to send us questions because I have a couple of ways I take questions. You can DM me on Instagram. I'm Jody Moore Coaching on Instagram. Or, do you know I have a podcast hotline?

Mark: No, that's brilliant.

Jody: It's kind of old school, but I like it.

Mark: Is it old school?

Jody: I mean, do people like get the phone and leave a voicemail?

Mark: I mean, I don't know one way or the other.

Jody: It's a voicemail, which I like because I can hear their voice and you can talk out your questions. So, anyway, it's 1-888-HI-JODY-M. That's Jody with a Y, M as in Moore, 1-888-HI-JODY-M. So call in if you have questions that you want Mark and I to flesh out. Or if you'd rather send them in on Instagram to my DMs, I keep a pretty close eye on that. And then we'll decide if we need to discuss this further or not, but thanks, Mark.

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Mark: Thank you. It's a super fun talk. Appreciate it.

Jody: Yeah.

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