

WorkWell

A Deloitte podcast series to empower your well-being



Overcoming Anxiety with Dr. Judson Brewer

Jen Fisher (Jen): Hi, WorkWell listeners. I am really excited to share with you that my book *Work Better Together* will be published this summer. This book is all about how to cultivate strong relationships to maximize well-being and create a more human centered workplace. It's inspired by conversations with WorkWell guests and feedback from listeners like you so, check it out. It's available for preorder on Amazon now. I have been very open and transparent about my life experiences with burnout and breast cancer, but there is another life challenge that I have not talked a lot about on this podcast. It's my daily struggle with anxiety and I know that my experience is not uncommon. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, anxiety disorders affect 18% of adults age 18 and older and 25% of children between 13 and 18 in the United States. Even though anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in this country, they are still often misunderstood and therefore go undiagnosed and untreated.

This is the WorkWell podcast series. Hi, I am Jen Fisher, Chief Well-being Officer for Deloitte and I am so pleased to be here with you today to talk about all things well-being. I am here with Dr. Judson Brewer. Dr. Brewer is a renowned psychiatrist and neuroscientist and the associate professor at the Brown University School of Public Health. His extensive research into anxiety and the addictive behaviors it drives spans over two decades. He is also the author of the book *Unwinding Anxiety: New Science Shows How to Break the Cycles of Worry and Fear to Heal Your Mind*.

Dr. Brewer, welcome to the show.

Judson Brewer (Judson): Thanks for having me.

Jen: I am so excited for this conversation, probably selfishly, as someone who lives with anxiety. I think this is going to be a little bit of a personal therapy session with you and I, for the world to listen to and hopefully learn from (laughs).

Judson: Awesome.

Jen: Let's start out learning a little bit about you. Tell us your story, how you became passionate about researching anxiety, I think addiction in the beginning, but a term that I have heard you lovingly called "Mesearch."

Judson: Yes. Well, my anxiety actually started back in college, I didn't even know I had anxiety. I thought I had something a GI bug or I was infected with a parasite from backpacking. When I went to the student health doc, he said, "do you think this could be

stress?" and I said, "no, it couldn't be. I am vegetarian, I run, I play the violin, and I can't be anxious" and he is like, "okay". I didn't even know what anxiety was back in college. Fast forward ten years later, I finished my M.D., PhD program, had been starting my residency in psychiatry and was really getting into research around helping people with addictions. There, I was seeing a commonality between some of the concepts that we had been taught in basic psychology around operant conditioning, positive and negative reinforcement, things like that and how addictions form. I also had been seeing some parallels with how I have been working with my own stress around learning to meditate myself. I had started meditating my first day of medical school and that started to bring together some things that were really interesting led to an avenue of exploration around how to efficiently and effectively help people overcome addictions and break bad habits. We had done work around alcohol and cocaine use disorder. We even did a study with smoking where we got five times the quit rates of the gold standard treatment. We had extended that to even developing app-based trainings to help make these things available to anybody basically and it had gotten a 40% reduction in craving-related eating. At that time, I was in my outpatient clinic mainly just prescribing medications for anxiety, that's what I have been trained to do in medical school. There is this term in medicine called the "number needed to treat", which means how many patients you need to treat with a certain treatment, say a medication before one person shows a significant reduction in symptoms. For our gold standard class of medications, are you ready for this? It is 5.2, which means I have to treat 5 patients before one shows a significant reduction in symptoms. So, here I was playing the medication lottery just trying to help people not knowing which of my patients was going to benefit, and then I wasn't sure what I was going to do with the other 80%. At this time, I was just completing some of this work with this app-based mindfulness training for eating and somebody in that program said "hey, could you make a program for anxiety?" and I was thinking, well I prescribe medications but it put a bug in my ear to go and look it up. Lo and behold, there was some overlooked literature from the 1980s suggesting that anxiety could be driven in the same manner as other habits. I was thinking, I never thought about that and then I was thinking, I know how to work with habits. So, we developed this program and as a researcher, I wanted to study to see if we could actually approach anxiety in the same way that we had been tackling other habits and long story short, we did a couple of clinical studies. We got a 57% reduction in clinically validated anxiety scores in anxious physicians. We did another study with people with generalized anxiety disorder, we got a 67% reduction, and there we could calculate that number needed to treat, and are ready for this? 1.6. so, relative to medication is over five, it was 1.6. So that's kind of how I got into it.

