

## TRANSCRIPT – EPISODE 22 of THE 100% AWESOME PODCAST “WHEN OTHER PEOPLE SUFFER”

Hello, podcast universe. Welcome to Episode 22 of the 100% Awesome Podcast. I'm April Price and I'm so happy to be at my mic today and imagining all of you out there listening and applying this work in your lives. Thank you to all of you who have left reviews on the podcast. I have to tell you every time I get a new review, my husband sends me a text and he reads it out loud at dinner and it is so fun for him. And it's very fun for me. So thank you for all the love and support and for making dinnertime super exciting around our place.

So today on the podcast I want to talk about other people's models. So if you've been listening and following along, you know that as we live our lives there are circumstances that happen and then we have thoughts about these circumstances. These thoughts create our feelings which fuels our action and gives us results in our lives. So for simplicity and ease we call this "the model" and the model is always working in our lives.

And this might be obvious but I think it needs to be said anyway, the model is always working in other people's lives as well, right? They are seeing the circumstances around them and they are having their own thoughts and their own feelings and then taking action and getting their own results.

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All of us have our own models but as humans we like to have control over our lives in order to stay safe and not die, right? Our brains think it's really important that we exercise some control and one of the ways we like to control things is by thinking that we should control other people's models. In other words we would like very much to be able to control the thoughts and feelings and actions and results of other people. And we think that we know best and we think that we should be in charge of everyone else's models. Now in reality we cannot even control our own models. But there you go, we are an incorrigible bunch!

So I'm going to kind of break this podcast actually up into two parts. And this week I want to talk about other people's models in terms of suffering. So what do we do when others are suffering and how do we have compassion and peace and love for others without wanting to get in and change other people's models and change their experiences, even when those models include pain and suffering.

And I want to give a little caveat before I start as well, because I'm going to be talking about suffering I am going to include a few spiritual references to things that I believe about Christ and our Heavenly Father, because I don't think that you can talk about suffering without also talking about their care and their love and their plan for us.

And honestly you don't have to believe these things or these thoughts to get something meaningful and useful out of this podcast. But I just want you to know right up front that if this is not your cup of tea then you might want to skip this one and you can join me again on the next podcast.

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So let's get started. So to introduce the idea about other people's models, other people's suffering I want to tell you about an experience that our family had this last week. So on Saturday morning my daughter called us from China and she told us that she had spent the day being interrogated by the Chinese police and they were asking her why she was in China and what the arrangements were for her school. And they

checked her visa and passport and asked her all these questions. And they questioned her alone even for a few hours which was for her very disconcerting and a little bit scary.

And so then she called me again on Sunday morning and said that the following day they had taken her back to the police station and this time she had been there for 19 hours and she was crying and she was upset and she was scared and I talked to her about how she was just scared because her brain thought she was going to die. And she was like, "Yeah I know. I know I thought I was going to die because I thought I was going to die. See?" (I am a brilliant life coach!)

Anyway the long and short of it was that even though the organization that she went to China with has been going there with student teachers since about 2004, this year in 2019, for some reason someone in charge no longer wanted them there. And they told her that it was illegal for her to be there teaching and that she would no longer be allowed to teach.

And my daughter was heartbroken. She has loved being there and she loves the children that she teaches and gets to work with. And she said "I have all these things I still want to do. I don't know what I'm going to do now." She gave up per semester at school and now her experience was being cut in half and they were going to send her home. And after I hung up the phone with her I was out walking my dog and Sunday morning and as I walked I just felt terrible. I just felt so terrible inside about what was happening. I felt heartbroken for her and I felt all of the feelings that we feel for our kids And as I walked in I noticed how terrible I felt and then I just couldn't shake this feeling.

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I asked myself, "What's the thought that feels so bad?" What am I thinking that's creating this emotion? And I realized that the thought was: "This isn't the experience she's supposed to be having. She's disappointed and she shouldn't be. This isn't the experience that she's supposed to be having."

And that thought made me feel terrible because she IS having that experience. It's when I think that this isn't the experience she's supposed to have and she is, that's going to cause some pain and suffering for me, right?

