

Loving on Purpose Podcast

with Bonnie Lyman

Episode 65 Joy Comes From What We Focus On

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 you're listening to episode 65. Joy comes from what we focus on. Hello, my friends. Welcome back.

We're gonna talk today about real joy or where joy really comes from and we tend to think of it's the happenings, the people, how we're treated, the weather is what causes us to feel joy. Now, I have to admit it's pretty joyful when a new little baby is born, but we feel that way because that's where all our focus goes. Nothing else around us really matters when we have that first grandchild, especially being born or our first baby, being born to us. It's pretty magical, this gift of life, but we are so joyful because it doesn't matter if it's 110 outside, if it's snowing, it just doesn't matter. It doesn't matter if our kitchen was a mess or we really don't have anything prepared for dinner or we were maybe supposed to give a talk in church the next day and we haven't even started it.

None of that bothers us doesn't make us unhappy because all of our focus is on the birth of that new baby and how wonderful it is. But that is proof that yes, the happening was the birth of a new baby. But all this other stuff was going on around us that could have distracted or deterred us from feeling joy. But all of our focus was what was going right that day. And this miracle was happening. And so we were joyful. The president of my church, the church of Jesus Christ of latter day Saints has said joy does not come from the circumstances in our life. But what it comes from what we choose to focus on. So that means there can be some intentionality in finding joy in our life every day or let's bring it down to what I address is finding joy in our circumstances, whatever they may be with our adult Children.

A lot of times this joy gets a little disheveled, a little unclear, doesn't feel quite as strong, especially after our, our kids have gotten married because we've got this other person now in the family. And so if we don't choose intentionally to focus on what's going right, we tend to have this negative bias about us that we start focusing on what people are doing wrong. And so what it does is, it robs us of our joy. So again, if we focus on what's going, right. And what's good about people, then we can have joy. And I think it takes some practice and sometimes it's easier to practice when we practice with. Let's just say people that we aren't so personally connected to relationships. I mean, even the guy that takes our groceries out, we, we have a relationship and I know there's been

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times when I've gone to the store and there's been a, somebody that bless their heart is taking my groceries out for me and it's real chatty.

What are you doing tonight? Do you have any great plans? And maybe I'm not in the best mood and it kind of irritates me. But if I were to focus on thank you person for helping me get my groceries out, whatever his behavior was, that seemed to be a little annoying, wouldn't matter to me. And so practice on those people that maybe aren't as significant in our life as family members. Now, there may be behaviors of some of our family members that we don't like. Maybe they're, is, well, this comes up way too often in the people I work with, but it appears that the daughter in-law isn't real happy getting together with your family, your son's family and maybe she's kind of cur maybe she doesn't even join most of the activities. And so we tend to focus on that and then we rob ourselves of feeling, joy, of feeling happy, to even have this person as a part of our family.

If we were to focus on how much I loved my son or how much we loved our son, then we're more apt to focus on loving her because he loves her. And I love my son. It kind of becomes automatic that when we love people, we can learn to love things that they love, even if it's things they like to do. So let me be a little clear on that. My son went and got a motorcycle and I wasn't real happy about that because I always looked upon motorcycles as being dangerous. And so I didn't like feeling that fear. But I had to tell myself there, there's as good a chance he'll never have any harm come to him as there is, there will be harm come to him and I'll just deal with it when it happens. But he really got a thrill out of having that motorcycle of riding through the air with the air blowing on him.

And so I started focusing on what I liked about motorcycles and I started studying out all the different kinds and I felt more connected to my son by trying to understand what he liked so much about motorcycles. But I was focusing on what my son liked and not focusing on why I didn't like them. No, there are going to be behaviors that we have within our family, whether it's our kids, whether it's with the people our kids marry that we maybe don't like that are annoying. Maybe we even consider them unkind. Maybe they are impolite. Maybe every time you walk in the room they leave and go to another room so you can focus on that about them and it's ok not to like their behaviors.

