

53. Having Difficult Conversations with Jody Moore



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Dara Tomasson

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Are you convinced that having a difficult conversation is a lot easier to avoid than to actually have but then you start turning to all the chocolate and ice-cream to avoid all those negative emotions? Well, you are going to absolutely love this episode on a very special interview with Jody Moore who will teach us how to have difficult conversations and how that's going to help us lose so much weight.

This is Weight Loss for Quilters, episode 53, Having Difficult Conversations with Jody Moore.

Did you know you could lose weight and keep it off for good? After 25 years of hiding behind my quilts, I have finally cracked the code for permanent weight loss, and I've lost 50 pounds without exercise or counting calories. I'm Dara Tomasson, professional quilter turned weight and life coach, where I help quilters just like you create a life they love by losing weight and keeping it off for good. Let's jump into today's episode.

Alright, welcome everybody. I am so excited about this interview with Jody Moore. And I cannot wait for you to delve into it. And just before you listen to the whole episode I do want to do a shout out to one of my clients who I actually share the story in the interview with Jody. But one of my clients, she at 18 years old, she had a surgery, and her sister came and said, "I was going to bring you ice-cream, but I know that you are probably worried about your weight, so I brought you this instead."

And so, for 40 years my client has been carrying this around. And with being in a coaching call and in the safety of the group she was able to realize that her sister would probably be mortified if she knew that her words had affected her so much. And so, it was really important for me to have this podcast for all of you because we have a really difficult time having difficult conversations with ourselves and with others approaching them. And so, I can't wait for you to learn these tools and to apply them.

So, before I became a coach I was a free motion quilting liberator, that's what I called myself. And it's been really fun to watch on these coaching calls or in the Facebook groups, you'll have comments where people will

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say, “I had this aha moment, I finally realized this is happening.” And so, listen to this episode. I have the handout for you but before we dive in I want you just to ask yourself, how much time do you spend in your day in your head with avoiding conflict, avoiding difficulty, or even with others and with yourself?

And I can tell you that this listening to this episode and applying even just one of the tools that Jody shared, is going to make such a difference for you and all of these tools are learned inside my program, just saying. Alright, so now I’m going to turn the time over to our interview, Jody Moore, and Dara Tomasson. Enjoy.

Dara: So, I’m so excited to introduce you to my amazing guest. So, this is Jody Moore, hello.

Jody: Hi, everybody.

Dara: And Jody doesn’t even know how we met. So back in 2018 I had my friend, Deena Reuter, who is an amazing talented fabric designer. In fact, I was crushing on her, girl crush because she’s so talented. And she had a reach out and said she’s going to Life Coach School training, and she needed a guineapig. And we had moved here, and I felt terrible, even though this is one of the most beautiful places in the world.

But anyway, so then Deena, I took her up on her offer and she gave me six coaching calls. And she told me about Jody Moore. And so here I am listening, binge listening to all your podcasts as I’m quilting but it got so frustrating because I kept having to leave my quilting, because I have a longarm of course. I have to leave my quilting and go write down all the things that Jody was saying. So, I was like, okay, I’m not allowed to listen to her podcasts and quilt. So, I made dates with myself.

And I would just take myself on the porch or I would go for a walk, and I would bring her podcast with me because I needed to have that time alone. What you were teaching me, Jody, was first of all, I am not my

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circumstances. I do not have to be that person. And second of all, I can totally change, and I'm super allowed and it's all amazing and wonderful. And so, since Jody, your podcast and then applying all the things, I've lost the 50 pounds, I've kept it off. I have created this incredible business.

I help women every day do the same thing and it is the definition of abundance. And I remember particularly you gave a podcast about having difficult conversations and it has changed so much in my life, my mother-in-law, my husband, my children, ladies at guild, and church, and all of that. I'm actually doing going to girls' camp tomorrow.

Jody: What? Well done.

Dara: I know, I'm in charge.

Jody: And so there will be no difficult conversations there all week.

Dara: Yeah. And there's been no preparing either. So, we're being really sarcastic. But it has helped me have so much more fun at girls' camp and all the things. So, I'm just going to set the stage because maybe some of you might be like, why are we talking about having difficult conversations on a weight loss podcast? And there's two reasons we're overweight. We over-hunger, over-desire. So, we're turning to food and basically it's like we just put more food in our mouth than we need.

