

# Loving on Purpose Podcast

with Bonnie Lyman

## Episode 83 Questions and Answers

I am Bonnie Lyman and you are listening to the podcast, loving On Purpose, episode 83. Questions and answers. Hello everyone. I'm hunkered down in what we call at our house away, far down basement. It's 90 something today, which isn't too hot, but we live in a 70 year old home, which I love and is very comfortable and functions very well except the air conditioning. If you go to the way far down level, I almost need to put a little sweater on. But it's cool down here, up in my bedroom, it's about 85 degrees and it's very warm, so I'm here. Joyfully talking to you. I hope you're having a good summer. I love connecting with you in this way, and I wanna thank everybody that submitted questions to be answered that were on your mind.

So we're gonna talk about some general things because I believe the answer to solving any problem is really. Pretty much the same, even though we can use the same tools to solve any problem besides diseases and those kind of things. It still takes some work. It takes desire and it's not always easy to do, so one of the things that we neglect doing is allowing ourself to feel the negative feeling of whatever that problem is creating, because anytime we resist anything, we intensify it so, You could almost say that when you resist reality, and I am thinking in the cases which I think are. Really sad situations when children tell their parents that they no longer want any contact with them and they cannot have any contact with their children, the, the parents, the grandparents aren't allowed to see their grandchildren. That's painful. That hurts. But if we resist it and we never come to accept that this is the reality. Of what's gonna be happening for, we don't know how long. Hopefully not forever, but maybe. We only make ourself more miserable and prolong moving forward in finding satisfaction in our life in other ways.

I know a lot of us, especially those that belong to my church, there's a lot of emphasis that there is nothing more important than families and I believe that, and I believe that the connection between families, it never dies. It may change, but it never dies. But the type of context. Contact that families have differ greatly between families to family. It has a lot to do with the personalities of people, different circumstances, different experiences of how the parents were raised and what they bring to the table in raising their children. D n A has a, a factor, and I've done a lot of study on this and I, I haven't come up with an answer that satisfies me as to why children are doing this. I had a difficult relationship with my parents as an adult and I, I can't say that I ever really longed. To see them or be with them because of how they reacted to me. But I would never think of cutting off all contact and especially cutting off contact between them and seeing their grandchildren.

My children, which my mother at least had a very good relationship with. So, One of the basics in solving any problem is, like I mentioned, is, is you first have to feel that negative emotion and then we have to learn to accept reality. That things maybe didn't turn out the way we thought they were going to turn out, and so we don't wanna judge ourself for you know, having bad feelings. And the other thing is we don't wanna be in a hurry to get out of feeling these negative problems because it doesn't solve the problem any faster. In fact, if we judge ourself that we

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shouldn't be feeling this way or blaming ourselves for what's happening, we just keep adding on layers and layers of additional negativity and realities.

Is that it's part of being human, that we come across hard things in our life, things that we thought weren't gonna happen, things that we don't want to happen, but we have to remember that even the tools that we do have to feel. A little better about what's going on to feel compassion, to feel hope, or to always love our children regardless of their action. We're, we're not gonna feel that way all the time. There's, there's no such thing as being positive all the time. That's like this Pollyanna world, and it's just not realistic. We know that there's opposition. In all things, and the sooner we accept that and embrace that and be willing to feel some discomfort for a while, the better. We're going to figure out how to either see things from a different perspective or have different thoughts that will help us move forward. So just some other general thoughts I had about the questions that were asked was, we can always be ourselves. There was some things that came up that all talk about later in some of the questions that came up and answer, but, We can always show up just as we want to show up.

We can ask any question. We can make any request of anybody, but especially our adult children if we do it in, in a atmosphere of love and kindness. I. Not judgment. Nobody likes to be judged. And any time we accuse somebody or even trying to defend our side is, is often a way of saying, I'm right and you're wrong. We judge people. We judge them by insinuating. You don't understand my side and. Every, everybody wants to be in a place where they have their own autonomy, where they govern themselves and exercise their agency the way they want to. Everybody is entitled to their own opinion and we cannot take that away from somebody else. And when another person's senses that that is being threatened. Then we have more contention in the relationship. We need to be honest. A lot of times we'll say, oh, it's fine, and it's not fine. You at least need to be honest with yourself that I don't like what's going on, and then just sit with the discomfort for a while.

We all look at things differently. We have different thoughts that cause us to have different feelings because we all have our own brain, and so we have to recognize that there nobody has to see things in the same way that I do. Or that we do, that we have the right to view things and have our opinion about things in any way that we want to. Right or wrong, we cannot take that from somebody. And like I said, when somebody feels threatened that that is being taken from them, that they are, are being made to feel guilty for thinking a certain way. It really. Causes contention in relationship. You have one responsibility right now as a parent to adult children, and that is to love them. And it really, really helps if you will, focus on not only what they're doing right or what you admire about them, but to tell them, express that to them, even if there's other behaviors. That they're doing or things about them that you don't approve of or that you don't like.

