



The Marijke de Jong Podcast

Episode #3 How To Feel Bad, Mad & Sad

See the show notes at: www.straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast3

Welcome to this podcast that will change the way you think, which will change how you feel, therefore, change what you can do, so you'll get the results you are looking for. And now your host, founder of the Straightness Training Academy, Marijke de Jong.

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MARIJKE DE JONG: "Hi, everybody. Thanks for joining me today. And I'm so excited to share the second half of "Feeling Bad, Mad & Sad" with you. And in a previous episode, we discovered the four reasons WHY we're supposed to feel bad, mad, and said every now and then. And on this episode, we're going to talk about HOW to feel bad, mad and sad in a responsible and powerful way. So if you haven't listened to the previous podcast episode, I highly recommend that you go back and listen to that one, now. That is the first half and the fundament of this episode, okay

And today's episode is really for anyone who wants to use their brain powers to the highest capacity, so negative emotions start to work for you, and not against you, all right. So today's episode is an important one for you, for sure. And let's start with a personal experience.

You see, I traveled the world to do all these Straightness Training seminars in Europe, the UK, the US, Brazil, South Africa, and so on. And many Straightness Training enthusiasts and ST Instructors came to those clinics. And every now and then a student experienced a negative emotion in a lesson because something happened with their horse, or they tried a new exercise and it didn't work out the way they were hoping that it would turn out. And that made them feel sad. And because of that emotion, they started to cry. And then their fellow students or instructors were like, "Oh, don't cry, you're okay, don't cry, you'll be alright". And they immediately wanted to control the situation, you know, and they wanted the student to stop crying. And that's perfectly normal. I mean, our primitive brain wants to fix things, right? And it wants to fix it fast. Because if they feel better, we feel better. If the students feel better, if the crying student stops crying and feels better, than we feel better. And that's what the primitive brain wants, you know, everybody happy.

And this was the other thing that happened often, like, somebody asked the crying student: "What's wrong with you? Poor you! You're crying! What's wrong with you?" As if there's something wrong, you know. But that's our inner crocodile. He has a strong desire for situations being right, and doing the right things. But I was like: What if nothing has gone wrong? What if there's nothing wrong with that student? What if there's nothing that needs to be controlled or fixed? And what if this student is just going through a negative emotion, which just has a start a middle and an end? And what if we just wait and see?

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And let's hold space for the student to process the crying and the emotion. Let's just be curious, you know, and then let's see what the positive outcome will be. I mean, crying can truly release a mental or an emotional blockage. And it can reduce stress and tension. And it can make riders more vulnerable, which can deepen the bond with their horse as it releases pleasant hormones like oxytocin and endorphins. so in my opinion, that's enough positive reasons to let it all out, right?

So that's what I teach new Basic ST Instructors, I teach them to hold space for people to cry, and to be curious and non judgmental, and to just wait for the positive outcome to unfold. And I'm very excited to tell you that a brand new group of Basic ST Instructors is about to start with our certification program, and we start on April 1st, so we're getting close and that's so exciting. And if you'd like to see how this program works, then join our 5-part free training that shows you that becoming an amazing Basic ST Instructor is possible for you. And I'll list the link in the show notes, or just go to straightnesstrainingacademy.com/opportunity.

Anyways, I teach all my ST Instructors to hold space for people to cry, instead of judging it or resisting it or avoiding it. It's the opposite, you know, just accept and allow and trust the process, all right.

I mean, that's a useful thing that we can learn from our caveman ancestors. You see, feeling sad, was part of another brilliant evolutionary game plan. It was a useful strategy to emotionally bind people closer to each other. You see, as a cave person, you had to fit in with the group, because if you're alone out there at night, on the African savanna, you will soon die, you know. So feeling the fear of being kicked out of the group was a useful feeling. And feeling sad was a useful feeling. So all negative emotions with a positive influence, all right.

So nothing has gone wrong. When you experience a negative emotion in a lesson, when you start to cry, during a workshop or a clinic, nothing has gone terribly wrong. And there's nothing wrong with you. On the contrary, things are going terribly right. So that's the good news, right? It's good to know that feeling bad, mad or sad can work in our favor. And I think that is really powerful. So today's episode is an important one for you. It's about how negative emotions can be really useful, helpful, valuable, and they can really serve us. But only if we learn the skill to accept and allow and employ negative emotions in an empowering way.