And we do that because we don't want to feel uncomfortable. And when you think about having difficult conversations, you don't want to say the things because you don't want to feel uncomfortable, it's the same thing. So, Jody, I really would love you to share with my listeners what your recommendations are on approaching these difficult conversations.

Jody: Well, let's begin with determining why we would want to and sort of I think one of the questions I get a lot, I'm sure you get this too in coaching is should I go talk to this person about this thing? Or should I just deal with it and process it internally? So, I think that your reason why is worth taking a look at.

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I think that when we go into a conversation, this is what I'm guilty of is I tend to think I know, I'll go explain to whomever it is, I'll go explain to my mother that I don't really like it when she behaves that way and then she'll understand and then she'll change, and she'll behave differently and then the world will be better for me.

Dara: You see, that was like how I operated 99.5% of the time before you.

Jody: Yeah. And most people do, and my brain still tries to go there. I should just go tell them. Now, on the one hand there's nothing wrong with telling people what your preferences are because sometimes it's true. Sometimes when you sit down and explain, hey, mom, I prefer that you not come over unannounced or whatever it is. Sometimes she may go, "I'm so glad you told me," and she may honor that. So, there is nothing wrong with communicating your desires in the hopes that the person will change.

Where we get ourselves in trouble is we don't want to hang our happiness on whether or not they do. They may say, well, and they might get defensive, or they might come back at us for something they wish we didn't do. It might turn into an argument even. So, you don't want to define success by the person. It feels good at the end, they hear me and then they change which is what our primitive brains sort of do, without examining it.

If though you can get to a place where you understand, I feel like me owning my side of the relationship is communicating clearly because I can't expect my mom to read my mind or I can't expect people to just understand my preferences and/or maybe it's that accountability conversation that you're having with a child, or an employee, or something. There are times when it's like me doing my job of being the woman I want to be, the wife I want to be or the employer or the coach, or what have you.

The person I want to be is I need to communicate this because I care about them, or I care about the relationship, or it feels like me owning my responsibility. So, from that place then we go into the conversation deciding ahead of time that success is that I did what felt like me owning who I want to be. And of course, I hope that they'll feel good at the end. Of course, I

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hope that they'll change their behavior in the end. But I know that they may not. And I still feel like it is me at my best to have this conversation. Does that make sense?

Dara: Yeah, totally, yeah. So first of all, it's kind of figuring out your why. And then figuring that all out and then what's next.

Jody: And defining success like that. I like to remind myself, success is that I shared what was true for me. And ideally we want to go into it not defensive, or upset, or angry, we want to go into it from a place of openness, and compassion and love. So, I will say, I had a boss when I worked for University of Phoenix many years ago, who was such a good example of this. I watched him and I realized that's how you do it. I watched him have difficult conversations with employees as he kind of mentored me, as I started having employees.

He'd say, "Okay, well, we're going to have to have a tough conversation with this guy, let's do it together and I'll teach you." And he would say, and it was genuine. This guy was a very kind of fatherly kind of guy. And he would say, "Listen, we really care about you, Jody, and I, and we care about your success here at this company. We want to help you succeed. And so, we're not doing you any favors by not bringing this to your attention."

And so, he always prefaced it with, "This is going to be a difficult conversation. We're going to call you out on some behaviors that need to change because we care about your success at this organization." And so, whatever the setting is, if I'm doing this with my children I say, "Listen, I'm your mom and I care about you and part of my job as your mom is to help guide you as you grow up and make decisions. And so, we need to talk about this."

If you preface it with coming from a place of caring and trying to support their growth, or development, or what have you, it really changes everything. Let me give one other examples because sometimes it's not a peer subordinate authority kind of conversation, it might be with your sister,

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or your best friend or something. Still, you can cushion it with, “Listen, I really care about you, and I care about our relationship and so I want to be honest with you because of how much I care.”

Dara: Yeah. So, I just had a client share, 40 years ago her sister came to visit her at the hospital after she had a surgery. And her sister said, “I was going to bring you ice-cream, but I realized you probably want to lose some weight. So, I brought you this instead.” And so, she has been carrying that around with her. And so, when she put three pounds on after the hospital she said, “I guess my sister’s right. I guess I am just going to be overweight always.”

