

Loving on Purpose Podcast

with Bonnie Lyman

Episode 93 Causes and Remedies to Painful Relationships With Adult Children

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. Hey there, welcome, welcome. Thanks for joining me on this episode.

If you're new, a welcome extended to you and you might want to go back and look at some of my past episodes that many of my clients have said have been helpful to them. So I just have to mention one thing about what's going on in Israel, and it's really been rather disturbing to me that these people are not really acting like adults, but like little children, and I'm a You know, whether it was just or unjust, what happened years ago is this really the way to settle it by being so, so evil?

Just so they can have the I'll show you mentality. And so, I... I ask you to join me in praying for the sadness of these families and what's going on. I don't know how I can help something so global as that, so I just tend to focus on What I can do to bring harmony to my family. Today, I want to talk about the causes and remedies.

to painful relationships with our adult children. Now, basically, that's what I've talked about in all my past episodes, but I just want to pull some things together and just kind of reinforce who's really responsible for how we feel. There are things that are going to happen in our life that That we're not going to like and we're never going to feel good about.

But there's a lot of things that happen right within our own family with our adult children that we just don't have control over. And that's partly because of agency. That's partly because of misunderstanding on each people's sides. But any problem.

Now that's aside from getting an incurable disease or consequences of accidents, but even those of how we deal with those is, is still the same basic, solution and that is managing our thoughts. Are we going to let it run us into the ground and ruin our life? Or are we going to try to have the best attitude, the most positive thoughts, hopeful thoughts, peaceful thoughts that we can and create a life for ourselves that is still enjoyable?

So, all of us, basically, we just want to feel good, and it's just because how we were raised that we think our feelings, if we're feeling bad, if we don't like how we're feeling, if we're hurting, it's, we think it's because of what's happening in our lives. And this is true and untrue. Many of you are really good at comparing your family to other families.

Either way, I'm sure glad my family is not having the struggles another family is having. I'm, I'm glad that we all get along and there is nothing disruptive about when we get together. And then there are many out there who I hear about more than the ones that are going right, the ones that are struggling to have any kind of civility, perhaps.

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When they get together as a family, or maybe there's just one particular member of that family, could be a child, could be a child in law that seems to cause a lot of contention and disruption and disharmony, which causes or you think causes you to be sad, but we have to remember a If there is no contention, then yes, there's going to be harmony because there is nothing happening that triggers our thoughts to cause us to have a feeling we don't like having hurt.

Sad, disappointed, whatever it may be, but there is a way to look at it from a different perspective and to have thoughts that hopefully things won't always stay the same. Now. We just can't have it perfect all the time. Those families you are looking at that seems like there's nothing but harmony in their family, that could be the case.

But I'm telling you, there's opposition in their life somewhere. Because without the opposition, we wouldn't grow, we wouldn't learn how to get better at solving problems. And It, nothing would feel as good as it feels when we've had some opposition in our life and then something really good happens, or maybe even something very small happens.

But it's taking those moments and those times and being grateful for it. It's being grateful for when we have some hard times that we know is going to make the good times feel wonderful. And it's also going to teach us something. I know that before my son came out. As being gay, I just assumed that homosexuals just chose to experiment.

It never, with, you know having relationships with the same sex. Or maybe they were even experimenting with animals. I don't know, I just had these really far out ideas. I had... I didn't have the knowledge that there actually was a very strong attraction to members of the same sex. And as my son states it, I didn't choose my sexual orientation, just as I bet you didn't choose yours.

And he was so right on that. And I learned so much and had such a greater understanding of what was happening with same sex attraction. But we were raised with some false beliefs. And that... Is that we don't have control over our feelings because we were pretty much raised that our feelings were caused by what was happening outside of us by somebody else or something else that and so we become dependent on feeling good.

By how other people treat us or by what good things are happening in our lives. One of the greatest things we can have is an awareness that it's always our thoughts. That cause our feelings to become so aware of our thoughts that we become watchers of our thoughts and we default to when we are feeling a feeling that we don't like when we're feeling hurt that are our children didn't.

You know, include us in a birthday celebration, let's say, of one of their kids, that it, that what happened, that incident of them not including us triggered us to have thoughts. If we are aware

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that it is the thoughts, it was not the actual not including us, because it's analogous. If they didn't include us, and we never found out about it, we would not be feeling hurt.

But it was not until we found out that a birthday celebration for one of our grandkids was going on, and we were not included, that then we started having thoughts that caused us to feel hurt. I'm not saying you shouldn't feel hurt. But as I've talked about before, we just need to be willing to feel hurt when we get resentful or vengeful and it causes us to have thoughts that cause us to stop loving our children.

that childhood didn't invite us to our grandchild's birthday party, then we are hurting ourselves. We are missing out on loving someone despite something they're doing that we don't like. And so we just need to be willing to be sad for a little bit. But let's talk about some basic pain contributors. in a relationship.