Jen: Well, thank you from all of us that needed this research. You have said that we are all addicted to something. Can you explain what you mean by this and share some everyday examples of why this is in our modern world?

Judson: I would be happy to. I learned this definition of addiction that was simple and just rang really true to me back when I was in residency. The definition was continued use despite adverse consequences. Just listen to that again...continued use despite adverse consequences. I was learning about cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, alcohol, tobacco, and I was saying, "okay, classic substances". Continued use despite adverse consequences starts to explain things like why texting while driving was shown to be as dangerous as drunk driving. I was like wait a minute, people can get addicted to texting and it's just as dangerous. This can apply to social media, this can apply to people binge watching their favorite shows, this could apply to any behavior, continued use despite adverse consequences.

Jen: I guess once you learned that, you kind of took your work in behavior change and your understanding about habits and you applied this to everyday addiction and habit loops. Can you talk a little bit about that and explain what habit loops are?

Judson: Yes, so habit loops are basically habits that are formed in a simple process where it takes three elements: a trigger, a behavior and a reward. From an evolutionary standpoint, this was set up to help us survive. So, we need two basic things, we need to eat and we need to not be eaten. So, our ancient ancestors who didn't have refrigerators or food delivery or anything like that, they had to go out every day and find food and then they had to remember where it was and go find it the next day. So, you can imagine our ancestors out there foraging for food. They see the food, there is a trigger, so that's the first element, a trigger. They eat the food, there is the second element, that's the behavior. Then their stomach sends this dopamine signal to their brain that says remember what you ate and where you found it. So, that's the third element, the reward or the result from a direct standpoint or an experiential standpoint. So, trigger, behavior, result is what's needed to form any habit loop. So, if it's something that's pleasant like eating some nutritious food, our brain learns okay, do that again, it feels good. If something is unpleasant, like we get scared and we run away from some danger, that negative quality of that experience drives what's called negative reinforcement because it is making something unpleasant go away. Both of those help us survive, and both of those are still 100% at play in modern day life. We learn to eat; we learn to stress eat for example or we learn to procrastinate through negative reinforcement. We learn to associate cake with parties and friends as early as our first birthday party.

Jen: This is just fascinating to me and the wheels are turning. I have also read your book and a bunch of articles that you have written. One of the quotes that you took from Eckhart Tolle, "one of the greatest addictions you never read about in the papers because people don't know it, is the addiction to thinking"; the direct translation or the direct correlation, if you will, about our addiction to thinking and anxiety. For those of us that live with an anxiety disorder, but just in general, the way that anxiety presents itself in our life and in our world. I am fascinated by that connection and kind of the worry habit loop. So, can we dig into that?

Judson: Yes, I would be happy to. This has been one of the most fascinating explorations that I have had, both from a research standpoint and also from a clinical standpoint because I have seen it have huge effects in real world situations with my patients. So, you never think of anxiety as being a habit, it just seems like a feeling, and if you look at the dictionary definition, it's described that way; a feeling of worried, nervousness, unease about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome. Yet if you look at that, if you double click on that definition, worry is not only a feeling, it's a noun, but it's also a verb. I worry, and so the noun of worry...somebody, like my patients, they wake up in the morning and they just feel anxious. That feeling can trigger the mental behavior of worrying and they start worrying, "why am I anxious" or "what's wrong" or what not. That mental behavior drives more anxiety through negative reinforcement because it gives us either a temporary distraction from the worse feeling, feeling of anxiety or it makes us feel like we are in control like, "I am going to solve this, I am going to figure out what my anxiety is and I am going to fix it" (laughs).

Jen: So, we are worrying about worrying.

Judson: Yes, exactly.

Jen: I have never done that (laughs). Actually, I do it every day, I think.

Judson: Isn't that interesting? It starts to feedback on itself, especially because it doesn't actually put us in control and generally does not solve problems.

Jen: So, what's the strategy? What's the solution there? You knew I was going to ask that (laughs).

