

66: How to Handle Emotional Discomfort



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Bonnie Koo, MD

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Welcome to *The Wealthy Mom MD Podcast*, a podcast for women physicians who want to learn how to live a wealthy life. In this podcast you will learn how to make money work for you, how you can have more of it and learn the tools to empower you to live a life on purpose. Get ready to up-level your money and your life. I'm your host, Dr. Bonnie Koo.

Hey everyone, welcome to Episode 66. So today I want to talk about discomfort. Yep, you heard me, discomfort. So some of you may have heard this quote from Brooke Castillo, "Discomfort is the currency of your dreams." And so what I wanted to do today was to take a deep dive into this quote and dissect it. And tell you how you can apply this to you so that you can have more money, or really anything you really want in life. You ready?

So we actually just covered this topic in depth inside of my program, *Money For Women Physicians*. We just had a lesson on feelings. And in case you're wondering what do feelings have in common with money? What do feelings have anything to do with money? Actually, quite a lot, which is what you're going to learn today.

And so first let me tell you what the dictionary definition of discomfort is. It said pain. Actually, it said slight pain. Now in this quote, "Discomfort is the currency of your dreams" we're talking about emotional discomfort. Not physical discomfort, like being sore from a workout. But it is a great analogy.

Now, some of you may have heard me talk about the motivational triad, which is the three things that motivate our primitive brain. So let me just do a quick summary in case it's been a while.

Our primitive brains are motivated by three things. It wants things to be easy, it seeks pleasure, and it wants to avoid emotional pain. Put that emotional pain on pause for a second while I explain the other two.

So our brains are basically lazy assholes, meaning that its primary purpose is to survive. And so in order to do that it wants to conserve as much

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energy as possible. Which means it wants to be efficient, or lazy, depending on how you look at it, right? And so if anything seems complicated, it's going to be like, "Ooh, this sounds like or this looks like it's going to take up a lot of energy. That is not a good idea. We need to conserve energy, let's do something else."

It's seeking pleasure, meaning it wants to feel good, of course. Now, it wants to avoid emotional pain or emotional discomfort, kind of the same thing. Anything that feels like it might be a negative emotion or make us feel bad, well basically it ignores it or wants to do something else.

And so many of us are simply unwilling to experience emotional discomfort. Let me give you some examples. Feeling awkward, feeling embarrassed or even mortified, ashamed, the discomfort of failing. Which, if you really think about it all failing means is that you got a result that you didn't want. Meaning you wanted something and you didn't get it. That's what failure means. That's all it means; it doesn't mean anything about you.

The funny thing is, we aren't just unwilling to experience these negative emotions, we take it even further in that we're even unwilling to entertain the possibility of experiencing it by not even trying.

We call this failing ahead of time where you don't even try, because why bother? You might fail, you might make a fool of yourself. It's going to be awkward; it's going to be uncomfortable. You're going to be embarrassed. Why bother

But remember, you miss 100% of the shots you don't take, 100%. Think about it, guaranteed to fail if you don't try versus trying, taking action, maybe feeling some negative emotions because you didn't get the result you wanted, figuring it out, learning from that. You can only do that if you're willing to experience discomfort.

Now, when I say experience discomfort I don't mean, for example, let's say you give a talk and you make a few mistakes and you feel really

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embarrassed and so you run off stage. That's not experiencing negative emotion, that's running away from the negative emotions, right?

And so the reason we went over this inside my program in that what is the big deal about feeling a negative emotion? Like I really had everyone pause and as I explained, listen, emotional discomfort, basically a negative feeling, are simply you feeling sensations in your body. Sensations that are temporary. Sensations that dissipate, that go away. Yeah, they don't feel good, but they're temporary. And they're just sensations, they are physically harmless in the moment.

Now, there's a brain based reason why we are so terrified of experiencing certain negative emotions. Think about it, back in the caveman days if you made a fool out of yourself and created social separation between you and the tribe, that could impact your survival, right? Not being accepted.

It creates this weird, fear based response. It almost feels like we're actually physically in danger, except we're actually not. For the most part, if you listen to this podcast you probably live in a very safe part of the world, you have all the modern comforts of society. And so some of these really negative emotions, fear, et cetera, it's not the same as fearing for your life, but it can often feel that way.

What would you be capable of if you were willing to experience all the negative emotions? What conversations would you be having? Would you be asking your boss for a raise? Would you be taking some bold moves at work? Would you decide to start your own business? Would you be willing to have that hard conversation with that person that you know you need to have that conversation with?

What's the worst that can happen? If you really think about it, the worst that can happen is always a negative emotion. Now, you may think, "No, that's not the worst that can happen. The worst that can happen is I'm going to make a fool out of myself." But why is that a problem? It's because of the shame that you expect to feel when that happens, right?

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It really boils down to a negative feeling that you're trying to avoid. But remember, feelings are temporary. They are simply sensations in your body. Now, when I say sensations in your body, I literally mean you can feel them like you would feel your stomach growling when you're hungry.

Now all of us feel feelings differently in the body so I can't tell you exactly how or what you would feel sensation wise when you're feeling anxious or embarrassed. But I can tell you that when I get embarrassed, bordering on shame, like my face gets really hot, right? Like a wave of hotness, just I feel. And then maybe it like tingles and buzzes a bit. It's definitely one of the worst feelings I've experienced. But I've experienced it and I didn't die.

Your ability to experience negative emotions, and I know I'm speaking mainly about negative emotions but if you're someone that has trouble experiencing negative emotions, you also have trouble experiencing positive emotions.

And so here's a quick and easy exercise that I have my clients do when I teach them this concept of feeling negative emotions. I tell them, there's two things you can do, you can set a timer for five minutes, and I want you to do nothing.

I want you to notice what you feel. You're probably going to feel bored or restless or a little bit of both. Maybe you'll vacillate between the two. And you're probably going to want to do something about it. But you're not allowed to, you're just going to feel for five minutes.

Now when I say you're just going to feel, you're just going to notice all the thoughts that your brain offers. I want you to notice all the sensations in your body for five minutes. You can do that.

Another quick exercise is when, let's say you're sitting on the couch, whatever you're doing, and you hear your phone beep like the text message, or let's say a text message alert. I want you to not answer it for five minutes and see how you feel.

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You're probably going to feel a little uncomfortable because we all know that phones, these devices, they're designed to get our attention, right? And so if it beeps your brains like, "Oh, got to check that. What if it's important? What if it's something cool? What if it's good news? Or what if it's bad news?"

And you're going to have to just deal with not answering it for five minutes and just notice what you feel in your body. I would say for me it's an awkward sensation because you want to answer that desire to check your phone, but you can't just for five minutes. Notice what comes up for you. You're going to learn a lot about yourself by doing these five minute exercises. I'll talk to you guys next week.

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