And so that thought made me feel terrible. My daughter was suffering and I realized this is on a very small scale compared to many of you and your children. I understand that but she was suffering nonetheless. And I thought she shouldn't be and this is what we all think on some level when the people that we love or the people around us are suffering we think they shouldn't be. We think this isn't the experience that they are supposed to be having. And this resistance to their suffering, to what actually is, is very painful.

And so then what do we do as humans is we try to change that. We try to undo the suffering. We try to stop the suffering because we are suffering by watching them suffer. We want them to be happy so that we can be happy.

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Like even on the smallest micro level, right? So as a family probably our very favorite show is *The Great British Baking Show*. And just so you know it's the very best show out here. Even our dog loves it when the music starts up, he jumps up like front and center on the couch and he's like ready to go. Anyway, in this latest season, I like I hope I'm not going to spoil this, but in one of the recent episodes one of these young guys' cake doesn't come out of his baking tin and it just kind of breaks in half when he takes it out

of the tin. Right? And it's a total mess. And he's like absolutely distraught about this. And he's like so sad about this cake.

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And he even starts to cry a little bit. I'm telling you it's the best—grown men cry about cake—I mean what could be better than that? Anyway he's just so devastated about this cake. And one of his fellow bakers comes by and she's trying to make him feel better and say like "it's not so bad," "it probably tastes amazing" right? And "maybe the judges won't really notice." He's like, "Don't. Just stop." He says, "Stop trying to make me feel better. I don't want to feel better." And she's like, "Okay, okay, I won't make you feel better." She's pats him on the shoulder and she's like, "I really like your shirt." Right?

It's just so sweet because that's what we do as humans. We resist the suffering of others; we want them to feel better. It breaks our heart a little bit that their heart is breaking. And here this boy just wants to feel bad about his cake and his friend really wants to make it all better.

But what I want you to understand is that when other people in our lives are suffering they are suffering because of what's happening in their model, because of what they're thinking. They have thoughts which are creating feelings. My daughter was thinking "I'm not ready to go home." And so she felt disappointed. My daughter was thinking "I don't want to leave my kids without saying goodbye." And she felt heartbroken. My daughter was thinking "I was supposed to be here until January." And she felt ripped off. My daughter was thinking "I didn't do anything wrong." And she felt misjudged. My daughter was thinking "I don't know what I'm going to do now." And she felt confused. So do you see? My daughter was suffering because she was having thoughts which were creating feelings.

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And what I want you to know is that it's never my job to change that. We think it is; we think we want to change other people's suffering, so if they could just think about it differently then they wouldn't be suffering. But it's not our job to change that. It's not my business to control that. It's not my place to say it should be different or that she should be having a different experience. It's not my job to remove her suffering.

So you might be saying, "But shouldn't we try?" Right? Like shouldn't we try to make people feel better? To answer that question I want to just remind you that you only want them to feel better so that you can feel better. And also remember that you don't know the experience that they're supposed to be having. You think you do. I thought I did. Remember my thought was: "This isn't the experience she's supposed to be having." But the truth is I'm not in charge of that. I'm not in charge of her experience. That's none of my business. My business is how I love her and how I just allow her to do her suffering the way she wants to. My job is to stay out of her model and let her have the experience exactly like she needs to.

Now this is hard, right? As a parent, as a friend, as a Christian, we think it's part of our job description to take away the suffering of our loved ones. But it is not. Our job is actually to love them as they suffer as they experience earth life. Right? The scripture says to mourn with those who mourn, to comfort those who stand in need of comfort. It doesn't say make it all better for those who mourn. Change the thinking of those who stand in need of comfort. I think the whole point of it is to feel negative emotion while watching another person experience negative emotion and be okay with it.

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Now I'm going to use a little example from the scriptures and I am not an authority on the scriptures. These are simply my thoughts on the scriptures. So if you don't like these thoughts and you don't agree

with these studies you can just ignore them. They're just thoughts. So the example I want to use is: Do you remember when Martha and Mary's brother died? Lazarus died and Jesus couldn't come for four days and when he got there he saw that these dearest of all of his friends had been suffering; they were in mourning; they were distraught; they were missing their brother. They were broken-hearted and then what does the scriptures say?