Judson: Yes. I love the question because there is a common strategy that I would say most, if not all of us, use or have used, that is a dead end, and that is the willpower approach. We think, well now that I see what the problem is, I am just going to go in there and brute force and fix it. I don't know how many of us have had parents that have said, "just stop worrying" or "don't worry about this". If it were as simple as flipping that worry switch like, "oh, there it is, okay. I will stop worrying" (laughs), then I could have my patients come in...they walk into my office and they say, "I worry too much" and "I just say okay, it's behind your ear. Let's just flip that switch. Okay, you are done, no more worrying". That's not how it works, unfortunately. In fact, the prefrontal cortex, the thinking and planning part of our brain, ironically it goes offline when we start worrying more and more, so we can't even use the thinking and planning part of our brain. I just want to highlight that in case somebody says, "oh I have just mapped out my worry habit loop. I can stop listening and just go fix it". That's not how our brains work. How our brains do work is based on this reward-based learning system, positive and negative reinforcement. Our brains are going to set a reward value of a certain behavior based on previous experience. If we don't pay attention to how rewarding it is now as compared to how rewarding it was in the past, we are just going to keep doing it habitually, that's what habit loops are all about. The only way to change that is to actually update the reward value based on one simple thing, which is awareness. Awareness is what helps us see how rewarding something is in the present moment. I will give an example of eating to make this super clear and then we will bring it to worry and how to apply it there. So, the formula and this was developed back in the 70s, the mathematics of this is based on some work by these two researchers, Rescorla-Wagner and basically what they showed, and this is still true today...this is a very well established paradigm, was that current reward values based on past reward value plus an error term and that error term is called a positive or negative prediction error. So, for example, if we have laid down the reward value of a chocolate cake in our minds, we are like oh yeah, chocolate cake tastes pretty good. We go to a new bakery and our brain says, "oh, that cake looks pretty good". If we eat the cake and it's really good, our brain says, "ooh that's really good chocolate cake" and we get what's called a positive prediction error because it's better than expected. What that does is it updates the reward value and reminds us or basically lays down the memory that says, "okay, this is a good bakery, come back here". We update that reward value and we learn to eat cake from this place. If we go there and we eat the cake and we are like, I have had better, we get this negative prediction error where it doesn't meet expectations. It's not as good as expected and we lay down this memory that says, "oh don't go back there, go to another place that's better". Our brains lay down this whole reward hierarchy, so it's easy to make decisions, and we know basically where to go. So, how does this apply to worry? Well, our brains have laid down this reward value of worrying based on how much we have done it in the past and how rewarding it might have been in the past. It's a habit. The only way to update that is to bring awareness in right now and bring in those error terms where we say, "well what am I getting from this? Is worrying actually helping me perform better?", that's a big one that I see. People think, "oh, if I am not anxious, I am not going to perform well",

no data to support that, it's not actually true. We form these false associations, we think that worrying is going to help us perform better. If we see that worrying actually makes it harder for us to perform, then that negative error comes in and we say, "well, it's not that great". If it doesn't help us solve a problem that negative prediction error comes in. If we see that worrying actually just makes us more anxious, that's the key one. In any one moment when we are worrying, we can say, "what am I getting from this? Well, it's just making me more worried and more anxious", there's another negative prediction error. All of that is just based on one simple thing, awareness, just paying attention to that cause and effect relationship.

Jen: So, what is the difference between worry and anxiety. Worry causes anxiety or how do you delineate between those two?

Judson: You can think of anxiety as that feeling. It tends to feel restless, closed down, contracted, nervous feeling, whereas worry is the mental behavior where our mind is racing. What about this? What about that? Does that make sense?

Jen: That does make sense and I guess anxiety, you can feel in your body too, it's not just in your brain.

Judson: Yes, that's typically where people feel anxiety is really in the body. One other way to think about this is we can have a feeling of anxiety, but we don't have to worry because worry is on top of the feeling of anxiety. Anxiety tends to trigger the mental behavior of worrying.

Jen: I assume every human experiences anxiety from time to time, but at what point does anxiety become a disorder?

Judson: It's in the eye of the beholder really. If you look in the psychiatrist bible for diagnosis, we have a bunch of criteria, but honestly, it's not that helpful to memorize a list of things. I can barely remember it myself, and I have been a practicing psychiatrist for a long time. One of the aspects that I find very helpful is going back to this definition of addiction, continued use despite adverse consequences. So, if the feeling of anxiety is getting in the way of our daily lives, whether it's personally, whether it's professionally, whether it's interpersonally like our relationships, that's when we think of it as something where it becomes a little more disordered. I don't like the term disorder. One thing I think of it as conditions and there is one condition that we all share which is the human condition.

Jen: I like that a lot better.

Judson: Yeah, and then there is just stuff where it's like our brains are slightly tweaked this way or that way as compared to there is something wrong with us.