And that's what we do, also in our Scholars Program, and there we learn all the tools to master our energy and to master our emotions as they can help us move forward, you see, these negative emotions. Alright.

So today in this podcast, I'll show you six incredibly powerful ways to manage your negative emotions, so they help you move forward. And I think you'll really appreciate these. And you can use all of them, or pick the one that suits you and leave the rest. Just do what's best for you.

Okay, so today we'll cover six subjects, I'll show you six incredibly powerful ways how to feel bad, mad or sad. So let's dive in.

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Number one is replacing judgment with curiosity. It's about the power of curiosity. So at the Straightness Training Academy, we don't perceive any emotion as right or wrong. Instead, we approach an emotion from a judgment free space and a place of curiosity. So we ask ourselves:

- Is this emotion useful?
- Is it helpful?
- Is it powerful?
- Is it productive?
- Does it serve me?
- And does it help me and my horse move forward?

And that's what really matters when it comes to emotions, both the negative and the positive ones.

Of course, our primitive brain wants to do the *right* thing, because doing the *right* thing meant we stay alive back in the day. And when we're not feeling positive, and when we're not feeling comfortable, we're doing it *wrong*, or something is *wrong* or something is *wrong* with you. But nothing has gone wrong. When we experience a negative emotion. The only question is, is it useful? I mean, why would we say that feeling comfortable is *right*. And discomfort is *wrong*. I mean, a positive emotion can be pretty useless, right? For instance, feeling comfortable, might keep us in the same place, it can keep us stuck. While on the other hand, the negative counterpart which is discomfort, that one can help us break through and move forward. So which one is more *useful* when we want, for example, change a situation or learn something new? Is it comfort? Or is it discomfort? Is it a positive emotion or a negative emotion?

So that's the thing, you know, the power of perceiving emotions from a place of curiosity. Not perceiving our emotions from a place of moral judgment. Not assuming that positive is *right* and negative is *wrong*, and that positive emotions are the *good* ones, and negative emotions are the *bad* ones. No.

In the Straightness Training Academy, we perceive all our emotions from a place of curiosity, while we investigate: What does this emotion teaches us? And how can we use this emotion as fuel for change? The discomfort? The disappointment? The disgust? Just ask yourself from a place of curiosity: How can discomfort be your ticket to growth and freedom? And how can you use your disappointment as a stepping stone to success? And how can you use disgust to stay on the right track? Alright.

In the end, it's all a matter of perspective, it's not a matter of *right* or *wrong*, but whether an emotion is *useful* or not, okay, that's what matters. And the good news is that we can choose to believe: it's useful or not. And you get to decide. And that puts you in charge of your negative emotion, okay.

And that leads us to the second powerful way to manage our negative emotions, and that's by owning it.

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So the second way to handle our negative emotions is called ownership. So number one, if we're curious and investigate how we can *use* our negative emotion, then we will *accept* and *allow* that emotion and then we can *to* that emotion. And when we open up to the negative emotion, then we get some authority over it, right.

And that's number two, the power of ownership. I mean, emotions like to own you, like fear, and shame, and guilt, and grief, and anger, and frustration. And sometimes it really feels overwhelming. It kind of overtakes you. It feels like it might kill you.

But let's take a look at the emotion of anxiety. When you see anxiety as something to fear and avoid, it makes it even worse. But when you own it as your own, then it's *your* anxiety, or *your* worry, or *your* discomfort, or *your* uncertainty, or whatever negative emotion comes over you regularly.

But it all comes back to the fear for change, right? Our primitive brain fears change. You know, for centuries, change was viewed as dangerous or life threatening. But stability is an illusion and uncertainty is reality. But uncertainty makes us anxious. And anxiety leads us to worry and we want to run away because we're not in control of life anymore, and we feel worse.

But if you own your anxiety, you can investigate where it's coming from by asking yourself questions, like:

- Do you have a strong need to be right? Or in control? Or successful?
- Or are you scared of inadequacy? Or failure?
- Or are you scared of being insignificant or unworthy?
- Or are you scared of being taken advantage of?
- Do you question the motives of others?
- Or do you expect affection, attention and approval of others?