First of all is our expectations. Our expectation that we should have been invited to the birthday party. When that expectation is not met, then depending on our thoughts, we Usually, we'll have a negative feeling, and we can write a whole story, a whole book about that, but it's an unfulfilled expectation that is a main contributor to pain in a relationship.

Just the idea that your relationship with your adult children in general was not as you expected it to be. Perhaps you thought it was going to be much closer, and there would be more time spent together, and phone calls would be returned on a timely basis. That we would get a phone call that we weren't the only ones that initiated the phone call.

I, I could give you a hundred expectations of my clients that they have had that have been unmet. that has caused them to feel pain in their relationship. So number one is those unfulfilled, unmet expectations. Number two is we often don't think well of ourselves. So we go to the place, I must have done something wrong, or I am doing something They don't like my personality.

I talk too much. I don't talk enough. I ask the wrong kind of questions. I don't ask enough questions. I'm in their life too much. I'm not in their life.

But it all comes down to if we had the self confidence and self love, we would just see it as this was their opinion or their perspective. I know I have weaknesses. But I also know I have these strengths and I know I'm a decent person just trying to do the best I can in life. And we know that our Heavenly Father, that's all He expects of us.

So thinking better of yourself. And there's all sorts of tools of how to do that will relieve some of the pain that you have in your relationship. Oftentimes, husbands don't take things near as personally as we do, and it's all because they think better of themselves. Number three is We blame them and their actions for how we feel.

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We need to drop the thoughts that imply in any way that you can't be happy unless your adult children treat you a certain way. You can be happy. You're just... going to find that happiness in a different way than you thought you were going to find it. We can't blame them for our hap for us not being happy.

Yes, some of their actions will trigger us to have thoughts, but it's what we do with those thoughts. Whether we tend to hang on to them tight or whether we're willing just to be hurt for a little while and then let it go. And I'm not going to go into all the reasons, go back and listen to my past podcasts.

I go into each one of these in quite a bit of detail.

Another reason, or a basic contributor. to our pain in our relationship with our adult children is we are not acting like the adult. We are acting like a little child. An adult takes responsibility for how they feel. But again, like I said earlier, we were raised, we even had teachers, or maybe our parents, would say things like, don't hurt Sally's feelings, let her have that toy, be kind to her.

And those are all well meaning principles. It's teaching to share. It's teaching to be kind. But it also inadvertently teaches us that we have power to make another person feel a certain way. And in turn, we take that as somebody else has the power to make me feel a certain way. And so we revert to being a child in our actions and our thinking.

We blame our adult children. We don't feel we have control over our emotional life. So we try to control our children. And we want them to be different than who they are. Now, if you think back on that, if you thought somebody wanted you to be different than who you are,

you could be somewhat offended. Now, there are times people have pointed. Some of my weaknesses that were maybe a little overused, as in I tend to talk too much, and I have appreciated that. My texts are shorter. I try to leave out some of the details. And so I, I took that as being grateful, but then there's been other times I have people who have tried to have control over me or correct me.

Not only was I offended, but... It made me not want to change all the more. We have more influence over our children by loving them and when I say ignoring what we don't like about them, to deal with it in a mature adult way. That is factual and not judgmental.

But, do you see, all of these things we talked about, unfulfilled expectations, that we don't think well of ourselves, and that we blame others for causing us to feel a certain way, each one of those factors comes back to our thoughts. The good news is... We can manage our thoughts, but it starts with being aware of what we are thinking that's causing us to have that painful feeling and the understanding and having some tools of what to do next.

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So, the remedy for Getting rid of the pain in relationships with our adult children or not having it to begin with is, as I've talked about earlier, awareness is huge. Aware of where are we putting the blame? Are we putting the blame on something we can control and fix when We can't control and fix that because somebody else's actions doesn't have the power to make us feel a certain way.

Their actions trigger us to have thoughts, but it's our choice whether we want to keep on thinking those thoughts, or if we want to interrupt. That negative thought cycle and come up with a thought that is more understanding or at least less judgmental. So this becoming an emotional adult. An emotional adult is someone realized they are responsible for their happiness.

My husband is responsible for his happiness. My kids are responsible for their happiness. My responsibility is to show up as a person I want to be, and that is to be a kind, loving person that hopefully will trigger them to have thoughts that don't bring them pain, but for us, we need to love it. Evolve into becoming this emotional adult, where we truly believe that we are responsible for our own feelings, and then we become hugely aware.

Of the thoughts that we don't like having because they make us feel a certain way and learn how to let go of those

as an adult

being an emotional adult, or if we're still being an emotional child, we still. Want to feel like we're in control. We want to feel like we have the power to feel any feeling we want to feel and we do. And so we need to stop blaming our Children.

We need to be aware and realize that we have needs. But our children are not responsible for fulfilling them.

The best relationships are we, are when we recognize each one in the relationship is responsible for fulfilling their own. Needs, and we do that by managing our thought. That doesn't mean you aren't responsible for how you treat another person.

You are responsible, and we should If, if we love these people, if we love these children, that we just automatically do because they're our children, and we want to be closer to them than anybody else we know most of the time, and we don't want to give up on them.

