

# Loving on Purpose Podcast

with Bonnie Lyman

## **Episode 119: Being Willing to Wait for a Better Connection With an Adult Child**

This is Bonnie Lyman, and you're listening to the podcast, Loving on Purpose, episode 119, Waiting for a Better Connection with an Adult Child.

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, my friends. Welcome back. I'm excited about the conversation.

Well, I guess it's me talking to you and hopefully you're listening. Like I said before, I can feel you out there. I just hope I'm helping somebody with my podcast. Appreciate the feedback. Appreciate when you share it with somebody else. I just don't like seeing people hurting over relationships with their adult children when it's not necessary.

I have some other outlets for you to get help in this area. One is to get on my email list and you can do that by going to [BonnieLyman.com](http://BonnieLyman.com). You can also go there and book a personal one on one relationship strategy call that is free of charge and I'll give you a little bit of help. You'll tell me what's going on.

And then you can decide if you want to get more help from me, but I am excited about the people I have been able to help and I'm excited to be here talking to you again today. So we're talking about this idea of waiting. For a better connection with an adult child, and I'm thinking of a child maybe that has distanced themselves from you.

This is not going to be talking about one that has told you they never want to see you again, they don't want to see the grandchildren. I did do a podcast about that called When Your Children Divorce You. You can go back and look that up. I know Apple took away the number, so I can't give you the number.

You'll just have to thumb through podcasts. But in today's episode I'm going to be talking about why it's important to be able to wait for your adult children to change their undesirable behavior. And I'm thinking particularly in wanting to have adult children a closer relationship with you, or, you know, it just may be how they're living their life in a way that's pretty destructive to them.

So we're going to talk about how to wait without feeling hopeless. So, a person who I highly admire, and I had a podcast on him, and I also in my emails have given references to YouTube talks he has given and also articles he has given. But there's a

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man by the name of Joseph Grenny who raised his kids thinking that he would have a fairly normal life when these children became adults.

And then in his YouTube video, he He shows these mug shots of his sons that are two of his sons that were in jail. And then he has another photograph of when one of his sons almost died of a drug overdose. He doesn't really tell where, what stage. His sons are in now, but he lives a very happy, satisfying life that I do know.

But a statement he said that I think it's worth pondering is he said, there is a pandemic in today's society. of parents who are unwilling to wait for their children's return. And I've had some, little bit of experience with this and the clients I have worked with as we talk about ways we can show love to our adult children even though they reject it over and over again, but it's.

Practicing and doing it more and more often because that's who we are, loving people, especially towards our children. But these clients get real frustrated because their children aren't coming around. And so it's, it's natural. To want to see immediate results or to try to intervene and kind of speed up the process, but rushing the process can often do more harm than good.

There is opposition on this earth. There is opposition in our lives in living the full human experience. And that opposition is to help us grow and to enjoy even more joyfully the good circumstances in our life. It's not for us to decide when and how our children should change because we would be robbing them.

of what they were supposed to be learning when they came to Earth. Patience is crucial because change takes time, especially when it comes to deeply ingrained inappropriate patterns or habits. Rushing our children To change just causes and creates more resistance to change and more resistance to us and it just pushes our children further and further away.

from us and from what we want happening. But if we give them the space and the time that they need to grow and change on their own terms, you're empowering them to take ownership of their actions and to make lasting changes.

And in the meantime, you get to practice learning how to be gratefully patient. So how can we as parents wait for these adult children to change without feeling hopeless or powerless? We as parents need to focus on what we do have control over. What is our own reactions and behavior to what is going on in our children's life?

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What are we doing to move forward in our life even when we don't like the relationship we have with our children or how they are living their life? Number one is to practice some self compassion. And remind yourself that you're doing the best you can in a very challenging situation. And that self compassion can be manifested.

In different ways, but, you know, one way is in the thoughts that we have that we're not blaming ourselves for what's going on with our children. This is something outside of us. It's outside of any related DNA. It's just what they were either predisposed to do. Or intentionally decided to do for whatever reason, we'll probably never know why.

Number two, what you can control is lean on a support system. Whether it's friends or other family members or maybe it's getting a coach or a therapist. Numbers. Numbers. to help process your emotions and gain perspective and gain the perspective that there's a 50 percent chance That things don't always stay the same, that things will change, that they will come around.

They will change. Number three is trust in the reliance, resilience, I'm sorry, trust in the resilience of your adult children and have faith that change is coming. It's possible, even if it takes time, it is in them. They have the capacity to change, but it has to be for it to become permanent and real to them on their timeline.