See, when you own it, you can deliberately ask yourself all these questions and investigate where the emotion is coming from, and then make a conscious choice how to respond to it.

- So you can use your anxiety, for example, as a wake up call, or as a reminder that nobody can take away your worthiness without your consent.
- Or if anger is an emotion that comes over you regularly, you can use your anger as a message inside your mind telling you to take productive action.
- Or, for example, disgust: you can use disgust to say "No more! I've had it!" and then breakthrough, all right.

You see in the Straightness Training Academy we believe there's real power in owning all your emotions, both the positive and the negative. We can only own them with our higher human brain. So that's with our prefrontal cortex.

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So let's move on to number three, the third way to manage our negative emotions, and that's by using the wisdom of our prefrontal cortex.

Now, of course, we can honor the wisdom of our lower brain, our primitive brain, and we can thank our inner crocodile for keeping us safe and comfortable. But don't believe everything you think! That's number three. Don't believe your inner crocodile, as he still thinks that you're in danger every five minutes. And he wants you to feel good and comfortable and safe. And he wants it right now, which means, the moment he feels uncomfortable: He's fast. He reacts. He quickly comes up with excuses and lies and subtle justifications why you should not change. Stay in the cave! stay comfortable! You know. So be aware, and don't believe his chatter in your brain.

For example, what was that little voice this morning when it was raining, that said to me: You don't have to train! You don't have to train your horses this morning! It's raining." And my inner crocodile almost talked me into it, right.

So imagine this. There's your crocodile sitting on one shoulder and Sherlock Holmes sitting on the other shoulder, both whispering in your ear. And Sherlock Holmes says, "Go ahead and do it. Train in the rain. It will be okay." And the crocodile says "No, no, no, it won't be okay." "Yes, go ahead and do it" says Sherlock Holmes. "No, no, no!" says the crocodile.

And how often does that occur for all of us? Every day:

- Go to the gym. No.
- Start a new program. No, no, no! Don't do it.
- Get a new job. No, no, no!
- Change your career? No.

All this fear of the crocodile, you know. All this fear of the unknown. The fear of discomfort. The fear of change. The crocodile is like "Why change? Why all this effort? So we can feel good in the future? Why not do it the easy way and feel good right now?" And that's what the primitive brain will offer you, right? Let's avoid pain. Feel good right now as easy as possible.

But that leads to a small and limited life. Now remember, your inner crocodile is not deliberately trying to make your life small and limited. On the contrary, your brain is simply doing the job it has evolved to do: It tells you to keep breathing and it's simply trying to protect you. And in that positive pursuit. Your crocodile wants to afford threats and danger and change and discomfort and negative emotions, all right.

But don't believe your crocodiles lie that you're going to die. I mean, don't believe that little voice that is whispering in your ear, like: "It's raining, stay in bed, eat something, so you feel better. Remember, the primitive brain likes to feel good right now, and he loves instant gratification, so he talks you out of the uncomfortable things. And he whispers "Let's not train in the rain. Let's just stay in the cave and watch another episode on Netflix."

So don't believe your crocodile's lie that you're going to die, and that when you train in the rain, that it's a bad idea.... It's not.

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Now here's another example. It's like when you feel a sort of rejected, because you weren't invited to a party, or you didn't pass a test, something like that. And then your inner crocodile shouts in your ear: "Oh my gosh, we have been left out of the crowd. We're going to get left there on the African savanna. We're going to be left here to be eaten alive. We're going to die." But listen, don't believe him, because that's not what rejection means nowadays.

So we have to ask ourselves: What else could this mean? What are the facts? It just means we have a specific test score. And this test score relates to "not sufficient yet". It simply means we left our comfort zone, we made some mistakes, we learned how not to do it, and we're just failing fast forward, and grow as we go in the stretch zone. So we have to be smarter than our primitive brain, right? I mean, in our everyday life, with our everyday challenges, the worst that can happen is not that we're going to die, when we fail a test, no, the worst that can happen is a feeling. And the worst that can happen is a negative emotion.