Jen: Despite its prevalence, I think it is really misunderstood. Are there are things that we should know or myths that we should dispel about anxiety or people that live with anxiety or how we can support those that live with anxiety?

Judson: One thing that I find very helpful and I see this in my clinic even in the first visit with a patient who is referred to me for anxiety is just helping people understand how their minds work; helping them understand what anxiety is and how it can be perpetuated. I write about some of this as the first section of the *Unwinding Anxiety* book, which is around helping people see that fear is an evolutionarily adaptive process. Fear helps us learn things so that we can survive yet, if you pair fear with uncertainty, uncertainty is analogous to our

stomach. So, our stomach, when we don't have enough calories, when our stomachs are empty, our stomachs grumble and they say go and get some food. Our brain works in a similar manner. When our brain doesn't have information, when there is uncertainty, our brain kind of grumbles or rumbles and says, go get information. That's adaptive, that's helpful. Yet, when there is a lot of uncertainty, or when there is too much information that we can't sort through and we can't figure out what it's true or what's accurate, or we just don't have information that can then spin out into anxiety. Just knowing that can help people start to see, is there something that I don't know? Can I actually be okay with not knowing right now? The only certain thing is that there is uncertainty, and the only unchanging thing is that there is constant change. If we can really start to live into this idea that things are constantly changing, there is uncertainty, and that's okay, we can start to move from being locked in anxiety moving into what I think of is...I think Carol Dweck put it nicely, she was a Stanford researcher, it talks about growth mindset or our growth zone. If we can get paralyzed when there is a lot of uncertainty, we can move into our panic zone or when there is a lot of uncertainty, we can actually move into our growth zone and say, instead of "oh no" we can say "oh". That's the first thing I would say is helping people just understand our brain has kind of gone into a dead end around anxiety, but this is really what it's trying to do is help us get information. Can we be okay with not having information right now? The second thing that I find very helpful is just helping people see how anxiety can be driven through worry as a habit loop; that was probably the biggest thing that I found, both from a research standpoint, but also from a clinical standpoint. Even spending 5 minutes in mapping out a habit loop with a patient is tremendously illuminating for them. They can see how their mind goes from this black box of not knowing and being pushed or pulled by anxiety to just seeing how this process is logical and self-perpetuating. Because they can see it clearly, they can actually start to step out of it and we can give them tools to do that.

Jen: So, for example, if I personalize this, I am experiencing anxiety about something and I think my immediate go-to or my habit is to fill in the blanks of all the things that I don't know. My tendency is to fill in the blanks with all of the bad things that could happen. I convince myself that this is certainly going to happen, there is no other option, I have figured it out. I am just waiting for somebody to tell me (laughs).

Judson: Absolutely, yes.

Jen: Okay, so this is what we are talking about.

Judson: Yes.

Jen: So how do I break that cycle?

Judson: Well, the key there is to first just be able to see it. If we can start to recognize these habit loops, even recognize what's the trigger, what's the behavior, what's the result... that helps put us back in the driver seat instead of being driven by anxiety. We have put together a free habit mapper that anybody can download and start mapping out their own habits this way. It's just on the website Mapmyhabit.com so, anybody can do that, start mapping them out. That's the first step. The second step, and I go into a lot of detail about this in my book because it's a really critical component around starting to see this reward value and tapping into it... It's the oldest, it's the strongest part of our brain, yet counterintuitively, it's the last place that we tend to go to help us step out of these habits. This is where, as I was mentioning before, we can bring awareness in and start to update

that reward value in our brain by asking ourselves very simple questions like is worrying solving the problem? Generally, not; Is it keeping my family safe? Generally, not; Is it making me more anxious? Yes. Just asking these simple questions and getting curious about like what is this worry trying to do and is it actually serving that function, that's what updates the reward value on how rewarding that mental behavior is in our brain. Once that gets updated, our brains start to become disenchanted with doing that more. Notice how that doesn't take effort. It only takes awareness, and this curious attitude like, "huh? Is this really serving me?"... No, it's not. That's the second step. Does that make sense?

Jen: It makes a lot of sense and I want to dive into awareness and start talking about mindfulness and meditation, but I have one quick question before that. You were talking about uncertainty and anxiety and we are living in the middle of a global pandemic. So, I was going to ask you how that has impacted the likelihood of us experiencing anxiety, but that almost feels like a silly question (laughs), when I say it out loud, right? We know the rate of anxiety and what people are experiencing has skyrocketed. Can you talk about what you are seeing in your world with this?

