

## 233: Holding Space for Yourself and Others



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**Jen Riday**

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## 233: Holding Space for Yourself and Others

You're listening to the Vibrant Happy Women podcast, episode number 233. We're talking about what it means to hold space and how you can do that for yourself and others. Stay tuned.

Hi, I'm Jen Riday. This podcast is for women who want to feel more vibrant, happy, aligned, and alive. You'll gain the emotional, physical, and spiritual tools you need to get your sparkle back and ensure that depression, anxiety, and struggle don't rule your life. Welcome to the Vibrant Happy Women Podcast.

Well, hey there friends, welcome back. Have you noticed that change is in the air? Life is shifting all over the world. People in the US at least are heading back to school. More parents are heading back to work as a result, many college aged kids are heading off to college and things are shifting, things are moving. How do you feel about that? Maybe your kids are doing virtual school. Four of my school aged kids are doing virtual school for now. One of them will be going back in person four days a week, that's Cora who will be in first grade.

At this point I think we all understand that there is a huge range of thoughts and emotions involved in our decision making around how we're going to live our lives right now, to mask or not to mask, to go to school or not to go to school. And I hope you see that every opinion is valid because there's risk connected to every single decision. And we all as parents, as humans get to decide how we're going to balance those risks. Now, with these choices come a range of feelings.

And in this episode I want to talk to you about holding space for your feelings and for others feelings. A huge part of our human condition of this earthly experience is emotional, is perceptual. We all have perceptions based on our thoughts about what's happening in the world around us, those thoughts generate feelings. Some of those feelings are comfortable

## 233: Holding Space for Yourself and Others

and amazing and joyous, others of those feelings are low vibe and uncomfortable and unpleasant.

The question is have we been improving throughout Covid, throughout our lives, the ability to weather, to handle those uncomfortable feelings? I would propose we have all improved. We've faced anxiety and uncertainty, and decision making, and lots of family together time. And I would guess all of us have improved our ability to handle uncomfortable emotion, which means we're more resilient. Most of the human beings on this planet right now have become more resilient. I think that's beautiful.

So moving forward I want to talk to you about holding space. In the Vibrant Happy Women coach certification we learn about holding space during the very first lesson of this 16 week program. And incidentally the first 20 students of the coach certification have graduated, they have finished lesson 16. We'll be moving onto the business track soon, so they get 16 business lessons as well included in the program. But they are certified coaches now and I'm so proud of them. This has been completely life changing for me to watch how life changing it is for them, it's kind of meta.

But this sacred skill of being able to hold space for ourselves and for others, what does that mean? Well, you may have heard the term before and I want you to imagine, I've shared this analogy before as well. I want you to imagine you're in a very cluttered space, perhaps your attic, perhaps your storage room. And imagine piles of papers, boxes of clothes, stacks of books, corners filled with toys, shelves with who knows what, just cluttering this space. You feel overwhelmed to come into this space.

And right there in the middle of a small clearing in the space is an empty Rubbermaid tote, a clear one, nothing in it. It looks almost out of place amidst the clutter. Your eyes are drawn to it. You're like, "That is fascinating." You see a potential place where you could start to organize all of that clutter. Well, holding space for ourselves or for another person,

[Vibrant Happy Women](#) with Jen Riday

## 233: Holding Space for Yourself and Others

which is the actual building block of coaching, of being an excellent parent, of being a loving person, of being a great friend, holding space means you create a container for them to feel anything they're feeling.

If you have a child it's a space where you let them feel their emotions and don't shush them or quiet them, or shame them for feeling. "Be quiet, I don't have time for this, stop whining." It's not to say that we're not going to have boundaries and rules with our kids. But what if we could engage in a type of parenting, a conscious style of parenting where we hold space to let them feel?

Now, this works in friendships. How many times has your friend or your best friend called you to want to talk through something? How many times have you wanted to call a friend to talk through something? Now, I would guess that the friends who listen the best are the ones you want to call the most often because they're holding space for you.

A good listener who can hold space doesn't judge what you're feeling, doesn't tell you you're wrong to think or feel what you're experiencing, doesn't tell you it's crazy to be anxious about Covid or that you're wrong to think that you should do x, y and z.

Holding space acknowledges that every human on this planet can feel, think, believe and do what feels right to them. These are the building blocks of human values, prioritizing one thought or one set of beliefs above another, those are values. People create values across politics, across religion, across geography, across all kinds of things. And we learn thoughts or collections of thoughts from our loved ones. Some of those thoughts might limit us like, well, I just have bad genetics; I'm never going to be thin, limiting thought.

Every single thought we have is going to generate a feeling. So if you are trying right now to make decisions about Covid, you're kids are going back

[Vibrant Happy Women](#) with Jen Riday

## 233: Holding Space for Yourself and Others

to school or they're not. You're weighing risks and you have thoughts about that.

