

# Loving on Purpose Podcast

## with Bonnie Lyman

### Episode 75 Happiness is Predicated Upon Your Attitude

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 the podcast Loving On Purpose, episode Number 75. Our happiness is predicated by our attitude. Welcome, welcome, my friends. So glad that we're meeting together another time this week. Thank you for all of you that tune in and listen to my podcast, thank you for the feedback and thank you for sharing it with others. I'm just glad if I can help you in some small way, and this is my connection with you, so I hope you're having a good week.

Summer is in Spokane, we're loving the long, long nights and things are good. So today we're going to talk about our attitudes, and we often talk about this in having an opinion of somebody else's attitudes and also about how we tend to look upon them with their attitudes. But a lot of times we don't reflect on thinking about our attitude on life. I know some of you do, because some of you have decided to work with me, because you're tired of having a half empty attitude, seeing your glasses half empty instead of half full. So attitude really does matter in our life and it really matters when it comes to the happiness, the quality of life that we live. We're not going to be happy all the time. We don't even want to be happy all the time, because that's not how life was set up. To be a complete, whole human being and experience everything that life has to offer, we kind of have to have some negativity in our life as well as the positive things, but a lot of times it is our choice as to the attitude, what we are viewing our life as, experiencing life's situations, and so we do have some control over this. Our attitude is not decided by what's happening around us, how someone treats us or how much money we make. We are the creator of our attitude And I think you know that and you have seen that.

I can remember once driving home from church and there was a family in our ward and they had a lot of kids and they didn't have very much money, but they seem to always be happy. And I remember one of my kids asking me are the Johnson's I'll just call them that are the Johnson's rich? And I said no, not particularly. Why, do you ask, and my child's response was they're always happy. So they chose to have a degree of seeing the glass half full, of seeing positive things that were going on in their life, despite some challenges they have. So we are the creator of our attitude.

We choose if we want to have a negative attitude or a positive attitude, and we choose the kind of attitude we have by the thoughts that we are thinking, and most of the time we are unaware that we are the creator of our attitude. We tend to blame it and assign it to what's happening to us and around us. We give blame or we give credit to something outside of us for the type of attitude that we are experiencing. Can we create a false positivity, a pretend positive positivity? Yes, we can. Can we pretend that all is well and even talk about it and share that with people when really we're not feeling that? Yeah, we can do that And that isn't really true happiness, and we refer to that kind of positivity as toxic positivity.

Toxic positivity is when people always try to be positive and happy, but they ignore or dismiss any negative emotions or problems. It's like pretending that everything is perfect all the time and not allowing ourselves or others to feel angry or sad or upset. It's good to have a positive outlook on life, but toxic positivity can be harmful because it doesn't acknowledge our real feelings and struggles And it's just a way of resisting those. And we all know I've talked about it so much that when we resist anything, it intensifies. It's important to understand that it's okay to feel sad or angry sometimes And we should allow ourselves to express those emotions and seek support if we need it. If we can't get through feeling so negative and maybe down When we

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resist as I said before, feeling negative emotions, it intensify. We actually intensify those negative emotions by not allowing them. So the next time when that negative feeling comes up we run away from it because it's even more painful, because we didn't allow it, and just go through the process of feeling it when it came up before.

Have you found that it's easier to focus on the negative slant of a situation or person instead of leaning toward the positive about the circumstance? This is called negativity bias and we all have it. Negativity bias is a tendency that our brains have to pay more attention to negative things than positive things. And, if you notice, when you meet somebody, sometimes we're just not all accepting of them, but we kind of stand back and we're kind of judging them before we just automatically love them because of this negativity bias. It's kind of a way of protecting ourselves from this person if they should attack us or harm us in some way. It means that we often remember bad experiences or negative events more easily than the good experiences in our life. For example, if someone tells you three nice things and one mean thing, you might remember the mean thing more. This bias can make us focus more on the bad stuff that's happening in our life and sometimes overlook the good things in our life. Our brains are wired to keep us safe by being cautious and alert to potential dangers, but sometimes it makes us feel more sad or worried than we really need to be.

