

Loving on Purpose Podcast

with Bonnie Lyman

Episode 114: Fulfilling Your Own Needs Through Friends

This is Bonnie Lyman, and you're listening to the podcast, Loving on Purpose, episode 114, Fulfilling Your Own Needs Through Friends. 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, my friends, it's good to be back with you. Whew! Those weeks go by fast. I can remember when I was a kid and summers would last forever. Now they tend to go by so fast. But it also meant the winter went by fairly quickly, and I'm enjoying a very sunny day. I hope there is something about your day that you're enjoying.

I want to welcome any new listeners to my podcast, and I suggest you go back and scroll through my previous podcast to see if there's anything on there that sparks your interest, that specifically relates to the problem that you have. And I also want to encourage you. If you are not on my email list there's two ways to go about doing that.

First of all, though, you have to get on my website, BonnieLyman.com, and there's a place where you can sign up for a free resource called Being Yourself Around Your Adult Children in order for me to send that to you, you have to give me your email list, and so that automatically puts you on it, or there's a place where you can just sign up for my emails.

I think they're pretty fun. I get a lot of positive feedback of how it has helped them, inspired them to keep moving forward in their struggles, especially with their adult children. But the things I talk about really apply to to any relationship. It's, it's using all the same tools. The other thing I haven't mentioned in a while, I think I'm getting a little better at talking faster, but I personally, listen to all of my podcasts at a faster speed and you can do that usually in however you listen to my podcasts.

Most people have a favorite podcasting program app they use, and that's Usually, always an option. So today we're going to talk about fulfilling your own needs through friends. Now I am going to talk a little bit about why. It is our responsibility and no one else's to fulfill our own needs. And I'm also going to then talk about ways and benefits of fulfilling needs that aren't being met at this time in our life that we thought would be met by our children, Whatever.

So, it's very normal to be disappointed in the relationships we're having with our adult children because this disappointment comes about because life is not going how we pictured it would. Our expectations of how our life would be, especially with family. our children, our expectations are not being met.

We might have all different expectations, so we might be disappointed for different reasons. But we are all in the same boat, and most of the time we thought life with our children would be a

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major portion of how we spent our time. I don't like the word empty nesters, but that's kind of what we are.

We're, our children are no longer living at home, are no longer needing to be watched over and advised as they were when they were kids. Still in high school, we'll say. So some of the obstacles parents often face as their children become adults and move out of the home is they aren't included in their children's lives.

They don't get together as often as they thought they would. They don't take trips together as often as they thought they would. And another one is. Their adult children, their married adult children, maybe are spending more time with their spouse's parents than they are with you. I another unmet expectation is, I always think of the cover on Norman Rockwell's magazines during the holidays when these families, perfectly dressed, perfectly set.

table perfectly. Turkey are sitting around this table. So I say our holidays didn't turn out to be Norman Rockwell holidays. Another obstacle that parents face is they thought their children would be sharing more with them of just what's going on. They're not confiding in you. They're not telling you when they got a new job or when they bought a new car.

My husband, this was years ago, it must have been one of our other kids, told him that one of our daughters had bought a piano. And he said, why didn't someone tell me that she bought a piano? I mean, this was exciting, that she had the money to do that, that she had the interest to take piano lessons or whatever she was going to do with it.

And they said, well, dad, if you were on Facebook, so that is what caused him to join Facebook. Because he figured out if he wanted to know what his kids were doing a great way to follow them would be on Facebook, because they weren't going to necessarily call. And

A lot of us thought we would be spending more time babysitting our grandkids if needed. And again, maybe it's the spouse's parents that get asked all the time, especially if it's your son and your daughter in law. Daughters sometimes feel more comfortable asking. There, mom and respectfully to their mother in law in that they, they don't want to, to burden them or perhaps the only time that you get called upon to be included or invited to do anything is to babysit.

They're kids, and so we can have some disappointment and resentment and, you know, we're more than than glad to babysit their kids, but that just not be the only connection that we have with our adult kids. Some of us have kids. that are still living at home. And we didn't anticipate this happening. Maybe if they were going to school, or they had lost a job, or in between jobs, and didn't have the money to pay rent, or perhaps they were married or not, and, and And for a certain time period, they were asking if they could live at home so that they could save money to buy a house.

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But we didn't expect that they would just be staying at home, just lying around watching TV. Netflix or not doing anything constructive, sleeping in, not volunteering to help with anything around the house. Another one that I found interesting was that my children very rarely ask me, anything about me, or my husband, and our life.