Some of you might be thinking oh my gosh, it's dangerous, I'm so scared. It generates panic, you are more likely to freeze or not, take action when you're in a sense of panic. You calm yourself down; you return to maybe a more doable thought like it's going to be fine, the choice I'm making is the correct choice. You move yourself away from anxiety and panic and then you get a better result. This happens all the time.

So what does it mean to hold space for ourselves? We talked about holding space for kids, for friends, you can do it for your spouse, your coworkers, creating a sacred container for them to describe what they're thinking and feeling. It rarely happens, but when it does you feel so loved and so nurtured. Well, we can turn that attention, that light right on ourselves. How often do you create space or hold space for yourself?

As moms, many of us are so busy creating the 'perfect life' handling all the things, cleaning up, doing laundry, cooking, cleaning, running, going. We are not only not holding space for our family, because our attention is on our households, and our jobs, and our calendars. But we're certainly not holding space for ourselves. Holding space means creating that sacred, clear, peaceful container where we can hear ourselves think, where we can notice that's what I'm feeling. That's what I'm thinking, that thought makes me feel this emotion, how interesting.

This idea of holding space for ourselves is foundational to being able to hold space for others. If we want to be able to teach our kids to know what they're thinking, know what they're feeling, having that deep emotional intelligence, that deep resilience, we have to give the gift to ourselves first. Let me ask you, how have you been doing with this? How often do you create time to be alone in a safe space, to notice what you're thinking, to

## 233: Holding Space for Yourself and Others

notice what you're feeling, to allow yourself to feel whatever's going on in your body?

I want to share a story. This week my oldest who is 19 and who is a Panera Bread delivery driver was in a very terrible accident. This is how I learned about the accident. Our family was sitting around, there was a board game on the table and I get a phone call, a woman with an Australian accent, I don't know why she was in Wisconsin but I love her for calling me.

She said, "Is this Jen?" I'm like, "Yes." "I don't want you to panic but your son has been in a very terrible accident. He's okay but it is a bad accident." And immediately what do you feel? I felt adrenalin flood my body, particularly my heart area.

Now, because through the Vibrant Happy Women coach certification and the Vibrant Happy Women Club as well, I have become very familiar with a method I teach called feel it to heal it. It's shining a light, turning your focus on the sensations and the emotions going through your body. So the minute I felt this adrenalin flood my system I turned my attention to my heart and I gestured to my husband, I said, "Come here." And I took him out of the room and we put her on speaker and she told us the details.

Now, he's a teenager, I wonder how many of you listening can relate to this. He was exiting the beltline, the freeway, the speed limit was 25. It was a very tight curving exit ramp, very tight where it circled back around itself. He should have been going 25. He took it at 65 miles per hour. His car flipped and you can imagine how badly that could have ended. So we heard this story and felt shock, and adrenalin, and cortisol flooding our bodies, but also gratitude to hear from the ambulance guy that he's going to be okay, he's in a neck brace. He's going to be okay.

Now, during Covid the hospital is different so only one of us could go. I sent my husband and then I sat at home knowing nothing yet, and letting myself

[Vibrant Happy Women](#) with Jen Riday

## 233: Holding Space for Yourself and Others

feel it to heal it. And I went live in the Vibrant Happy Women Club, to walk them through my experience. I allowed myself to feel the adrenalin, and it felt like a shaky energized nervous feeling in my heart area. I felt tears building behind my eyes as this adrenalin flooded through me.

I noticed my thoughts started to race, oh my goodness, what is he going to do for a job? He can't drive, how is he going to work? How is he going to pay for his apartment? What are we going to do? This is incidentally his fifth wreck in one year. So my mama thoughts, my mama bear kicked into crazy overdrive. But I felt as I started to think those thoughts, the heart began to race faster, faster, faster.

And I stopped myself and I said, "No, I'm going to concentrate on my feelings." Holding this space for myself, I didn't have to deal with my kids, I gave them a video game to occupy them and I felt my feelings in a quiet and safe space. And a good thing I did because a few hours later the adrenalin came down, I never had a panic attack or anything and everything was fine. I got the call, my son was fine. He broke nothing. He had a little soreness. The car was totaled, crazy experience.

So why do I share the story? I share it because we all have moments where we get news, or something happens, or we're frustrated, or the police call, been there, done that a few times. And do we have the skill of holding space for ourselves? Now, that is a big reason why I do what I do in the Vibrant Happy Women Club and in the new Vibrant Happy Women coach certification.

