

## 105: Your Past, Present, and Future Self



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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## 105: Your Past, Present, and Future Self

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 105. So, I didn't really create an outline for today's topic so it might be a little disorganized. It might even end up being a bit of a rant, so just go with it. Okay, so I want to talk about a concept that I realized that I actually haven't talked about on the podcast. I was coaching women in my program, Money For Women Physicians, yesterday and so much rich stuff, topics came up. And then I realized I need to teach you guys this as well.

So it is the concept of three versions of you. And I like to refer to them as past self, current self, and future self. And I usually insert my name, so past Bonnie, sometimes I'll even give her a label like 2021 Bonnie. I don't really think so much about my current self, but my current self was once my future self, right? And then my future self, sometimes I'll just say future Bonnie, but sometimes I'll give her a label like \$10 million CEO Bonnie.

So basically, what I'm saying is I really want you guys to consider this because I think it's so helpful. It's helpful to help you relate and think about your past and your future. So let me talk about that a bit. So when you're thinking about your past self, your 2021 version of you, so let's start with that but it could apply to any year or any version.

So you could think about using yourself as a kid, a teenager, that sort of thing. The way you were in college. If you are divorced, you could even think about that version of you when you're married, et cetera. So I find this really helpful for a few reasons.

And many of you are familiar with the phrase, you made past decisions based on the information that you have. And I've heard this a lot in terms of basically its advice given to people when they "regret" their past decisions.

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They're making themselves wrong for past decisions, which basically means beating yourself up.

And so that's actually why I want to speak about this concept when it relates to the past version of you. Meaning, whatever decisions, whatever you did in the past makes sense based on what you were thinking and what you believed at the time. Now, I'm actually talking about this concept to set you guys up for a future episode I'm going to do to discuss decisions that I made in 2021 that for a long time I had so much shame around.

It's one of the reasons why I recorded that episode on shame and money, I just wasn't quite ready to talk about it. But I am ready and I'm just crafting sort of how I'm going to talk about it and why I'm going to talk about it on the podcast. But until then, understanding this concept will set you up, not just for that podcast, but it's going to help you so much because here is what I see so many of you doing, I just see so much regret, beating yourself up because of past decisions that you made.

So actually, here's a common thing I see with my clients, a lot of them beat themselves up for being in so much debt or actually not really doing anything about their money. And here's what I want to say about that, so if the problem or what you think is a problem is let's say not doing something about money, not looking at your balances, whatever that might look like. I want you to consider that doing that, meaning not doing or not looking into your money makes sense based on what you were thinking and believing at that time.

So think about it, if you were thinking some version of, "Wow, money seems really complicated. I'm worried about what I'm going to find." So I want you to think about what that might be for you for whatever decision or thing you did that you currently regret. And so it makes sense, right? If you are someone who thinks money is hard, if the thought of looking at your money makes you really anxious, it totally makes sense that you wouldn't do anything about it, that you wouldn't even look at your numbers.

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So it makes sense that you've made those decisions at that time. And now that you have, right, because we can't undo the past, this is something I talk about so much with my clients because we argue with our past selves. We argue against the current reality because our prior decisions and behaviors then create what we currently have.

So in the example I just gave, if you didn't invest your money, if you didn't look at your money and do anything about it, then your current money situation is probably the same, depending on what it was back then. So if you just had a bunch of money in savings and didn't invest it, that's what is currently going on.

And it's just not useful to argue with what is currently happening and what decisions you made beforehand. Because here's the thing, and I like to joke with my clients, when you argue with reality you lose 100% of the time. Okay? So I think that concept is pretty easy to understand.

Now, the second part I want to get to is when you are feeling so bad about yourself because of what you did or didn't do in the past. And here's what I want to say about that, this really comes down to your relationship with yourself. Meaning, could you show compassion? Could you understand why you did what you did?

And I think the best way to think about this is thinking about your past self as a child, and maybe your current self as a parent. Meaning in the past, let's think about it as your child, the child asks for permission to do something. The child asked for permission to not do anything about the money, to leave the money in savings. And then the parent is granting that permission, which is you.