So we need to plan for it, we need to plan ahead. I mean, of course, as soon as I set a big goal for myself, all this stuff comes up: I experience doubt, and uncertainty, and confusion, and concern, and discomfort, all of it. But I accept it. And I allow it. And I understand my crocodile deeply, but I tell him, I'm no longer in an acute situation of life and death, with urgency and emergency. I just tell him, that when it comes to my everyday challenges, that the worst that can happen is a feeling, and that whatever negative emotion, I feel I can handle it. I know it won't kill me.

And that leads us to number four, which is about managing our fear of fear. That's the essence, you know. And what do I mean by that? You see, some people face an actual fear that relates to an acute and urgent physical threat right now, because they're in an accident, or in a war, or in a violent situation, or they are seriously ill.

But for most of us in our everyday challenges, we're no longer dealing with the fear of getting killed in this exact moment. Instead, we are afraid of what could happen next week, next month, next year, or we are afraid of what happened in the past. So in this very moment, we're dealing with the fear of feeling a negative emotion. I mean, so much of our everyday life is spent in fear of fear.

And what are we afraid of y'all:

- We're afraid of not passing a test.
- Or we're afraid of not getting enough likes on Facebook.
- Or we're afraid of what other people think we are afraid of making a fool of ourselves.
- Of losing a game.
- Of not getting enough attention, affection and approval.
- We are afraid of not getting acknowledgement from our instructor.
- Or we are afraid of feedback.
- Or we are afraid of failing.
- Or becoming disappointed.
- Or getting uncomfortable.
- And we are afraid of rejection and humiliation and embarrassment and shame and guilt and regret.

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We are afraid just because of an emotion that we will have. And therefore we resist and avoid feeling negative emotions, which is often a bigger problem than the actual emotion itself. You see, avoiding it, resisting it, trying to get rid of it is what harms is most. Throwing up our hands like “This is terrible, unbearable”. And so we react, we check out and escape into Netflix and social media and snacks and wine and cigarettes and naps. We want to feel comfortable right now. And that's our crocodile telling you “Don't face your fear of fear. Let's fix this internal struggle with an external solution. Let's fix it right now in this moment.” But remember, it will be a temporary fix and it won't last long.

So let's deal with the internal struggle from the inside. Let's just face it. Let's not run away from it. Let's accept, allow, and experience the negative emotion. You see, that's the essence of how to manage negative emotions. Just face your fear of feeling.

I mean, it's okay for me to feel discomfort, as it helps me grow. And it's okay for me to feel disappointment, if it's an appointment for success. And it's okay for me to feel angry when it helps me identify that something needs to change.

Now, some riders come to me like: “Well, if I'm going to feel angry, my horse doesn't like me! My horse is not going to like me if I feel angry”. But here is a big distinction to make. There's a huge difference between a negative emotion and a negative action. And there's a huge difference between a negative emotion and negative behavior. You see, feelings in itself aren't bad. And anger in itself is neither good, nor bad. It's what we do with it, that matters. And only if we react aggressively or with violent behavior, it's bad. But anger, and all its variants, like annoyance and frustration, in itself, they aren't bad. I mean, these emotions employed in an assertive way, and expressed in a responsible way, they can be really a useful tool for change.

And that brings us directly to number five, which is expressing our negative emotions in a responsible way. And using our ability to respond. You see, there's a huge difference between *reacting* to anger and *responding* to anger. And when our primitive brain runs the show, we will *react* in an unconscious way. But when our higher brain is in charge, we have the ability to deliberately *choose our response*.

You see, our primitive brain will react to a threat. And nowadays in our modern world, most of the time, it's no longer a *physical* threat. Instead, it's a threat most of the times to our *opinions*, or it's a threat to our *identity*, or a threat to our *ego*. But the moment someone questions our opinions, or the moment our horse disagrees with us, or the moment our identity is threatened, our inner crocodile still thinks we're going to die. And when he's running the show, most of the time, he will do one of two things.

1. Number one is fight. So if you have a fight-oriented crocodile, he reacts in a defensive way. So when someone disagrees with you, you act out, or you blow up, or you lose your temper, or you yell and scream at your horse, or whatever it is your crocodile uses as your default ego-defense-mechanism. And these negative actions are not serving you because your crock is creating a bunch of negative results and negative effects on your horse, or other people, and you don't want that, okay.