A lot of more people used to attend church, or synagogue, or a mosque doing these sacred things that gave them the chance to hold space. Now, I'm not saying church, or a mosque, or a synagogue is better than finding space in nature. But the point I'm trying to make is we must build into our lives regular, daily if possible, opportunities to hold sacred space for

## 233: Holding Space for Yourself and Others

ourselves where we identify thoughts and feelings. We understand exactly how each emotion feels in our bodies.

I knew what adrenalin felt like and I didn't panic or lose my mind when I felt it. I kept breathing knowing that deep breathing brings a person back into rest and relax, out of fight or flight. And my experiences of holding space for myself gave me the strength and the emotional resilience to make it through a really scary situation, pretty unfazed. I held space for my husband who has anxiety and he was able to weather it really well. No one got upset with anyone, no one freaked out and it wasn't too bad. We've really improved.

So how is that working for you? When in your day are you holding space for yourself? Your life is so busy, just like that crowded cluttered attic or that storage space. So many things you could focus on, that pile of jeans, that pile of laundry, that sink full of dishes, the kids who are fighting, the kids having too much screen time, that school is starting, Covid is here. You could look outside of yourself all day long.

But there is a sacred, empty, clear Rubbermaid, so to speak, this metaphor, waiting for you to go and think, one clear uncluttered space to think. And you can create this for yourself in your life. Maybe it's getting up earlier than your kids and doing your morning routine. Maybe it's taking a one hour run every day alone. Maybe it's getting in your minivan and listening to some music and meditating.

Whatever it is, the more you hold space for yourself the more you understand how your thoughts determine what you're feeling, the more you understand how to move through those feelings. By focusing on our feelings, knowing what we're experiencing, I'm feeling shame in the pit of my stomach; I'm feeling stress up in my throat. I feel nervousness down in my bellybutton area. The more you become aware of how emotions move through you, the quicker you'll get through it. It's beautiful.

[Vibrant Happy Women](#) with Jen Riday



## 233: Holding Space for Yourself and Others

My friend, Danielle recently told me that when she used to get depressed, before she ever learned about the feel it to heal it method and everything else I teach in the Vibrant Happy Women Club and in the certification, she used to be kind of lost. Whenever depression would hit for her it would last several months. And she realized recently that now when she starts to lose that spark and the energy shifts and she notices her mood dropping, she's usually out of it within a week. And that's been my experience as well.

When the hard times come they don't knock us down as long or as deeply because we slowly learn to raise our emotional energy and to lift ourselves back to a higher energetic baseline that feels better. We don't have to go into that pit of despair, or frustration, or worry and get lost down there, it's not fun.

We can spend more and more time if we have the right tools, like the feel it to heal it method, and feel happier, progressively happier every day. So that in 5 years, 10 years, 15 years from now you'll know you've made progress, that you're such a happier person, that you're a light for your family. And as you hold this space for yourself, your kids watch you like a hawk, believe me, they will hold space for themselves. You will help create a new pattern for your kids, for your posterity, where they take the space when they're stressed to go meditate, to breathe, to walk, to think.

So whatever is happening in your life, decision making, a spouse going back to work, maybe you're going back to work. You're trying to figure out your new normal, you're probably feeling a range of emotions. And I want to let you know this is normal, and that you absolutely can learn the tools that will help you hold that space for yourself, help you understand how to change your thoughts so you can raise your energy to something higher vibe. So you don't have to suffer as much.

Most of us try to change by going to therapy, or reading self-help books. And those are fine, but if you don't have the tools that'll help you shift your

[Vibrant Happy Women](#) with Jen Riday

## 233: Holding Space for Yourself and Others

emotions on your own, you end up staying stuck. You end up having those pits of anxiety, and frustration, or depression that last much too long, that prevent you from showing up as the loving mom, or wife, or person that you want to be.

I know most of us listening want to be patient, and kind, and vibrant, and happy or we wouldn't be here. And I want to tell you, you absolutely can do that. When I think about how miserable I used to be as a person, how little resilience I had, how much time I spent feeling depressed, or frustrated, or angry at my kids and my spouse, and my life wasn't headed anywhere.

It wasn't until I learned the tools for changing my thoughts, and my emotions, and taking ownership of my life through thought tables, and brain downloads, and the feel it to heal it method and all of my self-love tools. And EFT tapping, all the things I try to teach you, working step-by-step through these tools, did I realize, oh my gosh, I really can hold this space of healing myself. And watching my kids and my spouse do the same has been brilliant.

So if you want to become a master of understanding your thoughts, and handling any emotion, quickly, moving through any stressful moment so you don't take out your pain and struggle, and frustration on your kids or your spouse, so you have healthier relationships, you so you spend more time feeling vibrant and happy. Definitely come join us in the Vibrant Happy Women Club. We will be talking about self-care for the entire month of September.