It didn't say that Jesus said, "Hey stop being sad." He doesn't say: "Have a little faith, everything's going to be okay, put on a smile. Let's have a positive attitude!" It says: Jesus wept Jesus wept. In other words, Jesus thought thoughts that made him sad.

And here's what I want you to see. He knew what was going to happen next! He knew that the whole plan was to come and raise Lazarus from the dead and he still wept. He still thought thoughts that made him sad because his friends were sad. He didn't tell Mary and Martha to stop suffering. He didn't try to change their mind or their experience of their brother's death. He just felt negative emotion right along with them. He was just sad because they were sad. He let himself be sad without needing them to be different, without needing them to have a different experience, so that then he could feel differently.

This is exactly what I think can help us as we love other people in their suffering. What if we could just let them suffer and have their experience and just love them without needing to change how they feel?

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So I want to give you a little example of this. So a week or so ago I was talking to a couple of friends about one of our other friends who is suffering. And these friends of mine and me were convinced that our suffering friend needed to do things differently. We said things like: she shouldn't be spending so much time in the hospital, she's wearing herself out, she can't keep doing this forever. Essentially, we're thinking that she isn't having the experience that she's supposed to have. She's suffering and we don't like seeing that. So we want to get in there and control her model and change her actions and change her thoughts and change her feelings so that she can feel better so that we can feel better.

Do you see? We thought if she could be different she wouldn't be suffering but we can't possibly know how she's supposed to do this. And I felt so uncomfortable after that conversation that I really started thinking about it. We only want her experience to be different so that she won't be hurting so much. But what if she supposed to hurt? What if she's doing it exactly right? Can we, as her friends, simply love her and the way she's doing it and just be sad with her without needing to change it?. That is real love—to be willing to feel negative emotion with another without wanting to change it or feel something else.

Now I hear you. Believe me, through space and time, I hear your objections. I know it feels like compassion to want people not to suffer but that is absolutely none of our business. Other people's experiences are their education and our educations are always God's business. He doesn't think anything has gone wrong when we're suffering. Everything is as it supposed to be. He's not worried about it at all and our business is not to advise him on other people's education. Our business is being who we want to be around those who suffer. Can we just weep with those we love and let that be enough?

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So I've told you before about how difficult my pregnancies were. And every one of them for me, was an exercise in suffering. Well, when I was pregnant with our fourth baby, my dad said, "Enough is enough." Right? He was so tired of watching me suffer and so he said, "Hey let's have a family fast. We'll fast and we'll pray and we'll use our faith and we'll ask God that this time, it's just a little easier for you and you won't be so sick."

So we agreed to try this. We had a family fast. Everybody fasted and prayed. And I was still sick. And so my dad said, "Okay, well let's double our faith and fast again and show the Lord that we really mean it. Like we really need a blessing here." We had another fast and I was still sick. And my dad said, "Let's do it one more time." And I said, "No. No, Dad." Because I knew in my heart that this was God's business that this was part of my education. I knew that there were things that I could learn in no other way and I simply needed to pass through this suffering.

And here's what I want you to see. My dad also needed to watch me suffer as well. He needed to suffer with me and not need to change it for me or for him. He had to be my dad and love me as I suffered. There were things that both of us could learn in no other way. Do you see? So as we watch the people in our lives suffer and go through their education we suffer along with them and experience our own education our own learning experiences.

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So I wanted to give you a few things that might help you when the people around you the people that you love are suffering and hurting. So in coaching there are some terms that may help you as you think about the pain and suffering of others and yourself as well. And sometimes we refer to this as clean pain and dirty pain.

Now I think these terms are not perfect. Let me just say that right there kind of charged already because we already have feelings about things that are clean and things that are dirty but for lack of a better term right now we'll just use them today.

So clean pain is when we feel negative emotion without needing it to be different. It's just recognizing that pain and suffering is part of the 50/50 human experience and so we're willing to feel it in order to have an Earth life experience. Clean pain, when we really feel it, can be processed and it can heal us.

Dirty pain on the other hand is additional pain that we cause ourselves when we think that there shouldn't be negative emotion. In other words, dirty pain is like anger or frustration or resentment or judgment, that we feel when we or others around us are feeling the normal 50% negative emotions of the human experience. In other words dirty pain is a resistance to that negative emotion and an unwillingness to accept the pain of earth life. And dirty pain instead of healing us, festers and it compounds our suffering rather than creating relief or healing.

