

Loving on Purpose Podcast

with Bonnie Lyman

Episode 94 Complaints Adult Children Have About Their Parents

This is Bonnie Lyman, and you're listening to the podcast, Loving on Purpose, episode 94, Complaints Adult Children Have About Their Parents.

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. Hello, my friends. Thank you for joining me on another week of listening to my podcast, Loving on Purpose.

I feel very strongly about the power of being able to always choose love. And I hope this week that you, this past week, you had some opportunities that you noticed where that choice was placed before you and what you were struggling with in perhaps choosing love over judgment. I had the wonderful experience of attending the wedding of a granddaughter, I guess you could say she's not a legal granddaughter.

She is in my bloodline. She was the daughter of one of the two daughters that were twins that my daughter placed for adoption some 24 years ago. And it was just incredible of how things worked out, how things have, um, conspired over the years to have the relationship that we have with these girls, that we can consider them our grandchildren and to come full circle to be at an event that we never anticipated the day that she was born, that we would have the opportunity to be there.

I love weddings because everybody loves everybody there. You love people you don't even know. You love people that you know had done some wrong things. It's just full of love because of this couple that's getting married and the vibes, the energy, the loving energy they put off. And it was a wonderful time.

My young grandkids were dancing and it was just a good time at all. And I hope some of the struggles that you're going through with your adult children and the ramifications of that, that they, they will work out in much the same way that this situation worked out. And I believe it's with all my heart that number one, the Lord had some intervention in making that happen, but it was the enabling power of the atonement of Jesus Christ that gave us the will, the desire, the ability to choose love, even in situations where it may have been easier to criticize.

So, I had a great week last week, but I will tell you that these tools I teach you, they're always being used by me. I just don't automatically have positive thoughts. I have to work on it. I have to desire it. And I have to believe that I... Don't have to be in despair. I have the ability to choose other thoughts that will cause me to feel differently.

But I also know that the first thing I need to do is to feel that negative emotion, not try to resist it. Otherwise it will just intensify. So, I got on and Googled complaints adult children are having about their parents who live in the U. S. And I will, I did a lot of studying from the articles and

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things I found and I referenced those in the, um, footnotes, show notes, whatever, to this podcast.

Complaints that adult children in the U. S. have about their parents can be varying, depending, of course, on individual circumstances and on family dynamics. How people react to each other. But I came up with, or from my studying, I picked 10 of some of the most common complaints or issues that adult children may have regarding their parents.

Now, I

I want you to know that when I say this, be sure and listen to the end. It's not about criticizing you. I'm not saying all these complaints are valid. And in fact, I discovered that the complaints that the adult children are having, are often the exact same complaints that their parents are having about them.

So, it's kind of relationship issues, and that's why all these tools that I teach you on my podcast, or if you've become a client with me, it just doesn't work in your relationship with your adult children or a particular child you're having struggles with. It relates to strengthening relationships with everyone you come in contact with.

And we all know that there's issues with our spouse, there's issues with our siblings. There are issues with daughter and sons in law, and it's all the same way to solve the hurtful feelings that you feel. These people in these relationships are causing and really the pain is coming from what you're making it mean.

I don't want to get off on that because I could reiterate and talk about that all day. But we're just going to talk about the complaints. Ten of the most common complaints that adult children have. And number one, and this isn't in any particular order. When their parents are overbearing and controlling.

Some children may feel that their parents continue to control or try to make decisions for them, which can be really frustrating. They feel their parents don't think they are capable of making decisions on their own. Because their parents are always there making decisions, and so it's a natural thing.

They feel they still are treated like children, and the result then is this makes these children, when they're feeling controlled, they want to stay away from their parents. Number two is a lack of respect for boundaries. Parents who don't respect their children's personal boundaries, including privacy, whether you can just show up at their house unannounced, or whether they would like to be notified ahead of time, or whether, uh, their autonomy, meaning not respecting that they can self govern themselves.

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This can lead to conflicts. We can give too many suggestions for how they should rear their children and too many suggestions about so anything that makes them feel or their parents are suggesting solutions that they feel their children are incapable of solving their problems by themselves. And the result, again, is they run away, and they avoid contact with their parents.

Do you like people telling you what you should be doing? What decision you should be making? I had a friend... who had a daughter that was married to a young man that was having a hard time fulfilling his responsibility in the marriage of providing some income. And so his parents stepped in and was giving them money because they, they didn't like watching them suffer.

going without or struggling so hard. And yet that was the very thing that could help him, which my daughter, my friend's daughter could recognize. And she begged them not to give them any more money, to let them hit almost rock bottom, that maybe this would get his Attention, but they they just couldn't stand to see them struggling.

So they didn't stop giving, um, them the money. The result in this case was they eventually got divorced. It was too much control by her husband's parents and he was not making any strides or advancement to improve his participation in the marriage

number this is still Under number two, lack of respect for boundaries. Parents bring up subjects that our adult children don't want to talk about. This usually refers to topics of private facts of their individual life. Our adult children will share what they want to share about their life. But when we probe into getting a little too personal into some topics they don't want to talk about, about, you know, are, are they saving money?