And so, this is another reason why I wanted to bring this, to have you help my listeners is because there’s a lot of these kinds of conversations that we carry around. So, I wonder if you could just talk to, how do you resolve that? And then the other thing that happens too is sometimes, the sister has now passed on. Sometimes the parent, the mom, the dad has passed on and they feel like, oh my goodness, now what do I do?

Jody: Right. Well, and do you do have to take on, in specific scenarios, that’s why I love you having a coach to work through it with. So, I would ask this woman, “Okay, so if you were to sit down with your sister and you’ve been carrying this for 40 years, what do you feel like saying to her? Let’s just get it out, let’s just say it.” And if you don’t have a coach you can even just do it in writing, write a letter to the person. And then we stop and take a look at, okay, what is my hope if I share this with her?

Am I hoping that she’s going to feel really bad and then I think I’m going to feel better and let it go? Am I simply trying to do my part in the overall movement of healthier body image, informing someone? Heads up, that’s not useful to someone. Or am I hanging my emotion and my healing in this closure that I’m sort of seeking on whether or not she responds in a certain way? And so, if we can sort through that and if it is the latter, if this woman is holding onto this and punishing herself and not healing or forgiving etc., then I would say, let’s do that work first. Let’s heal and have closure.

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And just decide that your sister probably meant well and yet that was misguided and inappropriate. And yet she didn't know any better at the time. And you're allowed to feel any way you want to about yourself, and your body, and your weight, etc., and that's personal work. Let's do that work first. So that then we can go into a conversation if we decide and say, "Hey, sister, listen, I love you so much and I love how much you care about me, and I just want to share with you some things I've learned about how we talk about bodies and how toxic that is." Do you see what I mean?

So, it's a different conversation than hanging, again, we don't ever want to delegate our emotions to another person even in a difficult conversation. If I am waiting for them to respond a certain way so that I can feel better, I'm possibly setting myself up to make it even worse. And I'm going into that conversation somewhat manipulative.

Dara: So, the other part of that too is that, so because we carry these around and this happens a lot within my program, these women bring up these past issues. They don't have a lot of confidence because they want to. They want to so badly say, "Hey, when you said that thing or when you did that thing." A lot of women when they were young they were sent to the doctor and the mom took them to the doctor and said, "My daughter's overweight." So, there's a lot of those kinds of things.

And they feel really, there's a lot of bitterness. So how would you, even starting out of building confidence to even approach the idea of, hey, I can think about this in a different way. I don't have to feel this way, even about yourself?

Jody: That's right. I like to do it in writing personally. So again, like I said, sometimes I will write a letter that I never even send because it's not really what I want to say, if it was my mom who took me to a doctor about my weight problem when I was seven if I decide I don't really want to say that to my mom. But I have this within me that I need to give a voice to. I like to write a letter that I never send. Maybe I share it with, again, a coach, or a good friend or something. But let yourself experience the emotions that you

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maybe haven't allowed if you haven't done that, the anger, whatever, frustration.

But then I like to also write a letter to myself from the ideal scenario. So, in this situation I would say, "Okay, so if we could control your mother, and she understood that that was wrong and how that impacted you, what would she say to you? Let's write yourself a letter, Dear Jody." And write it down, even though your brain's going to go, she would never say that. She doesn't think she did anything wrong. It's okay. This is like a magic wand scenario. We wave our wand. She says all the right things.

What does she say? "I'm so sorry, that was so wrong. Your body is perfect. I love you just as you are. It's always been perfect. I never should have done that. I never should have said that," whatever. All the things you want her to say and how much she loves you and how beautiful, and amazing, and strong you are. And all the things, write it all down. And then that's your job is to know that that's all true. Whether your mother or whoever it is in your life is ever able to see that or acknowledge that, doesn't matter. What we're seeking is permission to believe that ourselves.

And we ultimately are allowed to believe anything we want to about ourselves. And when we delegate that power to another human who is also flawed and operating sometimes in fear, and misunderstanding, and all other kinds of nonsense as we all are, then that's when we become powerless. But we do it for ourselves first and then we are not reliant upon someone else to do it. If someone comes along and has some encouraging words, great, we take it. But that's just like the cherry on top. We're not counting on that to fill ourselves up.

