

203: Allowing Feelings of Discomfort



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With Your Host

Jen Riday

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You're listening to the *Vibrant Happy Women* podcast, episode #203. We're talking about allowing feelings of discomfort. Stay tuned.

Hi, I'm Jen Riday. This podcast is for women who want to feel more vibrant, happy, aligned, and alive. You'll gain the emotional, physical, and spiritual tools you need to get your sparkle back and ensure that depression, anxiety, and struggle don't rule your life. Welcome to the *Vibrant Happy Women* podcast.

Hey, my friends. Welcome back to *Vibrant Happy Women*. I am super, super excited this week because I am just about to fly to the Vibrant Happy Women retreat with 50 or 60 of you who are also flying to Port St. Lucie, Florida for the retreat. Our theme this year is unleash your soul.

Those words alone make me feel really excited. We have planned some amazing, amazing exercises that will help you let go of hurt, which is something else we're going to be talking about in this episode. And start to get focused on what you really want, and shift your energetic state, and shift your thoughts, and shift your feelings so that you get a new result.

I love intensive workshops like the retreat because you get to go deep and you're in a safe space, you're not going to be interrupted by kids, and you accomplish a lot for your personal growth and your development and your thoughts so that you can get a new result all year. So, those of you who will be there, I will see you soon.

Those of you who aren't coming but would like to, keep listening because in the weeks ahead we will be opening up sales for the 2021 retreat. I am so excited. I love meeting more and more of you each year. Many of you have attended every year, and that says a lot about the retreat because it is a blast to be around so many like-minded women.

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Well, I wanted to share our review of the week and that is from Daisy Lou Leroux. I love that username. I hope, Daisy, that that's your real name. I suspect it's not, but I'm going to read the review from Daisy Lou Leroux.

She wrote, "I am a marriage and family therapist and college professor. I feel so incredibly blessed to have found this podcast. I think the stories being told are remarkable and universal to all women's lives. The guidance and powerful structures you have provided are profoundly healing and bring me to tears because it is life-saving in a world struggling to survive. I am recommending the podcast to everyone I love. A million thank you's for your beautiful gifts of clarity and strength that you share with us. I only regret that I didn't know back in 2016 that you were already here. Much love to you and your family."

Thank you so much, Daisy. I love that. Much love back at you as well. Thank you for leaving that review. Everyone else, I made you a promise that if you leave 1,000 reviews in the next few weeks that we will no longer have advertisements on this show. Keep them coming. You can do it at JenRiday.com/iTunes.

Well, today I want to talk to you about feelings, particularly the uncomfortable feelings. Now, many of you listening are moms, and I find that to be a fascinating time to get really in touch with those negative feelings. Because a lot of what happens in our lives as moms, moms who stay at home or moms who work, we have these little beings that we're in charge of and we want to keep them alive, we want to help them become well-adjusted adults someday, and so we try with all our power to control their development, to keep them alive, to help them become well-adjusted.

But the crazy dilemma is that we can't control them, and so we experience pain and struggle and suffering. And a lot of people have told me they had no idea the amount of love they will feel for their kids, but also the amount of pain they would cause.

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Holy cow, is that ever true. As you know, I'm a mom of six and I've mentioned throughout the past couple of years on my podcast of some struggles I've had with my two oldest. Now, I'm happy to say, knock on wood, that my four younger kids, so the four youngest, are all doing great. I wouldn't say any one of them has caused me an immense amount of pain.

Maybe that's because the two oldest engaged in some activities that, at the time, seemed to cause me so much pain that everything else pales in comparison. And if you don't know what I'm talking about, go back to listen to some past episodes. We'll link to those in our show notes.

Now, while I was talking, I used a phrase that many of us use, which is that our children cause us pain, that our children cause us to suffer, but I want to clarify something. Nobody causes us to feel anything. We think that feelings come from struggle and people and pain and situations, but the fact is those situations are just facts. They happen. People say things. People do things. It is our thought about those facts that cause us our pain.