It's important to remember that there are also many positive and good things happening around us, even if our brains make it seem like everything has gone wrong. And so you can imagine as we view our children's lives and the choices that they're making as they become adults. What we make it mean of what they say to us or don't say to us or act around us is that negativity bias that we tend to notice first and hang on to tightness that is robbing us from living a really fulfilling, happy life. So true optimism is not avoiding the reality the reality that we are criticized by our adult children, that maybe, yes, we are not given the attention that we want. But true optimism is being able to accept and manage these obstacles with the intention of not letting them get in the way of us living a happy life. My son saved up for a year to buy a leather coat and he left it in his car, in his unlocked car, and it was stolen. And this was his attitude. He could have been mad, he could have been really sad, he could have been very discouraging to him, but he's expressed his attitude this way. I guess someone needed that coat more than I did.

It's about accepting the obstacles and trials in our life and knowing that even more are going to come and that we can do hard things. It's being determined not to let them keep you from enjoying the best version of your life, of enjoying and focusing on all the good things that are happening in your life. It's focusing on what is going right and changing the parts of your life that you don't enjoy, letting go of things that are challenging that you have no control over changing and letting go of them is sometimes just accepting that this is going to be part of your life. Now, what do I want to do next? We decide what kind of attitude we want to have about our circumstances, what's happening in our lives, by deciding what we want those circumstances to mean and we kind of do that by a circumstance, by a circumstance basis. What kind of thoughts do we want to choose to have when these happenings, these negative things that happen in our life, are happening? Do we want to decide to embrace them Or do we want to be the victim and blame them? So we're either having positive thoughts or negative thoughts, and whatever these thoughts are, there are no bad thoughts, but do they make us feel the way we want to feel? And if they don't, then we want to choose to have different thoughts.

I sometimes wonder about my grandchildren and if they're going to have the character, that characteristic of their being, that I really have a high esteem for, and that is resilience. And to me, resilience is when we fall down, we get back up and we try again. And, yes, maybe for a while we have a little pity party and we feel sorry for ourselves, but it doesn't stop us from pursuing the life that we want to live. So I think resilience and

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optimism are related. I don't think you can be resilient and that is falling down, making a mistake and getting back up resolved, knowing that there is a way to figure out this, how to reach this goal, how to get through this problem, how to get through this challenge. So some thoughts about whether we're being resilient or optimistic are it's not the end of the world. I'm not going to die If I do. There are things worse than dying And to me that's optimism. That may sound kind of harsh, but I can think of things that are worse than dying. I'm not saying everybody would feel this way, but if I was in some sort of accident and I became a paraplegic, that would be very difficult to me And to me right now, my attitude is that would be worse than dying. I guess I'll have to try another way because that one didn't work.

So let's say you're flying to your daughter's wedding and the flight is canceled and the wedding is in two days and you cannot get another flight until three more days. So if we have resilience, then we either find a bus, we rent a car which may be driving nonstop for several days, day and night. We rent a car jointly with others because we know that we maybe can't drive for that long. We may be looking to another airline, we may be going to debt and rent a private jet. There's all sorts of options. But that is resilience, of being determined to make happen whatever your goal was to get back up and that you're optimistic that you can still make it to the wedding.