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2. Okay, number two is flight. So if you have a flight-oriented crocodile - maybe it's a she maybe it's a he, let's say it's a she - then she reacts by running back to the comfortable cave, avoiding and hiding behind a wall of ice cream, or chocolates, or chips, or cigarettes, alcohol, work, Netflix, Facebook, or whatever it is your crocodile prefers to buffer with. And also these disempowering actions are not serving you, as they cause a net-negative effect. For example, you gain weight, or you get addicted, or you no longer train your horse, or you don't do the work, all kinds of stuff like that, all right.

But here's the good news: remember, between stimulus and response, there is a space, and in that space, we can pause our inner crocodile, we can pause before reacting. And in that pause, we can choose our response with our higher human brain. And we can choose how to express anger in responsible ways, in a way that it's useful, and that it's helpful, and that it's moving us and our horse forward. Now, you might wonder how can I do that? What are my options? So let me offer you two possible empowering alternatives as a new response, okay.

Okay, alternative 1 is you can choose *not to act* on your negative emotion at all. So for instance, you feel angry or annoyed or shame or guilt or whatever. And normally, this would cause you to take negative action, but this time, you just accept the negative emotion, you just allow it, you feel it, you observe it, you just witness it. And without trying to hurry and get it away, and without escaping it, just be present with it, breathe into it, process it, and eventually it will go away. You see, you can choose that this becomes your new response. So that's alternative number one. Now we can feel any negative emotion and consciously choose not to react, for instance:

- We can feel annoyed, but not blame our horse.
- And we can feel disappointed, but not complain about our horse.
- And we can feel frustrated, but not take it out on our horse.
- And we can feel upset, but not freak out.
- And we can feel shame, but not beat ourselves up.
- We can feel guilty or regret, but not punish ourselves.
- And we can feel rejected, humiliated, embarrassed, but not victimize ourselves.

So we have this choice not to react on the emotion. And whatever we feel, we can take full responsibility for it. We can pause and use our ability to respond - our response-ability. Responsibility / response-ability. And we can choose to show up with our higher brain in charge with our prefrontal cortex.

In a way we can choose to let go or hold on and *take purposeful action*. And that's alternative number 2. So the second alternative is that you shift your reaction with more purposeful action in order to create a positive outcome. Remember, disgust: that's a great emotion to help you take purposeful action and to turn your life around. We saw that in episode number 2, all right. So when you say, "I've had it! No more! Enough!", that's the moment that you can change yourself in a heartbeat. And you can change your thoughts. And that will change your feelings. And that will change your actions. And that helps you to get the results you're looking for. So the bottom line is that we can feel any negative emotion and express it in responsible ways. And that's something else then *reacting* unconsciously to it with *fight* or *flight* behavior. So we can now see that it's not the negative emotion that ruins the relationship with our horse. It's our primitive *reaction* that ruins it, okay. And that is really an important distinction.

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Alright, the last part of the podcast? Are you ready?

Okay, think about all the inventions. Just look around. Everything we get to experience and enjoy and consume is because of the people that went before us that were curious, you know. People who risked going beyond just surviving. They risked evolving. They risked failure. They risked disappointment. And they used negative emotions to break through and to get to the next level and to make their responsible contribution to the world.

You see, in order to take risk, we just have to help our prefrontal cortex evolve by using our brain powers to its highest capacity. And the first step is getting comfortable with being uncomfortable.

You see, a lot of people think the goal of life is to be happy, but it's not. The goal is to live a full life. And sometimes you'll have good days and sometimes bad days. Just develop the skill of being uncomfortable. Knowing you can and will get through a bad day is important. Otherwise, we'd all just be sitting in the warm cave by the fire. We wouldn't have houses, and riding arenas, and lightbulbs, and telephones, and internet, you see. Aiming for 100% happiness isn't the best strategy for everyone. reach full and meaningful life.

So that's what I'm inviting you to do. Come out of the cave. Just risk yourself:

- And risk your comfort.
- And risk your happiness.
- And risk showing up for something that maybe you've never done before.
- And risk learning something new.
- And putting yourself in challenging situations.
- Embarrassing yourself on purpose, just risk that.
- And allow negative emotions on purpose.