Dara: Yeah. One of the things that we've been doing a lot of work lately in our program is you can't be judged if you're not judging yourself. So, I took my 10 year old to get his five year old shots at the doctor's. I was like, [crosstalk].

Jody: You're like, oops, we missed that child. I love it so much.

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Dara: And I'm sitting there and actually one of the nurses was a coworker's wife. And so, I kind of knew her and I thought, she could be judging me right now. And then I realized, yeah, I'm not judged. I can't feel judged because I'm not judging myself. I did the best I could.

Jody: That's right.

Dara: That is such a strong message and I feel like what you're saying is just bringing that together.

Jody: Yeah. It's such a good point, Dara, and none of us are bulletproof. It's natural for us to go to the doctor and wonder, is she judging me. And maybe even sometimes feel bad about it. But knowing what you know, that it is optional, and you can experiment at times. I love that little experiment you did there in the doctor's office. I like to experiment with my brain. Am I capable of not feeling insecure about this even if maybe she is judging me in her head? Can I not judge me? Yes, I can, at least in moments, we're all capable of it.

And so, to just try it out, that's when you become so empowered, and you realize how powerful you are in your own experience in the end which we all are.

Dara: Yeah. So, let's say one of the situations that I find my ladies in is that obviously them judging themselves on weight loss and there's these preconceived notions of you must be lazy, you're such a failure, all of that. So those are difficult conversations that the women are having with themselves. And so of course it doesn't feel safe to be in your own brain because you're being such a jerk to yourself.

So, if you maybe speak a little bit about how do you have difficult conversations with yourself especially when it's just like, you're such a failure, what's the point, you've tried so many times, weight loss is just such a waste of time anyway? These are the common things that are happening in their own brains.

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Jody: Yes. So, when it comes to – and this'll be applicable whether it's the conversation with yourself like you said or another person. It's the same things that apply. When we're trying to achieve something, when we're trying to get healthier, lose some weight, or again, raise children. Or try to create healthy humans in the world. There does need to be accountability. As human beings we need accountability. If there's no accountability we tend to just let the primitive brain that just wants to do what's easy, fun, and repeat the same old thing.

And that doesn't tend to serve us well in the long run. So, accountability is useful but there's a difference between a useful form of accountability and toxic accountability I'm just going to call it. So toxic accountability is that voice that is overly critical and judgmental, and tends to be very all or nothing, and says all the mean things that you just described. You're never going to get there and some of the excuses that our brains bring in, like this is too hard and nobody really does this, let's be honest.

But that toxic accountability will sometimes, and this is true whether again, you're doing it internally, or you're threatening your children, or your employees, it'll sometimes get you a little burst of movement. We do sometimes respond to it. We sort of scare ourselves or scare our children into suddenly behaving. And so, it sends this message to the brain that that worked. The problem is, that doesn't work long term. Nobody can operate in a healthy sustained way and achieve what we're really trying to achieve which is wellness from those bursts of toxic accountability.

What does work though is a very useful, kind compassionate accountability which sounds more like, hey, I know today you said you were going to go for a walk and then we didn't. What's going on? Is everything okay? Do you need something? Let's try. Alright, let's make tomorrow a better day. It's not that we shouldn't acknowledge and be aware of where we're falling short. We have to be aware of it to a certain extent. But with compassion.

Here's the thing. We always have a good reason, a valid reason, even if we think we don't, even the reason is, I just couldn't get myself moving, I just was sort of depressed today, I was sort of overwhelmed, I was sort of

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discouraged. I didn't feel like it. That food tasted so good. Whatever the reason, it's always a valid reason. And from that curious compassionate space we learn a lot about ourselves.

We learn things like, finally, I'm almost 48 years old and I've finally embraced, I am not a morning exerciser. I've tried for so many years and I just, I exercise right before dinner, that's when I either go for a walk or put on a video. I always have full make-up and hair and everything from working all day. It's just easier for me to do it then than to get up first thing in the morning and exercise. So being compassionate with myself, hey, we said we were going to get up and exercise again and we didn't.

Over time I've learned that and just embraced that, what works for me rather than try to follow what everybody says which is if you don't do it first thing in the morning, you're never going to do it. I just decided it's like, maybe not.

Dara: So, this is that part where with confidence and confidence is really learning how to start to trust yourself. You exercise with make-up on at four and so no big deal.