Now what about our wayward or wandering children? There's a 50% chance they'll change and they'll kind of come back to acting more like an adult, and there's a 50% chance they won't. I am going to focus on thinking, the thought that there's a 50% chance that they will do a turnaround, because it makes me feel better, even though thinking that thought doesn't guarantee it will happen. But thinking the opposite that they won't ever make a turnaround in their life is no guarantee that that will happen either. Another optimistic thought could be this is only temporary. Another place I like to go is what is the worst case scenario that could happen to my children when they're doing things that I don't particularly like? And then, if we want to be optimistic, we have the thought if it happens, i'll deal with it. Then That's just the kind of person I am. This is just a little interesting side note, and I really don't know if this has anything to do with optimism, or definitely not resilience, but I used to. When I look at my weather app and it would say that there's a 50% chance of rain. I read it. My thoughts were that 50% of the day it would be raining. Now that's kind of pessimistic, but really what they're saying is there's just a 50% chance that it will rain sometime during the day, but it may only be for a half hour.

So how do we change our brain to override our negativity bias but not have toxic positivity, not have being positive in a way that we believe it, that we have these thoughts that resonate with us, that make us feel good, and being positive, being hopeful, makes us feel good. While we might be having positive thoughts, we've got to remember if they don't resonate with us and they aren't believable to us, then we won't feel those positive feelings, and sometimes we need the help of a life coach to get to that point where we kind of default to those kind of thoughts. So here are some things we can do to become more positive When we have negative feelings. Be aware of what thoughts we are thinking. Talk to your brain kindly. I've even named my brain. It's Piper, and I go it's okay, piper, i've got this, everything is going to be okay. I just don't know how or when. But that is being optimistic and that is hanging out in this land of optimism, that it's going to be okay. And then if down the road it isn't okay, then we deal with it then. But we don't waste this time of our life when it hasn't even happened yet.

Another thing to do in the coaching world we call it a thought download. When something's really bugging you and you're really feeling down, just write down on paper every thought that is going on in your mind.

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Don't try to edit it, don't try to keep out other thoughts, just let it all come out. Then go back and underline the negative thoughts and ask is that true? Is that absolutely true? that my son wanting to become a movie star is not going to pan out for him, that he's going to be disappointed, that he's going to be wasting years of his life when he could have been establishing a career in something else that was much more possible? Turn it into a positive thought that is believable. There's always a chance. He is going to be the one that is successful at becoming a star in Hollywood. He has a dream and I'm glad he's got a passion and there's no harm in pursuing that dream. If it doesn't work out, he'll just move on in his life, or maybe even that's his thought now. I wonder if he'll still want to pursue that dream six months from now. So We just write down everything and we try to change those negative thoughts into something more positive.

Number three is when we have that negative feeling, when we're being pessimistic, when we have all this doubt and concern, be sure and don't resist feeling the discomfort of a negative feeling. Feel it. Own your negative thoughts. We all just want to feel good. So if we just allow the negative feeling to hang out with us for a while, if we just give it a little attention, a new thought usually will come all on its own. And if you struggle with this, it's less difficult to get to this point and know how to allow yourself just to really process and feel those negative feelings, with the help of a life coach.

Number four is accept what you can't change. If I get up tomorrow and it's snowing and all my flowers that I have just planted have died. There's nothing I can do about it. If I can feel the negative feeling I'm feeling and then just accept it. Accept that we can't change the weather, accept that we can't control how much time our kids want to spend with us, accept that we can't make others accept our values and live by the values they were raised with, then we're going to have a much better attitude about life in general and that everything is going to be okay.

Number five is be curious about why you're choosing to have the negative thoughts that you're having. Just going there and being able to answer that is going to help you let go of those thoughts that aren't serving you, that are causing you to have a negative attitude. Let's just say about your life or about the life and the well-being of your adult children. Just kind of be curious. And then number six is be very intentional in practicing focusing on what's going right in your life and what's going right in the lives of others, especially your family, those that you're closest to.

We do not live in a perfect world. We make mistakes, we do stupid things, but at the same time we have the potential to recover. We have the potential to figure out our problems and to be able to move on. Optimism is hope and faith that everything will work out exactly as it is supposed to, and that thought feels really, really good. I hope you have a great week and I'll be back next week to talk to you and share some thoughts of how I feel that we can live the best life possible.

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