

Loving on Purpose Podcast

with Bonnie Lyman

Episode 62 What to say or do in a difficult situation

Welcome to the podcast, loving On Purpose. I'm your host, Bonnie Lyman. If you're having trouble navigating through your relationships with your adult children, if you are struggling to connect with them or having specific challenges, you're in the right place. I'm Bonnie Lyman, and this is episode 62.

What to say or do in a difficult situation. Hello everyone. It's so glad to be meeting with you again this week. Uh, most of you probably don't even notice, but I'm recording this a day late. I just couldn't get it in yesterday. I had it ready to go, but I ran out of steam. But I know that most of you probably don't get it till Thursday anyway, because I publish him quite late some nights.

So anyway, I'm, I'm gonna count it as a win for myself that I just didn't skip the week completely. , but I didn't want to because I know that what I have to say, a lot of you that it's helping. So if you can share this with other people that um, need the help. , I'd appreciate it cuz I just wanna help as many people as I can.

I wanna welcome you that our new listeners and you can always go back and listen to the old ones, but welcome the reason. Publish this podcast on a weekly basis is I want to help people understand what is causing their discomfort, their pain, their despair. their feelings of not being loved or respected by their adult children.

I wanna teach people and show them that there is a way out. It doesn't have to stay this way because it's not the circumstances that bring us joy. It's what we choose to focus on, and that is a quote from the president of my church President Russell M. Nelson. And so how do we do that? . Well, this podcast is one way to help you know how to get out of that despair, but it's a process and it takes practice.

And so as a coach, that's where I come in. I teach people how to apply these things they've heard on my podcast because what's easy to do? Is easy not to do. And so we can listen to something and it all makes sense, but it's still, it's so personal to us that we want the circumstance to change. We want our children to change when it's really us that needs the changing.

it'd be great if our circumstances changed if those children started acting different toward us, but we can't count on it and life, life is too short to be unhappy. So I help

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people solve their problems, and yet in my heart, I know that the source. to solve any problem is following the teachings of Jesus Christ.

So my coaching practice is faith-based, but I help people apply those teachings. I, I feel like they are. True things, true reasons for why we feel the pain we do, and it's changing our thoughts and changing our perspective, that we can also change our feelings. So, We're gonna get on with this podcast, but there's one more thing I'd like to mention is that if you go to bonnie.lyman.com, there'll be a place that you can click on to get a free resource that I offer to anyone, and it's.

How to be yourself are three steps to be yourself around your adult children, and many of you have gotten that and I hope that it's been helpful to you. So here's the situation. Or Here's what I'm going to talk about today. I am going to give you, let me see how many I have. I guess it's five. Five steps, five things to do so that you know what to say or what to do, or maybe not saying or doing anything.

when you're in a difficult situation with your adult children. Now, this is similar to the podcast I had on how to have a difficult conversation, but this has to do. May get a little bit into the A line. Those of you that are familiar with the model know what I'm talking about, the action line or how we actually behave that, um, you can be satisfied with.

In, um, how you show up to your adult children when you get in a d difficult situation. So the first one, because it's the shortest in a lot of the steps. Overlap. I have five steps specifically of what to say in a difficult situation, and I just decided to add the do is number one, when you decide what you're going to do.

You be mindful of the reason why you're going to do that. So let's just say you, your child has asked you to borrow some money or to just give them some money. And this question comes up all the time from my clients. Maybe not in a particular situation of asking for money, but something has come up and they go.

what should I do? Or they give me something they're thinking about doing and they say, is that okay to do? And I always have the same answer. I can't answer that for you. What do you wanna do and do you like your reason of why you're going to do that? So if your child came asking you for money, You first of all have to decide if, if you wanna do that at all.

And then do you like your reason for the decision that you have made? And if you like your decision, then you're gonna have the self-confidence to move forward on that and

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feel good about your, your decision, what you decided to do. So, In, in that case, I guess really the first step, which is gonna be similar to knowing what to say, the first step is going to be making your decision when you're in a space of peace and calm, compassion and love rather than anger resent.

Or judgment. So then you make a decision and then you ask yourself,

um, do I like my reason for the decision I made? And you'll know if you like it or not most of the time how you feel, but sometimes saying yes or saying no, they could both bring some discomfort. So then I like to ask myself, is it moving us? Me, my child, our relationship isn't moving forward. Or is it? Just keep everybody spinning.

So let's go on, cuz this is specifically what I wanted to talk about because I hear it, these words said over and over again. So how do you know what to say in a difficult conversation? A difficult situation, and I'm gonna give you a very explicit example, but again, it comes back to, you know, what do you wanna do?

And then you get yourself in a place of peace and calm. And we do that, I believe first we take some deep breaths, and then we have some peaceful, calm, nonjudgmental thoughts about the situation. Just wanna focus on the facts. We wanna try to get away from our opinions and also from our children's opinions.