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So for example if we go back to the experience with my daughter when she is disappointed that she can no longer teach— that is clean pain. That is negative emotion that is a part of her life experience. But when I think this isn't the experience that she's supposed to be having— that is dirty pain. That is the pain and frustration that I caused myself thinking that she shouldn't have negative emotion that she shouldn't be having a negative experience. Dirty pain is thinking that things should be different for those that we love. Instead, if we just mourn with them when we just feel sad with them than we can have the healing experience of clean pain with them. And this is exactly what Jesus did with his friends.

So let me give you another example of this. I have a client whose daughter has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and this mother of course loves her daughter and she sees that her daughter is suffering. She told me, "I just want her to be happy" and this sounds like a beautiful thought, right? This is what we want for all of our loved ones. We want them to be happy. We want them to have an amazing beautiful Earth life experience. But right now her daughter is suffering. Her daughter is not happy.

Her daughter is in pain and then wanting this suffering to go away for her daughter is causing my client additional pain because she thinks her daughter's life experience should be different. She has all kinds of dirty pain that says like it shouldn't be this way. This isn't fair—all those kinds of feelings. But what I want you to see is not just that this is a painful way to live, because it is. What I want you to see is that not only that, but she is denying herself an experience with her daughter.

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And this is what I mean. She can't really mourn with her daughter when she's resistant to the pain in the first place right. She can't feel pain with her daughter when she thinks that pain shouldn't be there. She can't weep with her daughter when she thinks her daughter should not be weeping.

So to kind of neutralize this I told her, "Imagine that your daughter is watching a scary movie and she says 'Hey mom come watch this movie with me' right? 'I don't want to be alone' and you go in to watch the movie with her and you see your daughter is scared and you think she shouldn't be scared. So you keep telling her 'This part isn't scary, there's nothing to be scared of, all this is fake; that guy right there is an actor, he's just pretending to be a bad guy, but it's just makeup and special effects.' And your daughter is mad because you're like ruining the scary movie, right? She's like I wanted to be scared and I wanted you to be scared with me.

Now obviously mental illness isn't something the daughter wants and it isn't like a movie that she's choosing to watch. But I gave my client that example to illustrate that you can't be with your daughter fully in an experience that you don't want her to be having. In the same way you can't be with your daughter in love and compassion and sadness for her illness, when you're trying to change that experience for her and think that it shouldn't be. In other words you can't have the experience with her if you don't want her to have the experience in the first place. You can't truly love your daughter in her pain and have compassion for that pain if you don't want the pain to be there.

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Now I know this is hard stuff. You're like, "But I don't want the pain to be." But what if you did? Or what if you were just okay with her having the experience that she's supposed to have? What if you could just let the pain be there so that they can have the experience they need to and you can have it with them instead of being in resistance to it? What if you were just willing to feel negative emotion with them because you love them?

Now this is the part where I want to take this discussion to a more spiritual place because I think this is exactly how Christ shows his love for each of us. He was willing to feel every negative emotion because he loved us so deeply when he went into the Garden of Gethsemane and suffered for the pains and sins and sorrows of each one of us. He did exactly that. He suffered all of those feelings. He felt every one of those negative emotions. He didn't just magic them away. He didn't sit there and say, "Well they shouldn't have suffered that much." He didn't sit there and think we should have done it differently so we didn't suffer so much or we should have thought better thoughts so that we didn't have to suffer and feel all these feelings. He didn't spend time wishing that we had had a different experience. He just felt it all. He just felt every negative emotion we ever feel.

That was love. That was compassion. That was mercy. Not removing the suffering but feeling the suffering without wanting to change it or feel a positive emotion in that moment instead. So there's this awesome quote by Stephen Robinson I love that kind of describes this perfectly. He said, "All the negative aspects of human existence brought about by the fall, Jesus Christ absorbed into himself. God

uses no magic wand to simply wave bad things into non-existence. The sins he remits he remits by making them his own and suffering them. The pain and heartaches that he relieves, he relieves by suffering them himself. These things can be shared and absorbed but they cannot be simply wished or waved away. They must be suffered."