Judson: Whether it's my research world where we have seen a huge spike in 2020 in anxiety levels which, like you're saying, is unsurprising... this all relates to uncertainty and it's really interesting to watch this overtime. At the beginning of the pandemic, we were all uncertain about how dangerous this thing is? How transmissible is it? I don't know about you, but I certainly followed the standard practices of leaving all my delivered packages outside of my house for three days unless I absolutely had to bring them in because nobody knew that this could be. That one completely unusual virus where no virus in history has been shown to actually survive on a surface in cold winter Massachusetts for very long at all, but I wasn't going to take that risk because I was uncertain. My brain was saying, hey let's not be the first to die from the from the UPS package or whatever. That was shown to be completely not an issue, but it took everybody a while to figure that out. At the beginning of the pandemic with all this uncertainty, now we are even seeing uncertainty around things like variants and around going back to normal where people are having...I forget what the term is.

Jen: Reentry anxiety.

Judson: So, reentry anxiety, which is about uncertainty. Whatever our pandemic habit is, whether it's working from home, whether it's wearing masks in public, whether it's not congregating with friends, and just thinking about congregating with friends without a mask can make people pretty anxious. Why? Because it's uncertain, because they haven't done it in a year. This really highlights, it doesn't matter what it is, it's just that there is uncertainty and that is going to drive anxiety.

Jen: It is fascinating because if you rewind a year, our anxiety around the uncertainty of the virus and the pandemic itself and now that in some parts of the world at least we are opening up a little bit, we have adapted. It isn't ideal, I don't think any of us like it necessarily, but we have adapted to it. I have certainly experienced some of that re-entry anxiety, like what are all these people doing here? Why are they around me? (laughs) I can certainly relate to that. Let's shift and talk about mindfulness and how it can help break the cycle of anxiety. You have mentioned a couple times now about awareness and obviously mindfulness is an incredible practice to bring awareness to whatever situation you are in actually.

Judson: Yes, and so let's keep this simple and concrete because I think mindfulness can mean a bunch of different things to a bunch of different people. If you look at the elements or the way that I think of the elements of mindfulness are basically two sides of the same coin. One side is awareness and the other side is curiosity. So, we can be aware of things and we can be judging them like crazy like "Oh, I see that, and it sucks" (laughs), so that's not what we are talking about here. It's about bringing awareness in and really not judging what's happening but really trying to see things as accurately as possible, taking off all of our bias glasses. That's what we are talking about here. The reason I like to focus on those core elements is because those are the core elements that are not only needed to help us break unhelpful habits, but they are also the elements that can form helpful habits unto themselves. As I mentioned earlier, my lab had been studying habit change for a long time. The first thing that we studied as we were looking at these mechanisms of how habits form, whether it's addictions or overeating or even worrying, was that they are formed through this reinforcement learning process. As I mentioned, the only way to break that chain is through awareness itself. Awareness can not only help us break these cycles, but it can also form a new cycle, a new healthy habit itself. The reason I say that is because if you think about it....let's just take a concrete example of anxiety. Anxiety feels unpleasant, it's uncomfortable, so our brain says, "okay make this go away". Our typical old habits, especially if we don't know how it works, our brain is going to say "hey do something to make this go away as quickly as possible". So, we eat something, or we watch television or we check our social media, we do all these things that distract ourselves, but in fact they only give us this brief relief and they create unhealthy habits unto themselves. We are procrastinating or not getting our work done, which leads to more anxiety. If we look at anxiety and we even look at the results of these unhelpful habits, even if they give us this brief relief, they are still not fixing the root cause of the problem. If we look at anxiety, the feeling of anxiety and we compare that to the feeling of curiosity, that attitudinal quality that comes with awareness when we are just truly trying to see things as they are, curiosity feels better. It seems like a no brainer, but my lab did do the research to show that this is true. When we look at 14 different mental states, anxiety is very low on the reward hierarchy. Curiosity and also things like kindness and connection are very high. There's also another thing that's very interesting here, which is when we ask people to describe their experience, anxiety feels more closed or contracted whereas curiosity feels more open and expanded. We are moving towards something so we can learn about it. That closed quality, or let's put it this way, you can't be closed and open at the same time because they are binary opposites. If we close down anxiety, we can actually inject some curiosity, which starts to open us up because you can't be closed and open at the same time. Not only can we open up, but that feeling of opening feels better, so our brains going to learn that. I think of this as the B.B.O, the "Bigger, Better Offer". Our brain is going to learn, being curious about my anxiety is that "Bigger, Better Offer" as compared to being lost or caught up in a cycle of anxiety and worry.