We need to show up as not only the person we want to be, but that the golden rule, treat others as you would like to be treated, is still in place and still very, very effective. If I want someone to be more loving and kind to me. The only thing I have control over is to be more loving and kind to them.

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Another thing you can do is to write down where you feel like you are entitled to something from your children. And look at that and see how you can be wrong. You're not entitled to anything from your adult children. I don't care if you gave them all your money. That does not give you the right to feel and demand that they show respect and love to you.

Entitlement is not a good feeling to have. I don't care how many people agree with you.

Choosing to love. And choosing to recognize that you gave them all that money because that was your choice and your desire. And at the time, I'm sure it made you feel really, really good. But when we expect something in return for our actions, we're going to lose most of the time.

Another remedy for And not having as much pain in your relationship is to ask yourself how could I view this differently?

Do these things take work? You bet! It takes a lot of work to be a watcher of your thoughts and to put aside the judgmental thoughts and choose compassion. Instead, is a very difficult thing to do, but I promise you, you will always come out winning and feeling better than if you were judging or feeling entitled.

And this is one of the reasons why I advocate getting a life outside of our adult children. There's got to be things that we are really interested in and really light us up that cause us to fulfill our needs that perhaps we thought our children or life with our adult children would be happening and they are not.

So find something out there that you enjoy doing, whether it's serving. Whether it's educational, whether it's getting a job, whether it's getting a huge project to work on, but we need to have another part of our life. That brings us a lot of satisfaction than just our adult children. Our adult children are going to do what they decide to do.

They are going to make the decision of how much space or how much togetherness. they want to have with us. And if they coincide with your desires, then that is great. But when they don't, this is when you need to be responsible for creating your life, for you creating the kind of life you want to live.

The other remedies. I talk about all the time, love always wins, because love always feels good. Focus on the good in these adult children. Focus what you admire about them. Focus what's going right. Write it down if you have to.

Make that your priority.

You may. You have to have more space from them than you originally wanted. It just has to do with, we have different personalities going on here. Some kids want you more involved in your

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life than other adult children of yours want you in their life. And that goes for... Other families that you look at and compare yourself.

There are just different personalities and different desires. And we don't have the right to tell our children that what feels best to them is not fulfilling our need. We need to find another way to fulfill that. There's only one thing that we should expect from them. And that is for them to be them.

And just allow that and enjoy watching them grow. and respect that they have different opinions and ways than what you have. In extreme cases where children have cut you off completely,

it's always possible that things won't stay the same. And so we need to have thoughts, hopeful thoughts that create the feeling of feeling hope that one day we'll be able to spend more time together.

Why am I not taking responsibility for my feelings? Because the easy way out is to blame somebody else.

Why am I having this negative feeling? What thoughts am I thinking that are causing me to feel this way? How is this feeling not giving me the results that I want in my life? These are good questions to ask yourself. Remember, all of us, we all just want to feel good.

All of my podcasts, all of my daughter's Jodi Moore podcasts, all of my mentor Brooke Castile's podcasts teach everything you need to know to be in charge of your feelings. But it's harder to apply by yourself. The holidays are coming. And for many of you, that brings up a lot of anxiety of anticipating family drama.

But it doesn't need to be so. Why not get some help from someone that can guide you to have fond feelings before... During and after the holidays. This is what life coaches do. They help you solve any problem. My specialty is helping moms who are having difficult relationships with their adult children. I love what I do, and I love watching women.

Take control over their feelings. Thus the result is they create the peaceful life they want to live. I just had some clients finish up and so I have some openings. Coaching changed my life. Not just with my relationships with my adult children, but with every aspect of it. The only time life gets uncomfortable for me is when I advocate my feelings to someone or something else.

It's a guarantee that your life with your children is never going to get to the point that you would love it to get to. That Pollyanna type of relationship where everyone gets along and is kind and is respectful a hundred percent of the time.

But you can create a life that you want to have. But it's your responsibility To find the good or create the good that happens when you're willing to put in the work to live the kind of life you

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want to be, live. It comes from knowing the real cause of your unhappiness, which is your thoughts. And then learning how to use the tools available to choose the feeling you want to feel.

Without coaching, I wouldn't have ever been able to do this. The remedy to your adult child relationship struggles is always love. Not love for their behavior. But loving that they are a child of God, and that means you can find that value in love because they are your child and they have valuable characteristics inherited from their Heavenly Father that we just don't focus on enough.

I love my children. I choose to love them by choosing not to take everything so personally and to assume the best about them. It's what a loving Heavenly Father does for me. It's what I want others to do for me. It's what I want my children to do for me.

And so, I try to be the most loving, kind person I can be. And when I show up as this version of myself, and I'm not perfect, so I'm not always that way, but then, I just feel good. I wish the best for you and your family, and I'll talk to you next week.

If you like 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, 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's 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 one's. But I can help you with everything. So just go to BonnieLyman.com and book a call. I can't wait to hear from you.