Um, are, are they having family prayer? Are they going to church? Things that are really none, about none of their business. And the result is they end up sharing nothing that is feeling like a disrespect of honoring this boundary of not talking about topics that are much too personal.

Number three complaint is they make me feel guilty for not living up to their expectations, they feel guilty because they know their parents are disappointed in, uh, perhaps they left their faith. Perhaps. Um, they're, they're not giving their parents enough attentions. They feel guilty for running their own lives.

And the result is, then, there's an increase in distance from their parents. They don't want to feel the guilt, and so they know they consent when they... are disappointing their parents, especially their mom. Number four is that little bit, um, similar to what we were talking about before is when their parents disapprove.

of their life because of their life choices. Their parents may express disapproval of their career choices, maybe their appearance, getting tattoos, the way they dress, how they live their life, or who they marry. Leading to tension and resentment in this relationship. And so the result is

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being around their parents is not their most desirable choice because they are always feeling judged.

Number five, and some of these you'll see are kind of related to each other, constant criticism. Adult children may feel that their parents are overly critical about their behavior. I've had many clients be critical of their children over things such as Not answering their texts, or not answering their texts in the time frame they wanted them answered.

Or they're critical of their children not calling often enough. Or they criticize them for not sending birthday or Mother's Day cards. Or maybe they're critical of not spending. As much time with them as they do their spouse's family and all this results in is when their parents criticize, they usually don't change their behavior.

It causes the opposite. They, the result is they feel more judged by their parents than they do love. And so, they stay away. Who wants to be around people that they feel that they're being judged by? They don't like many of the things that they do, rather than being around somebody where they feel loved, despite what they do.

Number six is adult children complain that their parents too often Compare them with their siblings or with other people's children. Parents who frequently compare their adult children to siblings or peers can cause feelings. In our adult children of inadequacy and rivalry. I've had many clients compare one child's behavior against another.

They expect that if one child provides frequent contact with them, the other ones should do exactly the same. But this... is just focusing on different strengths and weaknesses in each of these children, rather than just focusing on the strengths in all of them. And what is the result to this type of behavior?

That child knows He's not living up to his parents expectations, and again, he feels more judged than love. Thus, it feels more comfortable not to have contact with his parents. Number seven, failure to acknowledge

That their personal growth of what they've gotten better at, what they've overcome, adult children just like ourselves crave validation. And it's always best when we can learn to validate ourselves, but it's easier to do if someone, especially our parents, recognize and acknowledge. Our personal growth and our achievement.

It's needful of parents to start seeing their adult children as people who are capable of making their own decisions and recognizing and validating them for the good decisions that they do make. The result would be If they were recognized for their achievements and what they were doing right, they would feel valued and respected by their parents, and they would enjoy being around them more.

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Okay, number eight. Adult children don't like being given advice from their parents when it hasn't been asked for. Parents offering unsolicited advice, especially on minor life decisions, like, why aren't you leaving before the bad weather comes? Or don't you think you should wear a suit to that job interview?

can be seen as annoying. by adult children. The result, they end up choosing not to share much of what's happening in their life. That they're taking off for the weekend, that they're even applying for a new job. You may not be giving any advice and you're still the last to know what's happening in their lives because of your previous behavior.

That could be, it could just be, though, part of their personality. That, um, they don't like to share things with you, but give any, giving unsolicited advice is a sure thing to keep them from sharing anything with you. Number nine. They feel they are not allowed to express themselves without either being judged, or their, um, thoughts and feelings are ignored, or they're shut down.

They feel their parents sometimes are closed minded to their perspectives and thoughts on life. They feel their parents hold on too tight to their own beliefs and values and are closing their minds to hear their perspectives. As a result, they quit expressing their thoughts and feelings of about just anything.

Number 10, their parents place too much guilt tripping on them to try to get their way, which creates resentment by the adult child. And this can be a control mechanism. But they can, it's also tied sometimes to parents feeling like they have some entitlement do them from their parents. Comments like, I sacrificed the prime years of my life for you and you can't drive 25 miles out of your way to stop in and see us.

for a half hour? Your brothers all sent me a Mother's Day present.

Can't you even acknowledge you received the package I sent you? Now, you can have all sorts of justification of why. Those particular examples might,

might be justified as something you could complain about, but it doesn't help the situation. We don't know what they're thinking. We don't know. Why they couldn't drive 25 miles out of their way to see you. We don't know why they didn't send you a Mother's Day present. We don't know why they didn't let you know that the package even arrived.

But by us having... Negative thoughts and judgmental thoughts about them just weakens the relationship. You can have them. You have every right to have those thoughts, but they're best not expressed, especially when you know the relationship isn't as strong as it should be. The result in putting too much guilt On our adult children is they become resentful, and when they're resentful, they may choose to distance themselves from us in all the adult children.