But then when the child comes back to you and says, "Okay, I did it." Then the parent is like grounding that child for doing what he or she got permission for. Does that make sense? I know, it might be a little abstract. But basically it's like you did what you did, and then your current self is like

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yelling at that version of you that did those things. That is literally what's going on.

And what happens when you're getting yelled at? People also call this your inner critic, you hide in shame, you're so upset with yourself. And we all do this, including me. And what I have found is it seems weirdly useful to be mad at yourself, to beat yourself up. But when you really think about it, and I really want you to listen closely here, it actually does not help you in any way. It is 100% not useful.

This actually would be a good time after the podcast today for you to go back and listen to my episode on money and shame because I talk about this concept there as well. But it's not useful at all. And when I say useful, I mean it doesn't help you create an outcome that you want, versus not useful.

So when you're shaming yourself, it doesn't create any positive changes. Brené Brown actually talks about this a lot because many of you know she is the expert, the researcher on shame. So she has talked so much about it, I love her. And I remember reading, shame does not create any positive behavior.

And you know this is true because when someone has yelled or berated you, I think most of us have had that experience, unfortunately. Did you suddenly turn around to that person and say, "Oh my God, you're so right. Thank you. Thank you so much." I mean, maybe some of you have, but most of us definitely do not react to that sort of behavior. So why would it work on yourself? Why would shaming your past self be useful? It's totally not.

And so the other thing I want to say about your past self is whatever you are beating yourself up for, and usually it's some version of I shouldn't have done that, I should have known better, one of my favorite, favorite questions, not just for myself, but for my clients is, what if I'm wrong about this? What if that's not actually true? Because all of us know when we look

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backwards at our lives, we usually understand why things happened. We usually understand the lessons. It creates who we are, right?

And maybe right now you can't see that, because that happens to me a lot too. Like something happens where I just feel terrible. And I'm like, no, I can't see the lesson in this and I'm just spinning in negativity. And it might take some time for me to understand why that happened. But I almost always get to a point where I do understand it.

And so I just really want you to consider that maybe you're wrong about why things happened, about thinking this shouldn't have happened, I shouldn't have done this, I should have known better. Why am I so stupid? Things like that. So what if you're wrong about that? What if you're not stupid? What if you were actually supposed to have those decisions?

I think the best way to think about this, actually, I actually have a real life example. I don't want to give too many details, not that you would know who I'm talking about. But I have a friend who got married to somebody and had to actually move a long ways away from home. She got a new job there and that marriage fell apart. Her husband was not very nice to her basically, that's what I want to say about that.

And I'm sure at the time she was, I don't know for sure, but let's just say that she was really upset with herself. Like, how could I not know? Why am I so stupid? I can't believe I married him. I made such a mistake. And that makes sense that she would think that, right? But a few years later, I don't know exactly how much time, she ended up marrying someone she worked with.

And so it wasn't until that happened, and they have a beautiful marriage, she's since had more kids. Now she can see, oh, that had to happen because otherwise I would have never moved, I would have never met the man I was supposed to meet.

So I really want you to think about whatever in the past, you're beating yourself up for, as it was necessary for that to happen for me to step into

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my future amazing self. And here's the thing, because I know some of you are like, well, that's just delusional, and that's not true. And that's just being made up. But news flash, the inner critic that's yelling at yourself, that's all made up too. We're just making up stories about everything that's happening in our life. You may as well tell the version of the story that's useful for you.

And what I'm not saying is I don't mean that everything needs to be positive and rainbows and daisies, that's not what I'm saying. But we always have the ability, the power, to tell the story that's going to empower us, that's going to move you forward. Because otherwise, we're always dragging the past with us. We're always looking backwards to go forward, which does not make sense at all.

And the reason why we do that is because we're carrying all that baggage with us like, oh, I can't do this because look, look what I did in the past. But it's like, what does that past decision have to do with what you're capable of going forward?

So now I want to transition into the future self. So we talked about the past self and how I want you to think about it and how I think about it. Now, I want you to think about you in the future. Now, this is why I think it's useful to have a label, like I think about \$10 million Bonnie, although I don't really know if I have that goal of \$10 million dollars. But I picked that number, because that's just in the future somewhere, maybe.