Love is always a choice, and it's always the best choice. We don't have control over anybody else. We can't fix anybody else. I can't make somebody love me more. Even if I love them more, but I can benefit, I can have the reward of feeling good by choosing to love people just the way

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they are. And I'll admit it's not an easy thing to do, but it is certainly work worth doing. I have mentioned this before, and maybe it was even just in the last podcast, but when I talk to adults that I. You know, are, say my children's age that are younger than me, and when I tell them what I do, it often comes up that the main complaint that they have about their parents is that they don't accept them for who they are. Or they feel like they never can do enough to please their parents. Now I know that's not always the case, but the, our, our brains are, have the capacity. To view the world the way they want to. Yes, they can be influenced by the world, they can be influenced by close friends or siblings that may be drag them in a direction that you don't particularly approve of, but nobody has the power.

To force a person to think a certain way, which would cause him to have certain feelings. The other thing is I think we take things way too personally. It is not about. You. It is not about us as parents of adult children anymore. We do not hold the same priority, the same position in their lives, in their mind that we did or they did when they were being raised. We were everything to them. And for the first couple years of their life, their survival depended on us. But now as adults, they want that autonomy to govern themselves and to be free of needing their, their parents. And the thing that threatens a good relationship the most is when you or we are unhappy with the type of relationship that we have with them. One that didn't turn out. Like we thought it would, or one that is maybe not as close as someone we know. So one of the questions that came up, Was this, I assume it was a mom, but she said her kids have moved far away and her thought was, I must have been a bad mom for them to do such a thing. True freedom is just accepting and not putting any meaning about yourself.

When our kids do something such as move far away. If we can just make it mean they moved far away. And yes, I'm going to be sad that it's gonna be more difficult to see them more often, but it has nothing to do with us and how they were raised or what. We just don't have that power over them that would cause them to have feelings to move far away. So we need to come up with a new thought. And so the thought can be, They had the exact mom they were supposed to have, and that's why they came to my family. Now, that thought doesn't even have to be true, but if that thought makes you feel good, then that's how we solve that problem. That's how we solve most problems. Is looking at it from a different perspective and choosing to believe a different thought. There was another one that came up that some of these I grouped together was that her question was kind of worded like this. My son is divorced and my ex-wife or his ex-wife won't let me see my grandchildren.

That is a hard thing to do. But this is her family. This is your son's family. It's for them to decide what they wanna do. There's no law out there that says they are required to allow them. To see you or allow you to see them. So you're going to have to find a different way to have a connection with them. And it may be in your mind, it may be buying gifts for them. That you, you don't even know the address of where to send them, but if you could, this is what you would do. Sometimes you can fulfill that need by finding some other children that are your grandchildren's age and do something kind for them.

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But we can't, we can't force, we can't control. So it comes back to how can I love these children if it's only in my mind? And then I believe to hang out in that positive part of your brain. And believing hard that one day when they're over 18, I will get to connect with them. Or there's always the possibility that she could change her mind. Things don't ever stay the same, is one of my empowering thoughts. And at any time, she could change your mind and allow you to see them. Someone else asked, how do I stop worrying? And you stop worrying. One way is to tell your brain to stop it, not to go down that path. The other thing I like to do is to change my focus to something very trite as in start making a grocery list or deciding which closet. I wanna clean out first in my house, but redirect your brain because worrying comes from fear about something that is going to happen in the future, and your brain just goes crazy because you're giving it a problem to solve.

That hasn't even happened yet. So you just take some deep breaths and you redirect your brain to think about something else. And again, go and hang out in the positive side of your brain. That you're going to assume that thing that you're worried about is not going to happen. And if you tell yourself that enough times, you'll start believing it. A lot of times I get asked questions, what do I do? About a certain thing, and I'll give you an example is this one person asked, they said, I feel like I'm being taken advantage of because I always get asked to babysit for free and I really do need some extra money. And this is what I say. What do you want to do?

What do you want to say? Why aren't you just honest with your children? I, and I know what's happening in your mind. You feel like if I don't do this, I will lose my relationship with these children. But when you do that, you have lost integrity with your self, and so I would suggest getting some help on building your confidence. That you're a great person and because of that, they, they aren't necessarily, you're not necessarily gonna lose the relationship. But a lot of times our kids just want us to be honest. I like the saying you can't expect your kids to eat their vegetables if you don't put 'em on the plate.