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I have talked to when I tell them that I'm a life coach that helps mom who are struggling in their relationships with their adult children. The most common reply is, Oh, uh. I wish my mother would talk to you. No matter what I do, it's never enough. I'm not saying, and as I mentioned before, that all these complaints are valid, but being defensive to your children's complaints doesn't solve anything.

Having family meetings where everyone lays all their complaints out on the table. I say, where are we? Get out all the dirty underwear out on the table. I don't believe is ever helpful. It just opens up wounds, irritate and annoy people, and it doesn't help to solving anything.

These are often... As I mentioned before, these complaints of these adult children are the exact complaints that parents have about their adult children.

But because We can't make them see this. There is only one solution and that is being able to choose to be loving rather than being judgmental. Choosing love always feels best. We feel love. when we have loving thoughts. So we have to learn to look at our children from a different perspective, to choose to think different thoughts about their behavior.

It doesn't mean, though, that you have to give up wanting for things to be different, to have more contact, to have more Respect and kinder acts of love shown toward you. But we can't change anyone but ourselves. Is there some of these complaints by these adult children that you recognize you might need correcting?

If so, it's your choice as to whether you want to work on that or not. You don't have to. If you don't want to, but we can choose to be better at understanding the challenges they have in their lives that are different challenges than the ones we had when we were their age, getting curious, really curious about your part.

in their complaints. Being willing to be wrong about your perspective and that maybe some of their complaints are valid. Don't get defensive. Try to understand that this is a different generation and their ways of showing love is different than your ways. Their way of feeling loved. And not judged is different than your way of feeling loved a benefit to of this is that you will feel better in being part of the solution and not part of the problem you will be that much closer to unconditionally loving your child, which are.

Okay. Always feels better than being a victim to their hot, to their thoughts, and to their behaviors. And it will also have the greatest impact on having a closer connection with your adult child. Not all adult children have these complaints. And many. Maintain positive, healthy relationships with their parents.

Figuring out how they want to be loved. Setting honest, healthy boundaries, which are openly shared and expressed in a kind. in respectful way, showing respect and love for each other,

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forgiving for wrongful differences. This is what creates loving feelings between parents and children that are each feeling, perhaps, in completely different ways.

Let me read those again.

Maintaining positive and healthy relationships between adult parents and adult children is for the parents to figure out how their children want to be loved, and then by both of you setting honest, healthy boundaries, which you openly share and express, but always in a kind and respectful way, and always choosing to show respect and love for each other.

And each other's differences and forgiving for wrongful differences that caused loving feelings between a parent and a child to be misinterpreted. So, to recap, are you part of the problem of a strained relationship? I'm not saying you are. Maybe you don't. Don't do any of these, and your children don't treat you very kindly and don't want to have much contact.

But listen to these again, read the transcript that you can find on my website at BonnieLyman.com and see if maybe you are a part of the problem or maybe you, are you trying too hard to help them and you're doing it out of love, but you do it in a way that they perceive as you trying to control them.

Have you not figured out or discussed boundaries with each other, whether it's about the frequency? of time that you want to spend together or which topics you don't feel or find out which topics they don't feel should be discussed. Do you contribute to them feeling guilty by your display of disappointment of their behavior?

Do you criticize them more than you praise them? Do you give advice? Without asking permission from them first. Do you find yourself being closed minded and never trying to see things from their perspective? Are you feeling entitled to be treated more kindly by them because of feelings of entitlement, that they owe you something.

Needs on both sides are not being met in a tenuous relationship. It's our responsibility to take care of our wants and our need. There is no entitlement to be placed on our children. Our children don't owe us one thing just because we made an investment and sacrifice with our time and money for the first 18 years plus of their lives.

That's part of the Responsibility of deciding to have children, that you would be willing to invest everything you had in helping them develop into an emotionally and physically responsible person. Children learn best from their own mistakes, and not from you sheltering them from failures. None of their behavior of shying away from you, of withdrawing from you, of not having much contact with you, means they don't love you.

Just as we can love our children without loving some of their behaviors, it's the same with our adult children. They still love us, but they maybe stay away from us because they don't like how

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some of our behaviors make them feel. But that doesn't mean they've stopped loving you. We are either loving people or we're judging them.

And this goes with anybody we come in contact with. Our only responsible children, now that they are adults, and I believe this with all my heart, because I have seen it work in my own lives of, in my own life of the lives of my children and the relationship I have with them. Our only responsibility is to love them and tell them as often as possible the things that we admire about them.

I promise you, doing this will have more influence over your children wanting to have more contact with you. than anything else you could do. It's amazing what happens in families when love is chosen to be shown, and it may only be outwardly shown by the parents. Why don't you be the first to start choosing love over judgment. And remember, love is always an option.

I thank you for listening. I hope you have a great week. And I've got another fun topic to talk to you next week. See you then. 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 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 everything. So just go to BonnieLyman.com and book a call. I can't wait to hear from you.