When I talk about having the faith that change is possible what I really mean is believing that this change. truly believing that this change can take place and what is really happening is just a growing experience for all of us.

Many of you are struggling with your adult children that they don't want a relationship or are resistant to communication, any kind of communication. So, you know, here, here are some things that you can do, and you can do this to strengthen even a good relationship. You have to go back, though, and examine and convince yourself of what you do have control over.

And you don't have control over their thoughts and their feelings. And that means you don't have control over your actions. What I'm talking about here

in bridging the gap and fostering a better connection with your adult children is what you can do. And number one, or just in general, Building this connection when there is resistance requires

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patience and empathy and persistence. We want to start, number one would be we would want to start. Validating their feelings and respecting their boundaries. So we can't go to the place of, they shouldn't be feeling this way. I have done nothing but outpour love. Whether it was through my spoken word or maybe it was money or maybe it was paying for their college education or buying a house or a car or whatever, it doesn't matter.

We that we can't buy their love, so we have to start validating. That they are feeling this, and because of agency, they have a right to feel any way they want. And then number two would be respecting their boundaries. If they say no contact, or I only see you, want to see you once a month, and that may even be expressed in a very kind way is to respect that, even if you don't agree with it.

We want to focus on, and this is number three, building trust with them by every chance we get, listening to them without judgment. And that could mean without offering any opinion at all. And number four would be showing genuine interest in their lives. And so that tends to be a one sided conversation where we are asking them, How's your job going?

What did you do this weekend? Any question you can look think of that shows that you're genuinely interested in what they're doing. Look for common ground between the two of you. Maybe it's your, you have the same favorite restaurant. Maybe you both enjoy watching the NFL. Or March Madness, the basketball tournament that we just got done with.

Or maybe it's you're both interested in gardening or cooking. Just look for some common ground that you can maybe share some things with. And that's at least a starting point for connection. But don't get discouraged if you don't get the reaction back that you were hoping for.

I want to talk a little bit more about Joseph Grenny and his advice on this topic. One of the things he says is that it's vital for parents. Vital was the word he used for parents to focus on what they can control, and that is namely their own actions and reactions. And he again believes in practicing self compassion and nurturing our own emotional well being.

And we want to go through this period with grace and resilience. In other words, we can be have heartache over this. We can be heartbroken, but we don't want to get to the place of being broken, and we do that, as mentioned earlier, he suggests, by

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seeking support from trusted friends or professionals who can help you look at things from a different perspective, and hopefully friends that can give you encouragement. During challenging times, one of the best ways I feel that we're when we're in these hard times to survive is to go serve others.

And be with others or even serve others that are your children's age who desire help and connection with you. Now, it doesn't necessarily have to be your children's age, but just going out and helping and loving on people that want your help and your love. He went on to say that connecting with result, resistant adult children just takes a lot of waiting.

It's essential for parents to approach the situation with an open mind and heart. And he goes on further to say we do this by validating our children's feelings, respecting their boundaries, and as we mentioned before, demonstrating genuine interest and understanding. In doing that, we are laying a foundation for connection.

This is part of having a family. When I ask my clients, do they wish they had never had children, they always respond, Oh, I would never wish for that. I feel you need to decide what kind of person you want to show up to, to your children, and then be consistent in being that person. Remember, we're in this for the long haul.

Things that are as important to us as a relationship with a child are worth

I found that when I waited by being anxiously engaged in good causes, when I fulfilled my own needs by being self-compassionate or doing things that were new or exciting to me, I could wait patiently and I could live a peaceful, contented life. I went three years. With hardly speaking to one of my children.

It was not my decision, but it was theirs. And I finally wrote a letter and just said, I love you. I feel there is something I do to trigger some sort of discomfort in you. But I love you enough that I am willing to wait as long as it takes. I am willing to give you all the space that you need. If it will cause you to live a happier life.

I did get a response thanking me for the letter and just saying it was in a text and just saying we'll talk about it later. But we don't need to go into all the details as to why. I will just tell you, after three years, my relationship with this child is 75 percent better. I still trigger them in some way that I don't know why, and they probably don't know why.

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But if this is what I get, this is what I'll take. I invite you to strengthen your relationship with God. Thank you. He knows how this is all going to work out. Ask him for where to find help to be able to wait patiently and lovingly to have a good connection with your adult child. I thank you for listening to me today, and I'll catch you next week.

If you like 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, 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](http://BonnieLyman.com) and book a call. I can't wait to hear from you.