And that version of me thinks and behaves very differently than who I am today. So that's the main distinction I want you to walk away with, is that future self thinks and behaves differently. And she has figured out the things that you might be struggling now. And I just really want you to consider that she, or he if you're a he, that person exists. Because who you are today was your future self in the past, right? It's kind of like weird to think that way. But like, think about it, right?

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So when I think about that for myself, there was a point in my life, a painful point, where I was single for such a long time. I'll tell you guys, I may have talked about this before, I don't remember. But I was single for a very long time. I mean, of course I dated, I had boyfriends over the years. But I just had so much shame about being single in my late 30s.

And I remember when I finished residency, I was 38 by the way when I finished residency, so not a young chicken by any means in terms of wanting to have a family, I don't mean that 38 is old, per se. And I just remember really feeling almost a little hopeless that that wasn't going to happen. That what I really wanted, a partner, a family wasn't going to happen.

And so I just remember feeling so sad about that, so devastated about that for such a long time. And now I have those things. So I hope that just makes sense in terms of thinking about your current self was once the future self that you wanted so badly in the past, okay?

And so when I think about my \$10 million version of me, and I don't just think about her in terms of how much money she has. I also think about just other things about her. Like when I think about her, I see her as just being so calm and so relaxed. And the reason why she's so calm and so relaxed is because she knows things will work out. She trusts herself and she has her own back.

I think that's really what all of us want. We want to love ourselves. We want to trust that we know what's best for us. And we want to have our own backs. Because we're the only people that can do that for ourselves. Sure, you might have friends, maybe you have a partner that does that for you. But ultimately our work is to do that for ourselves, okay?

And so it's really not until you are complete with your past self, in order to really step forward into the future. Remember, I talked about otherwise, we're just dragging the past with us? And here's how I want you to think about it, and here's actually an exercise that I encourage you all to do.

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I really encourage you to write a letter to your past self, the one that's hurting, the one that's so upset with whatever she did. Or it's not even like things she did, but maybe things that are going on at the time, like being in debt for example. Obviously, I'm a money coach so I'm going to give you money examples. What would you tell her?

Think of her as your child. Even if you don't have children I think you can relate that you would never talk to a child the way you talk to yourself. If this was your child, what would you say to them? I really want you to write your past self a letter from your current self. Or even I think what's more fun is from your future self. And usually when I write this letter, and I've done this a few times, I'm so loving to that version of her.

Like I literally say, "I love you so much. I'm so proud of you. I got you. Everything's okay. I'm here, we're fine, I am stronger because of you. I'm here for you. I'm here for you whenever you need me." When I write this letter, when I think about my past self, I just have so much compassion for her. And think about it, when you're like this, like if you're a parent and you talk to your child or even talking to a friend when they're having such a hard time, just think of how comforting that is.

That's actually what I wanted to say, you're comforting that past version of yourself that's just beating herself up. And when that past version of yourself is comforted, that baggage disappears, right? Then you have the space to look forward.

And here are the questions I want you to ask yourself once you're in that clear space, what is in my power and how do I want to use it? Did you know the future is wide open? You can do anything you want. Your past has literally nothing to do with what you can accomplish going forward.

I say this to my clients all the time because so many of my clients feel behind. I've talked about this before, this concept. They feel so behind, they're so upset with themselves for not starting sooner, whatever version

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of that you may have. And seriously, I'm like what does that have to do with your future ability to have and make money?

And part of it's because so many of us have been indoctrinated in that it takes time to make money. So if you didn't do it for the last 10 years, like compound interest, then you're behind and there's no way you can catch up. That is simply garbage. Total garbage, okay?

So anyway, I hope this episode was useful. I really want you to think of yourself as different versions of you, the past version of you, the future version of you. The future version of you that is like rooting for you. That has accomplished everything that you could imagine and things you can't even imagine right now. She has your back. She can't wait to meet you. She's dying to meet you. She has so much love and compassion for you. So I just want you to soak that in.

All right, that's all I have for you guys. Talk to you guys next week.

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