The next thing I like to do

in helping me find the reason. For making a decision or for deciding, what I'm going to say is, what is my gut feeling telling me to say

and then deciding, is that really what I want to say? So if I'm in confusion, I ask myself. What would love say and love would say something that was true or honest. Not necessarily your opinion, but you can give your opinion if you always start with the word I, I feel. Such a way

because they can't, they can't argue with that. But in my example, you'll see where we're sometimes a difficult situation is we are caught between maybe our husband and one of our children and a disagreement, and so. What do we say when they ask us something about that? We just wanna keep it factual. What happens is we get caught up in thinking we need to placate one another.

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We feel like we need to defend our husband or. If the difficult situation is a conversation with a child, we feel we need to defend our husband's side. Or if you're really caught in the middle, then when you talk to your husband, you think we need to placate them by defending our children's side, and most of the time when that's going on, We're only dealing with our opinion of what's going on and not really the fact,

and when we get asked a touchy question.

Do you know that it's okay to say I don't know the answer to that. We don't have to make up something to kind of keep things soft and to buffer the situation. We tend to wanna say things that we don't even know are true, are just a guess because we still have in the back of our mind we wanna fix things.

And remember, we don't have control over anybody. And really when it's a problem that doesn't concern you. , then it's really not your problem. It's not your business to get involved in, and you just get to be this lovely person that loves both sides of the war, you might call it that's going on. , and that's where your energy should be spent.

So whatever you decide to say, you go back and do you like your reason? Will it strengthen or weaken your relat? with these people. Remember, we don't have control over strengthen, strengthening the relationship between husband and child, maybe that are having a war. And we're not talking about boundaries here.

If, if I had a child that was defaming my husband or, or making accusations, About him that could harm him potentially in his job or maybe in a church situation. Then I'm going to make a request that they, they stop saying things. or the same with my husband. But when we make, um, when we set a boundary, if you say that, then I'm gonna ask you not to talk about that person again.

There's always the possibility. that that really upsets them and, and they may say, . Well, if if you're not willing to talk about that, then I don't wanna have any contact with you. You have to be willing, when you set a boundary, you have to be willing to lose a relationship. But I would think in this case that most of the time it's just gonna be a request and it's not, it's not going to go that far.

So here's this scenario that I have for you. I have a client where her husband and her daughter are at odds with one another. The daughter has inferred quite strongly in front of her mother, into her husband.

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She has used words. Describe her dad that what he does and what he says, that he is sexist, but it's more of an inference. She hasn't come right out and use the word sexist. Dad is upset because he is inferior infuriated that she would call him a sexist. And so my client who hasn't gotten involved with this, Conversation or these accusations has not taken size, tries to soften the situation by reminding her husband that her daughter never used the word sexist.

But he has gotten himself so angry and so judgmental that he refuses to believe and insist that yes, she did call him a sexist. It's really not important whether she used the word or not. because there's just, right now there's just a lot of judgment going on between the dad and the daughter. And remember my client, the mom isn't taking sides, but is GE getting pulled in and caught in the middle and it is escalated to a family issue.

Who's right is questions that are coming up. Why isn't mom helping her husband to soften his heart and to make a move to be the first one to forgive and say something to his daughter?

Do you see where when we get into other people's business it, it becomes a family crisis? If people were to view this to begin with, as was, Ooh, I'm sorry this is going on, but this is between my sister and my dad, or, My daughter and my husband, and we just kind of let them work it out. It's not as big a war and people just go on with their lives treating each family member the best way they know how or how they previously had.

So at this point we have family members that are upset with Dad for opinions he expressed. They're probably upset with the opinions the daughter has expressed, and they're upset with. For not making dad or daughter see the error of their ways.

Do you see where, where I'm always talking about or either loving someone or judging them. Maybe it's, it's not full blown out love, but we wanna be just at least one mark past judgment, one mark closer to love. We just don't want to really have any feelings about this because it's really not our business.

So dad and his daughter haven't spoken to each other for a couple months. We've got a bunch, or we've got two stubborn teenage siblings you could say right now. And so my client, the mom was invited to visit the daughter. And she, her concern is she feels like if she just shows up that there's an elephant in the room that everybody knows is there, that she knows it.

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Her daughter knows it and her daughter's husband knows it, and so she's kind of uncomfortable or she's, um, feels it would be naive to just ignore the elephant and not bring up the issue. But sometimes that's the very best thing to do.

And so I tried to get her to see what would her reason be for bringing anything up about it. And did she like her reason? and she couldn't think of one good reason for bringing it up. So sometimes it's best just act like yourself. Just be glad you're there with them and visiting. Enjoy your visit because that elephant in the room is there really an elephant in the room.

There maybe is when dad shows up, but not when mom shows up because this isn't a problem between her and her daughter. So here's where the five steps come into play. What's wrong with having a visit without discussing the problem in the family? , we sometimes go to the place we think, Kay. And remember I said we think

it's only an opinion. It's not a fact. If we lay all the dirty laundry out, that we can clean it up. But you know, we can't. This is between dad and daughter, not between mom and daughter. We cannot control other people's thoughts in feelings only our own. So number one.