And this way you can grow and change and evolve. And then you can share your skills and knowledge and talents and wisdom with the world.

You see, it's all risky. The minute you were born, it got risky. And having a horse is risky. And getting a new job is risky. And starting a new career is risky. Investing your money is risky. And I'll tell you how risky life is: you're not going to get out alive. So that's risky.

So don't miss out on the full human experience. Don't miss out on being fully alive. And don't miss out on living a rich, meaningful and fulfilled life:

- Start doing what you love.
- Do what you're good at.
- Do what you can be valued for.
- And what the world needs.

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You can live the very best version of your life, if you're willing to feel negative emotions half of the time on purpose. Which - just a note - you're going to be in negative emotion half of the time anyway, that's how the universe works. You either get them by *default*, or by *design*.

You get the *default* while surviving in your comfortable cave, feeling bored and monotonous. For some of you, it's regret for not listening to yourself, or guilt after watching too much YouTube videos. For some of you, it's an emotion of lethargy, because you're not allowing your life force to truly flow through you.

So no matter how much you try, there will be positive and negative in your life. Yin and Yang. So why not consciously choose negative emotions that serve you. Feelings like fear for the unknown. Leaving the cave, not knowing what's around the next corner, not knowing how to deal with the new challenges that you're now exposed yourself to, just opening up to the uneasiness of investigating, figuring things out, growing and evolving, the discomfort of living your meaningful and purposeful life, okay. That is the Yin and Yang by *design*.

So let's recap for a second here. Let me quickly sum up the six things you must know to help you manage your negative emotions.

1. One, replace judgment with curiosity, and that's the power to choose your perspective. Alright.
2. Number two, own it. Use the power of ownership.
3. Number three, don't believe your crocodile. Just use the power of wisdom of your prefrontal
4. Okay. Number four face your fear of fear. That's the essence.
5. Number five, express negative emotions in responsible ways. Just use your ability to choose your response.
6. And number six, take risks on purpose.

And what I wish for you is lots of empowering negative emotions so you can be fully alive and live a rich life.

And check out the free resource as well. You'll find an overview of this recap in the show notes at straightnesstrainingacademy.com/podcast3. Just download the podcast freebie. It also includes some questions that you can use to deepen your awareness. So be sure to grab the free resource from this episode by heading over to the show notes.

And for those of you listening: which of these six ways to manage your emotions resonates most on you and what is your key takeaway? And then carry a little bit of that insight with you as you go into your day today, okay.

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And one last thing: At the Academy, I've started to do a free training about finding your IKIGAI, which is a space where your *passion* and *vocation* and *profession* and *mission* come together.

And it's where *what you love* meets *what you're good at*, and that meets *what you can be valued for* and *what the world needs*.

And if all those four elements come together, you found your sweet spot, you found your meaning and purpose in life, you found your IKIGAI.

And if you're interested in finding your IKIGAI, you can go over to straightnesstrainingacademy.com/opportunity and sign up for that free training.

It's a five-part video series. It's 45 minutes long. And you can download a valuable workbook that provides a set of questions to find your IKIGAI and to identify your missing links, especially if you experienced feelings of uselessness, or emptiness at the moment, or if you have this sense of uncertainty in your life, go check it out, it's absolutely free, and enjoy the video series and workbook. It's 45 minutes of pure content. And after the 45 minutes, I will be talking about my Basic ST Instructor certification program. And if you're not interested in that, you don't have to stay until the end. And there will be a replay so you will be able to go back through it. And it's solid information. It's the Japanese secret to finding a rich and fulfilling career and living the dream.

So if you want to understand your IKIGAI, and if you want me to help you with your IKIGAI, I'm offering a free training that you can sign up for and you can go over to straightnesstrainingacademy.com/opportunity.

Alright guys, I really hope that you join me there. And if not, I'll be talking to you more about our mind, mood, motivation and mastery in the next podcast episode. All right. Have a good one. Bye.”

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Thank you for listening to the Marijke de Jong Podcast. It would be awesome if you would take a moment to write a quick review on Apple Podcasts. For any questions or more information, please visit us at StraightnessTrainingAcademy.com.



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