If you don't tell them what you're thinking, you just are going to show up as a resentful person, and that doesn't help the situation. At all to have a good relationship. Another one kind of related to this, they asked if you have a 21 year old that lives at home, can we have expectations of that person? And again, My reply would be, what do you want to do? If you want to have expectations of things they need to do, whether it's contribution with physical work or monetarily contribution, then. You just request that, and if you request it with kindness and love, you'll live with no regret. This is one of those cases where either decision probably brings you some discomfort because you're probably anticipating that your child.

Is not gonna like the expectation that you have, but you don't like him freeloading off of you either, but which one is going to move you forward? What do you want to do? It's okay to do that. We don't have the power to make them feel angry or upset. It's their thoughts about your requirement, your expectation. It's their meaning to that that's causing them. To feel bad. Another person said, I am, I didn't write everything down here. I'm gonna assume my daughter brings her child to my home. Or maybe it was a daughter-in-law and she will just go sit and text

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and ignore the child. It comes back to what do you want to happen? If you don't want that to happen, then you need to let her know what your expectation is when she comes to the house.

And again, you let her know this. You figure out how to tell her that in a loving, kind, respectful way, and what she thinks about it and feels about it. Is really none of your business. It's all on her. You do not have your, the power to make anyone feel a certain way. Another thing that comes up quite often is the concern that what do I do to become more prominent in my children's lives? You need to accept the reality that you don't hold the same place in your child's life as you did when you were raising them, as discussed before they needed you, but just because. They don't include you in as much of their life as you would like to be included. Doesn't mean they don't love you. They just have other priorities.

They have other things on their mind. They have other worries. They have worries they never had before and concerns and responsibilities that they're trying to figure out on their own how to take care of. I. That they do not have the responsibility to fulfill your needs, you are responsible for that. I had one client say, well, my daughter called me on Mother's Day, but she didn't call me for another two weeks. I asked her, so did you wanna talk to her in between? Then I said, why didn't you call her? But in her mind's eyes, she was putting all that responsibility on her daughter, that that was her daughter's role, was to reach out and check up on her mom. Why don't we have the same concerns and feelings for our adult children? And the same thoughts about how much involvement as we would perhaps just a friend. There is nothing out there that says our kids owe us anything. In fact, we could focus on just being grateful that we got to be a mother and raise them.

One of my most favorite questions to ask. When I get in a situation that's tough, and one of the things that came up was. My son is marrying a girl who has a very toxic mother-in-law, and I'm worried about my son and I'm worried about my relationship with her. Another one is my son has left the faith. That he was raised in. So what do we talk about? And I like to answer those with what would love do? What would love do if love had a toxic mother? In-law or had a son who had a toxic mother-in-law, love would find something to love about that person because I believe it doesn't matter how toxic anybody is, how mean, how cruel, how bad, how undeserving they may be to be forgiven. There is something good in everyone and it's our responsibility to learn how to love everyone, and there are lots of things if you love your son to talk about. That has nothing to do with your faith. Your son is a good person. You raised him to be a good person. He is just choosing not to have the same values or follow the same faith. That is all. He is still that good person who you have the most wonderful opportunity to just love on.

And if you think about what would love do, you'll know exactly what kind of conversations to have with him. I. I haven't been able to answer all the questions, but this one I will address because it, it has to do with any kind of behavior that you don't approve of how to love an L G B T Q child without affirming their behavior or. Agreeing that you accept their behavior. We have been asked to love everyone. And loving your child doesn't mean you love all their behaviors. And so, It doesn't mean because you love your child that you are condoning the type of lifestyle

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that they are living, but your child is deserving of your love. Especially if he's going through something that is semi controversial as his L G B T Q subject or even further had a client whose son wanted to have a sex change. They need your love and support more than ever. They are still your child. You get to make the decision whether you're going to love them or not, but we need to allow people the right.

To make their own decisions about their own love and not love them conditionally, you can do that, but why would you do that to your own child when I guarantee you it will make you. Feel miserable. Love is always available. It's always an option, and it always wins. You are able to maintain. A good relationship. Sometime it may be only the connection in your mind if they have decided to cut you off, but I believe in time that influence of love will cause them to reconsider that decision to have no contact with you. There is nothing more powerful in this world as love, and if you just think about it, if we all tried harder to work on ourselves, to be more loving and not be concerned about the other person's behavior.

What a more loving world we would live in. I hope this answered some of your questions. I believe that in every situation we have a choice of whether. We're going to choose love or whether we're going to choose judgment and love always feels better than loving. I'm sorry, than judging another person. But it's your choice and I respect you for whatever choice you make because I believe all of us are just trying to do the best we can and being human. We don't always be our best.

I hope you have a great week. And I'll talk to you next week. If you like this, be 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 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.com](http://bonnie.lyman.com) and book a call. I can't wait to hear from you.