Now, that can be a slap in the face sometimes when you think your life is hard and you're feeling pain because of it. When you realize all of your feelings are caused by a thought, you become 100% in charge of your life and all you need to do to stop feelings of suffering is to change the thought, as Byron Katie teaches us.

So, at that time when I struggled with my teenagers who weren't on a good path, legally or otherwise, I blamed myself. As I blamed myself, I was attaching a thought that I'm not a good mom. I have failed them. They are bad kids. All of those thoughts caused me to suffer.

Long story short, there came a day when I was taking my second oldest son to the Wilderness Therapy Program. He was the first one to go and then my oldest went after him, but the task of getting him to the Wilderness

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Therapy Program in Arizona was tremendously hard. Those were my thoughts about it at least.

He tried to leap from the moving vehicle multiple times. I was alone getting him there. It was a surprise. He was in shock that he was going, and he was angry about it. He was physically aggressive. I had to essentially lie to him to get him there, which I'm not proud of, but I knew I needed help.

And when we arrived there was a small suicide attempt. He ran away and was followed by the wilderness therapy program people for eight hours. It was highly traumatic. Hands down, that became the most traumatic day of my life.

Now, I attached a lot of meaning to that situation, because it was so out of the norm and so far-removed from how kids "should" act. Kids should not engage in a suicide attempt. Kids should not run away. Kids should not physically hurt their parents. Kids should not try to jump from moving vehicles, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

So, because of these beliefs, or shoulds that I had at that time, I experienced massive suffering. Now, I don't want to discount my suffering. We all suffer. Many of you are suffering through an illness or a death or a struggling teen yourself, but I want you to contemplate the idea that all of our suffering, all of our negative feelings, are preceded by a thought. When we meditate and get really clear and remove all our thoughts from our minds, we do not experience negative emotions.

I've experimented with this. You can read about meditation on your own. And the same is true for you. When you eliminate a thought that causes you pain, you will no longer feel pain. And by the same token, when you change a thought about a situation, you can end your own suffering, and this is a big teaching from Byron Katie.

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So, at that time I thought my son should not be running away. He should not have engaged in a suicide attempt. He should not be doing these illegal things. And when he did those things, that big gap between my expectation, or society's expectation, and his reality caused me pain. So, what do you think happened? Well, let me describe it.

That night, after dropping him off at the wilderness therapy program, all the emotions from getting him there, all the emotions from the day and the struggles and the hospital visit, and all the trauma and the drama came crashing over me.

There was no way that I could not feel it, I just rested on the bed and sobbed and sobbed. I never remember feeling so much pain ever in my life because I had this collection of thoughts that were causing me to feel pain.

I am owning my feelings. Many of us believe that feelings happen to us. We never pause to consider that it is our thoughts about a situation, our thoughts about a person, that cause us this pain. So, at that time, I felt the pain. I didn't know what was going to happen to him, I didn't know if he would succeed, I didn't know if he would be alive, and I had to let go in order to end my suffering.

That phrase, "let go", well I'm sure you have the *Frozen* theme song in your head from *Frozen 1*, "Let it Go". It's a great phrase, because to stop our suffering sometimes, we have to let go of our need to control, our need to control our children, our spouse, all the things that are happening that we can't control because we can only control ourselves. When we let go of the need to predict or control that outcome, we can eliminate so much of our own suffering.

So, for me at that time, I had to let go in a way of saying, "Well, I can't control whether he lives or dies. I can't control whether he succeeds or fails in this Wilderness Therapy Program. I can't control how he feels about me.

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What can I control? I can control that I'm going to fly home and love my other children extra hard tonight. I can control that I'm going to believe in hope for him, because what other option do I have? I'm going to hold a vision of the person he can become even when he can't see it himself."

By changing those thoughts and holding the vision of this part of his path, a thought which came to me while I was meditating and praying on the topic, this is part of his path, immediately so much of my suffering disappeared. This is part of his path and he's going to use it for good later in his life.