To getting yourself in a place of peace and calm. So if my client decides ahead of time how she wants to feel when she gets ready to come home, she's just given her brain an assignment, a problem to solve. I'm going in a touchy situation. I wanna come home feeling, let's just say calm and peace and love.

And so she's given that problem to her brain to solve. And our brain's love problems. This is how we manage our brain. We tell it what we want to feel, and it just kind of goes to work to come up with thoughts to help you feel that way. It will help you find the evidence you need that will cause you to feel that way.

This is one of my most favorite tools. when I'm coaching clients and sometimes we don't go very deep into it, and they come back from an ex experience and they say, oh my gosh, I can't believe how well that worked.

I, there were some things I didn't like, but I never got very upset about it. So what she does when she decides how she wants to feel and her brain kicks in and shows her evidence and helps her have thoughts that will help her to feel that way, as we know our feelings cause our actions. So now she shows up as her kind, loving self.

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She's not ignoring the problem. , but the problem does become not her problem, but it's between her husband and her daughter. It's not between her and her daughter.

Now, number two. When her daughter asks why she mom

hasn't gotten dad

to apologize, or when her daughter asks, why hasn't dad made any gestures to apologize.

Mom listens to her gut feeling. Maybe she wants to say nothing. , maybe she wants to say something and it's okay to say something as long as it's honest, so she could say something like, I don't know the answer to that question, but this is where it gets tempting for us not to be completely honest. We want to placate the behavior of our husband.

We wanna buffer his inaction, and so we may say things, I think your dad is thinking this will all go away in time. , that's possibly true, but unless we actually heard him say that

it, it doesn't help the situation. It's not being honest. . We're just offering an opinion. Not a fact. It isn't true unless we actually heard him say it.

In this case, the mom was thinking, her husband was thinking this. , but her husband never said that.

Can you see where being honest is always the most peaceful way to deal with difficult situations

if her daughter gives her a sob story? and goes on and on about why her dad should be apologizing. Mom could say what love would say, and this is step number three, which might sound something like, I'm sorry, you're hurting.

So if daughter continues to talk about this problem throughout the whole visit,

mom listening to her gut feeling. She could decide to make a request, but she has to like her reason for making that request.

She could say something like, I don't think this is a healthy conversation. Let's talk about something else. Or she could just keep saying, I'm sorry you're feeling this way. At some

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point, mom will start evaluating, does she like her reason for what she's saying or not saying?

And what is the best. To say or not say, to not become a part of the problem. This problem can be solved

only by either dad or daughter, one of them taking a move to forgive the.

but as a mom, as someone who it, it really wasn't their problem, can influence the situation by loving both of them, even though she doesn't love either of their behaviors of how they're going about solving this problem. Yes, counseling or coaching could help dad and daughter overcome this, but dad and daughter both have to want to get some help in order for it to be effective.

So it goes back. Everything goes back to we just keep on loving and we keep on waiting. We get fixed in our minds that if it's, there's no action being taken right now, then it's never going to be remedied. It's so freeing not to get mixed up in other people's business. Take all that energy and work that you wanna use on fixing the problem.

Put that energy and work into you of feeling as kind and loving as you can so that you show up. As a kind, loving person in this triangle,

this is a growing experience for them, and that's why we need to wait. We need to wait till they figure out how to best solve problems like this. And I think deep down, they love each other. So one of 'em is gonna make the first move to forgive the other. They'll figure it out because they still love each other, and maybe it'll take longer than you like.

But love is magic. Love always wins in the end. I am so happy to share this with you today. I hope you have the best week ever. I think I mentioned to you earlier, we were able to spend three weeks in Spokane. It is March 9th today, and we just had another snowstorm come through. But you know what? The sun is shining and I don't have any control over it, so I am not going to allow it to ruin my day.

And I hope you can figure out when those tough days come. If you're just feeling tired, you just kind of allow it and accept it. And know that it's only temporary. I can't wait to talk to you next week. Have one of the best weeks ever. If you like this, be this episode and you felt it was a benefit to you, I ask you to share it with somebody that perhaps it could also benefit, but if you're still feeling kind of.

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In that you don't know how to apply what was talked about or where to start on on changing your thoughts, on changing your perspective, on bettering your relationship. Get on a call with me and we can have a discussion. And I can tell you how to apply it and where we start, and then you get to decide what you want to do about this relationship that maybe you're struggling with with your adult children.

There is no reason to go on the rest of our lives struggling with our relationships with our adult children. Let's assume the best. Let's assume that we all love each other and we're just trying to figure out how to maintain our own boundaries and respect another ones. But I can help you with everything.

So just go to bonnie.lyman.com and book a call. I can't wait to hear from you.