I would add if you want to take it to the 400 level, we have self-care and holding space 101 or 201 in the club. If you want to take it all the way to the mastery level, the Vibrant Happy Women coach certification fall session begins on September 14<sup>th</sup>. And we are accepting 20 new coach enrollees, that means you can learn the tools like a master. How to do brain downloads, how to do thought tables, how to do the feel it to heal it method

[Vibrant Happy Women](#) with Jen Riday

## 233: Holding Space for Yourself and Others

for yourself. And how to lead your kids through their emotions with open ended questions, beautiful coaching skills.

How to hold the space for your spouse without judging whatever he's thinking or doing, how to hold space at work for your coworkers who might annoy everyone around them, giving your loved ones, your coworkers, your spouse this gift of holding space is beautiful. And then as you master that, being able to become a paid coach, to do it for others, people are desperate to have someone listen and hold space without judgment for what they're feeling.

And you can give yourself, your family, your loved ones, and your clients, eventually, if you so choose, that gift. In my experience, coaching is so much more future focused and transformation focused than therapy. I have done both and I would choose a coach in a heartbeat, because we don't just spend time rehashing the past, rehashing the past, but instead we focus in on our feelings now, and our thoughts now.

And we shift the thoughts and feel the feelings so we can move forward and up level our energy and our emotions, our vibration, up level our thoughts, up level our results, start creating the future life we're looking for. In the Vibrant Happy Women coach certification we meet every week, we do a lesson, a video lesson that is supplied online, you can watch any time at your convenience. You complete a worksheet and then we meet and we practice our new skills.

We start with holding space, we move into open ended questions and then we start to master the thought table, where we understand deeply the relationship between thoughts, feelings, actions and results. We start to coach each other; we start to apply it in our lives with our spouse, our kids, our loved ones. And wow, the transformation that the women from the spring session of the certification experience is phenomenal. So much

## 233: Holding Space for Yourself and Others

more empowered, taking so much ownership for their lives, and most of them are going to become paid coaches.

Many of them thought they would start out just using it with their families, a totally valid option, a totally valid reason to join the certification, by the way. But many of them have started to see how powerful this is and recognize everybody needs these tools. Everybody needs to experience how much happier you feel when you have these tools in your tool belt.

If you would like to join us we still have a few spots left out of the 20 spots. One of the groups will be meeting during the daytime over a lunch break, the other group meets in the evening. So if you want to learn the tools of holding space for yourself, for others, understanding thoughts, feelings, actions and results, plus a number of other tools, you can go learn more about the Vibrant Happy Women coach certification at [jenriday.com/coaching](http://jenriday.com/coaching).

I would love to have you join us; it will be the best thing. I can promise you the best thing you will ever do for yourself, for your parenting, for your marriage, for your relationship with your mom and your dad, your friends, your coworkers. Plus the option to have an entirely new career where you're making a difference and doing something that fills you with joy to know that you're helping people transform their lives, and feel happier, and more in charge of the results that they're getting.

We start the week of September 14<sup>th</sup>, I'd love to have you with us, again, learn more at [jenriday.com/coaching](http://jenriday.com/coaching).

Alright my friends, I want to challenge you as I wrap up here, to create some sacred space for yourself, whether that's a walk, or a run, or a meditation practice, or getting up before your kids. You deserve this, your heart needs it. As you create space to feel your feelings, they will shift. You will feel happier. You will feel more energized and more empowered.

[Vibrant Happy Women](http://jenriday.com/coaching) with Jen Riday

## 233: Holding Space for Yourself and Others

And just to wrap up, tying it back to the story of my son, I gave myself three solid hours to feel my feelings that night with the adrenalin, and it passed. It didn't morph into anxiety and worry about the future. Feeling my feelings moved me through, I was able to go back and record this podcast, in fact, the next day. Here I am. Yes, I survived it, not only survived but I feel like I thrived and I moved some of my other stuck energy through the process.

My friends, you deserve to feel exactly what you want to feel, even during Covid, even during car accidents your kids might experience, even during whatever, trauma or stress, or frustration, or hurt, or depression, you might have experienced recently, or even currently. You can make it through; you just need to fill your tool belt with all the right tools. I love you. You've got this, go hold space for yourself. Don't forget to go check out the four part video series I am offering over at [jenriday.com/coaching](http://jenriday.com/coaching). I've love to have you watch that, all about holding space and more, [jenriday.com/coaching](http://jenriday.com/coaching).

Alright my friends, make it a vibrant, and happy, and space holding week. Take care.

If you enjoy this podcast, you have to check out the Vibrant Happy Women Club. It's my monthly group coaching program where we take all this material to the next level and to get you the results that will blow your mind. Join me in the Vibrant Happy Women Club at [jenriday.com/join](http://jenriday.com/join).