I, I have started notice, noticing lately, that there has been a little bit more of that. Either, how, how did your week go? How are you doing? What did you do? But most of the time, even when I was like starting my coaching business, none of my kids asked me how that was going. I, I just found it interesting.

But here's a couple things to remember about our children. There, there should be no expectation for them to fulfill our needs. Number one, they didn't ask to be born. Number two, they don't owe us anything just because of the sacrifices we made in raising them. And then maybe I could say that maybe we made too many sacrifices and weren't able to be a happy mom, but actually carried on, carried over some of that resentment that there, there was no payback for that.

Number three was their agency trumps. Their responsibility to fulfill our needs. They were given the God given gift to act and do whatever they want to do. And there is no manual on how to be a good parent or how to be a good adult child to their parents, but they, they get to do what they want.

And because of this agency, they most of the time, they want. We are feeling that nothing has gone wrong, and this would be a good time to go back and listen to that podcast on autonomy, what our adult children crave most. Number four, and this is huge, I think, they are of a different generation, our ways of doing things at their age.

Our ways of showing love to our parents, and sometimes, it was maybe out of fear, not love, are now not their ways of doing things, because of one of the main things. things is there is great, a greater connection between individuals, family or non family because of social media and the internet. As an adult, we are responsible for fulfilling our own needs.

And if we put that On somebody else, we're, we're kind of operating in emotional childhood. That's how children think. If we depend on our adult children to fulfill our needs, we're going to be very needy for a very long time. The fact that there are families where everyone's needs are being met by one another, And there are those types of families out there.

Doesn't help you keep, though, from comparing and despairing. You only feel worse when you run into those kind of families. And I want to say, CC, they're not good. Fulfilling their needs, their adult children are helping, but families are complicated. And for everyone to be spending the majority of their free time together or trying to fulfill somebody else's needs is the exception.

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The families with the best relationships between parents and adult children are the ones where each individual Number one, takes responsibility for fulfilling their own needs. Two, respect and love each other just the way they are. And three, allow spaces in their relationship. Whether that spaces be geographical differences distances communicating distances just whatever.

But that is respecting and loving and being kind to one another. But there is proof by psychologists out there that we all need, have the need to love and be loved. We often feel unimportant and unloved by adult children, but that is because we have chosen to think or believe that. I feel most children love their parents, they just don't show it in the way their parents want that love shown to them.

My only concern is that I learn to love my children in a way they feel loved by me. And this often happens in very unconventional ways. It may be not contacting them for a month or two. It may be calling them once a week, though. It may be hearing from an outside source that they got a new job, but not asking about it until they first tell me.

It happens by having no expectations from them, except to be themselves. It means listening to them. Without always voicing my opinion, it means to ask good, non judgmental questions about what's going on in their life. Now, I'm not saying, That, that's the way you should be conducting your relationship with your adult children to show them that you love them.

You get to choose any way that you want and whatever you choose to do. If it makes you feel good, then you do it. If it backfires on you, maybe you want to change it. I really believe that you listen to the promptings of the spirit, listen to your inner voice, your gut feeling, whatever you want to call it, and then you act on that.

Just because we love each other, Doesn't necessarily mean we have the same interests. Our adult children, as I said before, are living in a different generation than we are. When, while they are just starting to speed up, trying out all sorts of new adventures, not wanting to admit this, we, are probably starting to slow down a bit.

The types of concerts, physical activities, books we read, movies we watch, are not necessarily matching with those of our children. I'm not saying there aren't things we have in common, and I'm not saying that we just give up and don't try new things, but we are facing choices. that may be appealing to a younger generation that aren't necessarily attractive to us.

My adult kids will go on vacations with their siblings or friends. Or friends that have kids their kid's age, but not with us, only because of difference in interests. I admitted a long time ago that we're not as much fun as their friends or even their siblings. But that doesn't mean they never want to spend time with us.

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It's just not everything we wished we had been included in are we going to be invited to go with them. So we all need to love people and we all need to feel that others love us. So we all need friends. People from our generation. Our generation that will ask us about our lives, who are more curious about what we're doing in our life right now than our adult children.

We need people that want to be around us often and we around them. We need people to include us in their lives and share their ups and downs in their lives. And, and we share the same with them. We need friends that we can share vacations with and go places and do things that we both like to do and maybe that we both can do.

I know a lot of times if there's something big going on that I can invite my kids to go knowing I'm, I'm going to have to pay their way. And you know, if we can do that, we enjoy doing that, but not everybody enjoys that luxury. We need to spend time with our peers. People that are closer to our age, our position in life, that think more like us than our children think like us.