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I think that describes so beautifully the experience that we need to have with the people that we love. "These things," he says, "can be shared and absorbed but they cannot be wished or waved away." Do you see? Christ didn't go to the Garden and say there shouldn't be suffering. He went there and felt all the feelings and suffered. And I believe that feeling negative emotion with others without any need to change their experience is a divine quality. I believe that is one of the things we came to learn how to do a little better here while we're on Earth.

I don't know if I've already told you this story or not but I had experience early on in my coach training where I coached someone and I felt utterly devastated afterwards. As they say on the Great British Baking Show, "I was gutted." I just felt gutted. And so I had a client that was in so much pain—like pain that I had never been like up close to before, right, pain that I didn't really know was possible—and I just thought like, "Maybe I can't do this." Right? "Maybe I'm not cut out for this—to see people this raw and vulnerable and hurting."

And as I was sobbing about this to my coach she gave me a thought that helped me so much then and perhaps it will help you as you do your work to get and obtain this kind of divine love, the love that comes with just suffering alongside someone. And she said to me, she said: "What is this part is necessary?"

Right? What if this part is necessary? Meaning when our loved ones are hurting, can you let it be? Can you accept that this part is necessary? None of it is by accident. Like, yes, we create our feelings with our thoughts, but even then, that agency was given to us as a means whereby we could learn. And so that means that our suffering, caused by our thoughts and our feelings, is a necessary part of our education. And if it wasn't, we would have never been given the opportunity to choose our thoughts all by ourselves

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And instead of wanting to take the pain away or argue with reality or assert that this is not the experience they're supposed to be having, what if you thought instead this part is necessary? This part doesn't need to be changed? As a human who loves other humans, my job is simply to let them feel negative emotion. And if I love them, if I want to show love for them, I do that by simply being willing to feel it right along with them. That is real love.

Okay, so here's where we are: Other people have thoughts and feelings due to the circumstances in their lives. This creates pain and suffering. As people who love other people, this creates thoughts and feelings inside of us, which in turn creates pain and suffering for us.

And so instinctively we think if we could change the circumstances or at least the thoughts and feelings of our loved ones then they can feel better and have less suffering and we can feel better and have less suffering. But the really transformational experience that we want to have in the way that we love and the way that we show up for other people occurs when we access Divine Love and just feel negative emotion and pain right along with them. As you do that, you will start to see the power of not needing to change others or their experiences or the way they think and feel in order to love them. And this in turn will affect every relationship you have.

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The thoughts and questions that I think can help you all along the way as you do this are these:

1. What if this is the experience they're supposed to be having? We often have so much resistance to what they're going through but what if we acknowledge that they're having the exact experience they're supposed to be having.
2. Another really powerful thought is: My job is never to change their suffering. My job is to mourn and weep with them and let that be enough.
3. And then finally a thought that's really helped me is to know that: This part is necessary. This part right here, this painful part, this difficult moment, this suffering right here, this part is necessary.

The more you are willing to experience negative emotion right along with the people that you love without needing to change them and without needing to change their experience the more access you will have to Divine Love for yourself and for others. And that, my friends, is 100% awesome.

[31:01]

I have one more thing for you before I go today. I know that many of my listeners are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For you and for me, this weekend is General Conference where we hear the words of our prophets and apostles. And while this is absolutely one of my favorite weekends of the whole year, I also know from experience that I can get overwhelmed and sometimes my thoughts can get in the way of me having the very best experience that I can have.

So I made a little workbook for you that can help you as you listen and learn and think this weekend. There are a couple of exercises in it to do as you prepare for a conference. Some thoughts that I hope will help you along the way. And I put in some exercises to use afterwards as you go to apply what you have heard and felt. I hope that it will help you get the most out of your experience and really help you as you move forward positively and joyfully towards new goals and evaluating exactly where you are in your life.

This is a totally free download. You can just go into the show notes and download the workbook or you can go to my website at: [aprilpricecoaching.com/22](http://aprilpricecoaching.com/22). I hope you have an awesome weekend with your families and I'll see you next week