But if you want to learn to love this person where in time it'll come, it doesn't matter if she walks out of the room, there's, there's just something about me perhaps she doesn't like, but that's her problem. But if we focused on what we did like about her, that she's a good mother that she's a good wife. She's smart, she's frugal. She takes care of her

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Children. Well, all those things that you do like pretty soon what you don't like about her becomes pretty insignificant. And yeah, we, I don't think there's a person I know that I just love everything that they do. Even my husband who I've been married to for 50 years. And I think I've told this story before. But when we first got married a couple of years into our marriage, I noticed there were about five or six things he did that were very annoying to me. But 50 years later he's still doing them and I don't even think about him. It's just part of who he is because I am focusing on all the good things that I do like about him.

So I'm gonna give you a little example. It's not a relationship example, but it's a situation example of something that happened a couple of years ago with some good friends of ours. It was COVID and that's a good example of what we focused on. I mean, I quite liked staying home and having church with my husband and I'm a real people person and I really miss being around people, but there was something about us staying home and having our own little church activity that really drew us close together.

And I can remember a lot of people mentioning some benefits that COVID did bring into their life, but they chose to focus on the good part and not all the disturbing things that, that pandemic brought to us. So we had some friends that we had planned at the time COVID settled upon us to go on a cruise, but it was canceled. And so we decided that this was before they shut down all the businesses, they canceled the, the cruise, but we decided we were still gonna get together and take a little three day trip to the Oregon Coast. And it's about a six hour drive from where I live. And we had anticipated being outside by the ocean and flying kites and buying saltwater taffy and waiting in the ocean and eating clam chowder and visiting the lighthouses that were around. And as we got closer into Oregon and into Portland. There was this thick brown smoke and ash was falling like snow from the sky and we were glad to be wearing our masks at that time. But originally we were wearing it because of COVID.

But now it was to keep the smoke out. No words were even exchanged between us about how our trip was going to be ruined because our focus was to be to spend some time together. And so we did so we went to the beach, but we didn't fly our kites and we walked to the lighthouse even though we couldn't even see it until it was 4 ft in front of us. And we still bought the most delicious saltwater taffy. And we ate some really good clam chowder and we talked and we laughed till we cried. And as we talked about our trip, weeks later, we focused on the good times that we had and not that we really couldn't see this beautiful lighthouse or that we weren't able to fly our kites. Would we go on the same trip with the same circumstances again? I think we would. So everything in life that we enjoy is predicated upon what we focus on our brain is only

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helping us to do what we wanted to do. So sometimes we've got to talk to our brain. All right brain. How are you going to help me find something good? I can focus on about this person.

If you're struggling to find that and guess what your brain loves assignments and it's gonna go right to work to show you what is good. What is going right in any relationship in any circumstance. If we focus on looking for the good in people, we will find it. If we focus on what's going wrong, your brain will keep finding evidence and keep finding new evidence to prove to us that yes, there isn't anything good about this person. But if we only focus on what our Children are doing right, then our brains will help us find more and more behavior and goodness. And we walk, find approval of those people that might even be difficult to be around, which focus causes you to feel compassion and love and peace focusing on the good are focusing on what's not going right? And which focus causes you to feel pain. We are either loving or judging someone. Love always feels good and pain always comes from judgment.

One of my clients was suffering when her son got married and he didn't call her as often as he used to. But when she started just getting curious about why he wasn't calling her as often and started focusing on admiring what an attentive husband he was to his wife. She started to feel more joy, not that she didn't miss hearing from him more often. But when she started to focus more on his needs and what was going right, and less on her desires and what she didn't like she felt peace. So I challenge you to write down 15 Good things about someone in your life that it's hard to focus on what they're doing. Right. And then just notice how you're feeling starts to shift from annoyance or unhappiness to having feelings of joy and gratitude that they are in your life. Notice how your connection to them, chefs to being more positive with them, even if it's just very, very gradual. At first, I've said it before and I'll say it again. Love always wins. Love is always an option. Love feels like joy but joy comes from us choosing to focus on what's going, right?

I hope you all have a great week. I hope that if you know somebody that this could help, that you'll share it with them. If you're struggling to find good in one of your adult Children or their spouses, I can help you practice techniques that will help you to be able to find what's going right? So that you can focus on the good so that you can have more joy in your life. I wish the very best for you and your family. If you like this, this episode and you felt it was of 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 stuck 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.

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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 dot com](http://BonnieLyman.com) and book a call. I can't wait to hear from you.