That's a super empowering thought. Wow. All this was kind of meant to be. Why not believe that thought? This should be happening to him. There's now way I can suffer that much pain if I believe he should be on this path. Since our thoughts cause our feelings and feelings drive our actions and actions give us a result, we just as well choose the thoughts that give us the feeling we want to have.

Because I felt hopeful and felt that this might be part of his path, I was able to interact with him from a place of acceptance and understanding and to build that relationship back up. Now, interestingly, two years later, well, almost two years later, he is still not on the path I would like him to be on or that society would say he should be on. He is, without going into details, he is still amazing in so many ways. He is super loving. He's an awesome big brother. He's fun. He loves people. And then there are those darker choices he makes that I can't control, but I choose to ignore them because why focus on what's going wrong?

If I focus on what's wrong, I will feel sadness, I will feel stress, I will feel overwhelm, and when I feel those things, I will tend to engage in an action that's negative. I might criticize him more, I might ignore him more, and that would hurt the relationship. So instead, by thinking the thought, "Oh, he's such a great brother. He's so extroverted. He's so social," I then feel more positive toward him and those feelings of positivity drive the action of giving

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him a hug or saying something cool or saying something I like about him and the relationship gets better. Do you see how this works?

So, I wanted to talk generally about feelings of negativity or feelings of discomfort. I want you to think about something you're feeling uncomfortable about right now. Maybe it's how your spouse treated you this morning, or how your 3-year-old isn't sleeping at night, or how your 12-year-old laughs too much and how weird that is. That's happening here. I love you, Lorelei, but you are pretty giggly right now.

These things are facts. These are situations or events happening in our lives, but what meaning are you attaching? It's a funny thing how we all believe 3-year-olds should sleep through the night, but the reality is a good 30% to 50% are not sleeping through the night yet. We all cling to a belief that they should be doing this "normal" thing and when they don't, we suffer. We feel mad, we feel frustrated, we feel resentful.

What if you drop that expectation and say, "Eh, a 3-year-old should not sleep through the night"? It sounds crazy, but it eliminates your suffering, and if that suffering and pain and negativity is eliminated, you're more likely to interact positively with your child and get the result of a closer relationship, plus you're not going to feel unhappy all the time.

Similarly, let's say your spouse, you wanted to tell them a story this morning and they were in a rush, and they were short and brusque with you and said, "I've got to go,". That's happened here before. You could say, "Oh, if he loved me, he should listen to me. He should've listened to me." And then you're going to suffer all day because your expectation, or your should, is so far removed from what really happened, but there's another option.

What if you drop the should or the expectation and say, "He needed to hurry. He shouldn't listen to me right now. Maybe he'll listen to me later. I'm

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good. I've got this. I should listen to myself. I should get someone else to listen. I'll call my best friend. She's a way better listener anyway."

Suddenly, the pain is gone, you're not going to feel resentful, it's not going to hurt your relationship, and your marriage will be close. We have so much power over our lives when we take responsibility for these feelings and for these thoughts and recognize that all of our feelings are caused by a thought. When we're in pain, when we're suffering, when we're sad, resentful, frustrated, it's always preceded by a thought.

So, take some time this week to analyze what you're thinking every time you notice a negative emotion. Then, change the thought if you can. Sometimes you're just going to have to feel what you feel. I call it the feel it to heal it method. When my son was doing all of those terrible things, I couldn't change my thoughts right away.

In that hotel room alone, I had to lay on the bed and allow myself to feel that pain, to be in that state of discomfort, that state of mental anguish. By allowing myself to feel it, identifying where I felt it in my body, which was in my heart area, it slowly dissolved, it passed, it didn't get stuck. Then, I could change my thoughts.