Jody: That's right. And here's the other thing I want to add too, Dara, about this positive compassionate accountability is that it doesn't just acknowledge when we fall short. Accountability is also acknowledging when we've done a great job.

Dara: Yes. And I think myself, my members, my listeners, we have a really hard time giving ourselves credit because we have been waiting so much for other people's validation. But then again, even when you've been validated by other people, if you don't believe it yourself then it doesn't even matter.

Jody: That's so true. And I'll tell you, for everybody listening, I promise, you're doing so many things well in any given area of your life that you just take for granted, that you don't think are worth acknowledging. So, I don't care if you have to start out getting really creative if it's around your health

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and your food, for example. Find something, you did drink some water today, or whatever it is. I promise that there's more minutes of the day when you're not eating than when you're eating. Even if you feel like you ate all day.

Find the littlest thing. This is again, the same thing if I'm trying to hold someone else accountable. If I am constantly just telling my kid where they're falling short, we all know what that does over time. I have to balance it with what they're doing well. And the psychology says, I mean depending on what source you go to, but typically it's a five to one ratio. For every one negative critical thing we're going to notice about ourselves or someone else, they need five positive things to balance it out, to have a healthy relationship.

This is what the Gottman's say in a marriage, for every one critical thing you need five compliments, genuine. So that is a really important part of accountability too. And accountability can be a reward system or something like that, or somebody that you talk with like a coach. But it can also just be acknowledgement.

Accountability is just, I have this habit every night when I brush my teeth. I look at myself in the mirror. I make eye contact with myself for that two minutes and I just say, sometimes it sounds like, "That was a good job today. You did a pretty good job. You did most of the things you said you were going to do." Other days it's, "The wheels totally fell off the wagon today. What's going on hun? Are you doing alright? Do you need something? You know what? I love you anyway and tomorrow's a new day."

So, it's just a moment of your own acknowledgement is so powerful when you do it consistently.

Dara: Yeah. So, what are some of the maybe tips about being consistent? Because I know this is – I mean just like when I say we start knitting, or crocheting, your hands feel really awkward, even free motion quilting my

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ladies are just like, “This is so hard.” What are some of your tips on being consistent?

Jody: Well, I’ll tell you, there’s lots of schools of thought on this even in the world of life coaches. I’m of the camp only for myself because this is what works for me. I love how Gretchen Rubin teaches that there are abstainers and there are moderators. So, an abstainer is that person that’s like, “Listen, if you want to learn to knit, you need to knit every day for 30 minutes”, or whatever it is. It’s sort of that all or nothing mentality.

And for an abstainer, she uses the term, abstaining because let’s say you’re trying to quit eating so much sugar, it would be I’m not eating sugar, period, I don’t eat sugar would be the abstainer. And the abstainer will argue that it’s much easier to just say, “I’m never going to eat it,” and then you never have to argue, or rationalize, or figure it out. A moderator would say, “No, that’s way harder, just let yourself have just a little bit, just have it in moderation and that’s much easier because then you quiet the craving or the urge, or what have you.”

So, I’m a fan of people choosing what is easiest for them, abstainer, or moderator, that’s the way Gretchen Rubin teaches it. But I myself fall definitely on the moderation side. And when it comes to like you said, implementing or learning a new skill, or routine, or habit, I call it the minimum baseline. I like to just have an action I’m going to take that’s so simple and easy that it feels like it won’t even make a difference, but it does. Just getting started actually builds momentum and eventually you probably, that minimum baseline probably grows.

But I have a lot of minimum baselines that serve me really well. They go up and down. There’s times in my life when I’m exercising a lot more and other times when I’m like, “Listen, the only thing we need to do is get at least 7,000 steps in.” And I can pretty much do that if I just walk around my house a little bit in between work calls. And that’s a minimum baseline. And from there I build momentum. So that’s my favorite strategy.

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Dara: But I remember you on a podcast, you talked about your eyelashes, that serum. Because I use that example sometimes where you put it on for even three days and you're like, "Okay, where's my eyelashes. Aren't they long enough yet?" The consistency.