If we think more alike, we are going to act more alike and be attracted to the same activities. So, this is why having friends fulfills our needs of being included. Our fondness for each other will come closer to fulfilling our needs to be around people that love and respect each other than the way our children show us they love and respect us.

When we left to go on our mission to Africa, 18 months, for 18 months, we were told that we would miss our children much more than they would miss us. Communication with them was roughly 90 percent initiated by us. There was even one child we spoke with only three times, and there are apps out there where you, you can call, you can FaceTime costing no money.

We were anxiously engaged in something we wanted to be doing, and they were immersed in figuring out their lives. We had twin granddaughters born when we were gone, plus two other grandchildren were were born. It was amazing, and I, I feel a blessing, how my children pulled together to help each other out in our absence.

They even planned out a family vacation together. I'm not saying there aren't families out there that are the best of friends and would rather be with family over being with friends, and this is wonderful, but if you're feeling your needs are not being met by your adult children as you expected them to be, one way to satisfy those needs is finding friends to help fulfill them.

It's every adult's responsibility, not just parents, to fulfill their own needs. Be as often as you need. We have some friends that we go out to dinner with every Monday night. As our children have moved out of the house, our circle of people we even see every week seems to get smaller because of not so much our age, but not having sources in which we are just automatically around other people.

And we're not able to do or not wanting to do certain activities anymore. So, it's always a lift every Monday night when we are with our friends. And I, I call it, My need fix and they have

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gone to Arizona for several months and I really miss Not getting with them. We need to get a little more creative and In doing things that we have more friends But we all need the association with other people.

There is an energy transferred between friends that satisfies a need that we may not even realize. And I learned from coaching clients on Zoom [www. mytrendyphone. com](http://www.mytrendyphone.com) That, that energy is not always there. So just FaceTiming with our family doesn't always satisfy that need to be around people. When I met these clients face to face, there was this energy there that I just can't describe.

And I was just so surprised at how different it felt. In talking with them, and it wasn't just because we were talking on a casual basis and not a counseling or professional basis, there was just something different about meeting them in person.

So, here are five benefits of having friends when we are, let's just call it, empty nesters. Number one is support and understanding. Just as you offer unwavering support to your adult children, friends can provide a similar kind of empathy and understanding. That your adult children are unaware you even need.

or that you aren't very good at giving yourself. It always feels good to be with people that give you some validation. We don't have the same expectation of being supported by friends like we would like to have from family, causing that support that we get from friends to feel a little extra appreciated.

We don't often feel judgment for our friends. We usually don't focus on what they're not doing right to support us or be a good friend. We usually focus on the good and what we like about them. So it just, it just makes it easier for friends to be the ones that help us fulfill our own needs. Number two, a benefit from having friends is personal growth and learning.

Friendships expose you to different perspectives and interests and knowledge. Friends bring with them a different set of experiences, expanding your outlook on life, And learning about new opportunities, perhaps a wish you want to try out and, and grow in this area. You might start experiencing with new hobbies that they invite you to join with them or passions or even career.

And these are things that we can learn about through having friendships. Number three is fun and laughter. Nothing feels better than a good laugh. And friends often provide laughter. Many reasons to laugh, whether it's discussing the most embarrassing moment in your life, trying out new activities together that you really fail at, or simply sharing a good joke.

Friends can lighten your life up, helping you escape from dwelling on the issues that might be challenging to you with your adult children. Number four, friends offer companionship and

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connection. While family connections are irreplaceable, friendships offer a different kind of companionship and connection.

Friends are there to celebrate your successes. Comfort you during challenges, time, and be there by your side, cheering you on in life's journey. They can provide a sense of belonging and camaraderie that is essential for fulfilling our needs.

The last one I'm going to share, and I'm sure there's many out there, is making friends is self care and balance. Making friends be a priority in your life is a form of self care, especially when our children are so involved in the maintenance of their own personal well being. Balancing their time with their spouse, with their children, with their employment, and also with fulfilling their own needs.

Having friends helps you maintain a healthy balance between your identity as a parent, as a spouse, And as an individual, spending time with friends allows you to recharge and regenerate, cultivating a sense of fulfilling your needs, and that ultimately benefits all aspects of your life. I hope this podcast gives you something to think about.

I hope I hope that you can be a little more grateful for the friends that you have. You may be a little more interested in finding new friends or in finding ways to share time with friends that helps you fulfill your needs, especially the need to love and be loved. I hope you have a great week. And I look forward to talking to you next week.

If you liked 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 changing your thoughts, on changing your perspective, on bettering your relationship, get on a call with me and we can have a discussion.

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