So, as you identify your feelings this week, go ahead and allow yourself to feel them. Allow yourself to feel sad when your husband says that mean or quirky thing, or when you're tired when your 3-year-old didn't sleep all night. Allow yourself to feel it, but don't stay there too long, and then dust yourself off, pick yourself up, and change your thought so you can have a new feeling, and you end your own suffering.

Now, one final thought. Often when we are feeling a negative feeling, we engage in what is called a numbing behavior. That is when you do something to prevent yourself from feeling such as getting that ice cream

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gallon out of the freezer, getting on Netflix and just binging out on a Netflix show that you like. Shopping therapy, porn, gambling, drinking.

All of these things are behaviors that distract us from feeling those negative feelings, which can often cause those feelings to get stuck, become something that our brain circles back on again and again and again and we tend to ruminate on how someone wronged us, or how our life isn't fair, or how our life is hard, and we get stuck.

The best antidote is to stop numbing, put your phone away, turn off the Netflix, put away the ice cream, and maybe go to your safe space, which for me is my bed, and just allow yourself to feel it. What does it feel like? Where do you feel it in your body? If the feeling was a color, what color would it be? And by doing this, you can understand that these feelings are simply a collection of physical sensations in your body and that they will pass simply by giving them the attention they deserve.

Those feelings are there to let you know you need to change a thought, or to let you know that you need to change something in that pattern so you can grow. And when we numb those feelings we don't grow, we don't change, we don't shift. Because I was resting on that bed the night my son had all of those terrible things happening, when he was going to the Wilderness Therapy Program, because I allowed myself to feel, I realized I could no longer carry expectations for him.

I had to completely let go of the idea that he should live to a certain age, as painful as that was, or that he should follow all the laws, or that he should not run away, or whatever other thoughts I was having, I had to let them go and just accept that the reality is what should be happening, and suddenly my pain was gone by accepting what is.

If you want to go further on this topic, I highly recommend the book *Loving What Is* by Byron Katie. She talks a lot about how all our suffering is

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preceded by a thought, and you can take this very deep. Also, we've been talking about this in the Vibrant Happy Women Club.

If you want to master the connection between your thoughts and your feelings and learn how to let go of those thoughts that cause you so much pain and suffering in your marriage, with your kids, with your body, with your career, and learn how to get past those feelings where you often get stuck and get a new result, definitely join us in the club. We are moving forward on this all year long and so many members are making massive progress on changing their thoughts and becoming so much happier because of it.

The truth is you hold your happiness in your own hands simply by, one, identifying what you're feeling, two, figuring out the thought that precedes the feeling, three, letting yourself feel it when needed, and then changing that thought. It's easier than it sounds, and we start by figuring out what we're feeling, understanding the thought that precedes it. And again, we start by figuring out what we're feeling and allowing ourselves to feel it.

Number two, figuring out the thought that precedes it, and number three, changing the thought so we feel better. And when we feel better, we take better actions and get a better result: a better marriage, better relationships with our kids, a better health pattern, better decisions, better career, all of it. It all starts with a thought.

Well, I will leave it right there. I love this topic and I would love to hear your thoughts. Leave me a review and share your thoughts at JenRiday.com/iTunes. You can also go to our show notes and leave a comment. That's at JenRiday.com/203.

I want to send you all my love and my mad respect for the struggles and pain you do have, and also I want to send you a bit of confidence that you

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can handle any feeling and that you can change the thoughts that are causing your feelings.

This is the way to let go of victim thinking, feeling like you're a victim of the people and the crazy teens and the mean husbands and the bad careers in your life, and instead trusting and knowing that you control how you feel just by knowing and changing your thoughts. Full empowerment, full responsibility for your own happiness, it is so much fun.

I thank you so much for listening. I'll be back again next week, and until then, make it a phenomenal week. Take care.

If you enjoy this podcast, you have to check out the Vibrant Happy Women Club. It's my monthly group coaching program where we take all this material to the next level and to get you the results that will blow your mind. Join me in the Vibrant Happy Women Club at jenriday.com/join.