Jen: How do we cultivate this type of awareness in our life? You have talked about this a lot during this discussion, but also in your book. It's easy to fall back on those old habits. What is the process of cultivating this awareness? I assume it's just like changing behavior or creating new habits.

Judson: So here we can tap into our brains. If we know that our brains are going to go to something that feels better, the key for forming any new habit is repeat it early and often. It's like if we want to learn to tie our shoes, we practice tying our shoes a lot. If we want to

learn to be curious, the nice thing is, this is a capacity that we all have. We were actually all very good at it when we were kids and it tends to get beaten out of us as adults.

Jen: We stopped asking why, right? When you are a kid, you ask why constantly (laughs).

Judson: Yes! Some parents were better at indulging those than others. Some parents were like, I don't have time or whatever and we learn as a kid to stop asking why, just like you are saying. Let's reintroduce that why in terms of that feeling of curiosity. For example, and actually this is a critical distinction... as adults, often when we are anxious, we will start asking, "why am I anxious?". It leads us in a dead end of trying to figure out what the problem is so we can kind of squash it or solve it or avoid it. Here, I think of it as bringing curiosity in and asking what's happening right now as compared to why is this happening. If we are anxious, it's already happening so, it doesn't matter what caused it to happen in that moment. With what is happening, we can start to explore it and cultivate our curiosity by asking, "oh, what does this feel like in my body?". For me, anxiety feels tight in my shoulders, there is a heat, there is kind of a restless quality more in the center of my body. I can start to explore if it's the tightness that equals anxiety. Well, it's just tightness if I just focus on that part. Is it the heat? Well, no, that heat kind of has this funny feeling to it, and that's just heat. If I look at all of these elements, they are just elements and they actually come and go, they change over time. Instead of this big bad concept of anxiety looming over my head like a thunderstorm that might scare us the first time we hear thunder, we can start exploring, what's a thunderstorm? It's rain, its lightning, it's wind, it's this and that, it's all these elements. Oh, now I know what this is, it's less scary, there is more certainty. We can do the same thing with anxiety and at the same time cultivate our curiosity. Oh, what does this feel like? Oh, does it change overtime? Oh, where is it in my body? Each time we go "oh", that's a sign that we are awakening and fostering our curiosity.

Jen: Hmm I love this. I have to practice that more often.

Judson: You just did it, "hmm". It's another indicator of curiosity (laughs).

Jen: Awesome, I love it. Alright, I have two more questions for you. So, this one is more personal. How do you manage your mental and emotional well-being? What are your go-to strategies?

Judson: Well, I would say the first piece is around understanding. The more I started understanding how my mind worked, the better I was able to work with it so, that's key for all of us I would say. Actually, I would say 90% of our problems are caused by things related to reward-based learning. Just knowing that basic habit loop and mapping that out I look to that like okay what is this? Can I map it out? The second step really is can I inject a little bit of curiosity? What's happening? Am I judging myself? Am I judging somebody else? Am I worrying? Am I spinning too far out into the future? Can I dial that back to today? What needs to be done today? Between those two, it's about rinse and repeat. It seems to be helpful with just about everything, especially because the more I am curious, the more it alleviates anxiety and the more the curiosity builds on itself because it feels so good.

Jen: Alright and last question, what's your definition of well-being?

Judson: What a great question. What's my definition of well-being?

Jen: This is my research. (laughs)

Judson: This is great. I would say just riffing on that question, it might sound obvious, but I am going to say there is a mental and physical element where there is a level of contentment both in the mind and the body. There is a level of maybe just a slight hint of ode to joy. When we are content it's not like screaming at us with excitement but there is a slight pleasantness to it. The other piece I would say is that there is a level of connection, both connection with myself where I am connected with myself, I am not judging myself, I am not trying to change who I am, but also a level of connection with the rest of the world, feeling connected, and I think that can take many forms. I will just leave it at that broad term.

Jen: Yeah, but so much wisdom in that definition, so thank you for that. Well, Dr. Brewer, this was such an insightful, helpful conversation for me personally, and I know many of our listeners will feel the same. So, thank you for taking the time to explain all of this to us.

Judson: It was my pleasure.

Jen: I am so grateful Dr. Brewer could be with us today to talk about habit loops and anxiety.

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