Jody: Right. That was so mind blowing for me. During the pandemic when everything shut down and my false lashes were going to fall out and I wasn't going to be able to get them filled. I started using that serum. And I realized, I put this serum on every day even though I can't tell the difference. But I just trust. It's so easy to do, just swipe it on each eyelid after you wash your face. But I trust that in six weeks or so it's going to help my natural lashes grow back in more fully. And I realized that is how I have to think about everything in my life.

It's so easy, the brain wants to be like, what, just drinking more water, that's not going to make a difference. Because that alone isn't going to matter. But you know what? It does, it builds momentum. And all of these little things compounded are what create overall results in the end. It's not big things. It's little, little again, what's the minimum baseline that's so easy for me to do that my brain's going to try to tell me it's not worth it, we're just going to do that.

Dara: Yeah, totally. And I think that just in this interview alone, there's so many different ways that Jody has shown us how to think differently. And I love that you even brought it back to take the situation that you're in and then give yourself a minute to think about it and to relate to those tools. So, there will be a handout, I will, don't you worry, every podcast I always have a handout just to help my listeners. But just the idea of it's okay. And I think one of the biggest things that I got from listening to your podcast so many – well, not that many years ago, but 2018. It feels like a long time ago.

Jody: Yeah, that was, pre pandemic is a whole another lifetime.

Dara: I know, it's a whole other world. But just knowing that I can approach my mother-in-law. I can approach my husband. I can find my voice. And one of the things, Jody, that I was so surprised about was a lot of my

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clients had thyroid issues when they started working with me. And as they learned to have this trust and confidence that their voice matters, that they can say these things, they don't have to take them personally, all the tools that you shared.

They no longer require the same amount of thyroid medication and some of them are even off of it. And there is this piece about us speaking our truth and being able to say what we really want to say. And we don't have to shove it down with food. We don't have to shove it down with all these negative ways of talking to ourself, punishing ourself, willpower, all of that. And it really does emphasize what you were saying about this kind accountability, useful accountability.

Jody: And yeah, I know, we sort of got off topic from difficult conversations there. But it is the same work internally and externally. And I just want to emphasize that coming from a place of compassion is going to feel better too. If I'm really nervous about having a difficult conversation, it's often because I think that I have to become this angry, or defensive, or something version of me that I don't really want to be, and you don't have to. You can stay in compassion and curiosity.

And just one other practical takeaway and we sort of talked about it, but I want to just put a name to it, I think it will be helpful for your listeners is I always, if I have to have a difficult conversation, start it with a cushion. A cushion is just, hey, I've got to tell you something and it might be kind of hard for you to hear. And it's hard for me to say. And then if you're nervous, I'll say that too, I'll say, "I'm actually really nervous to tell you this."

Dara: Yeah, I loved when you gave me permission. I remember you saying those words back then and that's been so, so helpful.

Jody: Well because what it does is it makes it all so real. Now we don't feel like I have to pretend to be strong, I have to pretend to be confident, or whatever. No, just lay out it out on the table. I'm nervous to tell you this, I'm afraid you're not going to like hearing it but I'm telling you because I care about our relationship or because it's important to me. I hope you'll hear me

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out. That kind of authenticity and vulnerability is pretty lovable, not all the time. Some people are going to be defensive. But to most people that's a pretty safe space to have then a real conversation, so give it a try.

Dara: Yeah, so good. Well, this has been so amazing. I have loved this. I know my listeners, they're definitely not going to be chain piecing right now or quilting on their longarm because they're going to be taking all the notes.

Jody: Sorry if we interrupted your quilt.

Dara: No, I tell them that all the time. I'm like, "You know what, you can totally listen." And actually, what happens is most listeners listen to my podcast at least two times. They listen to it while they're quilting or walking, and then they listen to it again to really get the meat from the episodes.

Jody: Yeah, I love it. Well, thank you for having me on. It was so fun to talk with you.

Dara: Alright, thanks so much.

So, wasn't that an incredible podcast interview? I am so grateful to Jody for everything that she has shared with me, everything that she has done to help me. My life truly has changed so much. So, if you want to have support in this way I invite you to get on a 20 minute call; with me. And we can talk about your specific issues. And if you are totally just ready to start transforming your life you can go ahead and click on buy now and join my lifetime membership, weight loss, Love Yourself Thin. Alright, until next week. Bye bye.

Thanks for listening to *Weight Loss for Quilters*. If you want more info, please visit daratomasson.com. See you next week.