

Ep #31: New Year's Resolutions for Widows



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With Your Host

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 31, New Year's Resolutions for Widows.

Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, the only podcast that offers a proven process to help you work through your grief to grow, evolve, and create a future you can actually look forward to. Here's your host, certified life coach, grief expert, widow, and mom, Krista St-Germain.

Hey there. Welcome to another episode of the podcast. Let's talk about New Year's resolutions. Maybe you hate them. Maybe you love them. Maybe you set them and you knock them out of the park. Maybe you set them and you're tired of failing at them. Maybe you've sworn them off entirely since you've become a widow. I don't know, but we're going to talk about it. I'm going to tell you where we get it wrong and then how we can get it right and all the things, alright.

So first though, just a little update, I am so loving the Mom Goes On coaching program that I know you've heard me talk about a gazillion times, but I just want to brag for a second on the program and on the women in it. You guys, I read our Slack community every day and the victories that they post, and it just brings me to tears.

To give you an example, without sharing names – you know who you are. You know I'm proud of you – someone yesterday in the group wrote this, "I feel like a miracle has just occurred. I started getting the feeling this evening where I just wanted to eat, even though I'd already eaten. I was aware of it and thought, this is what drives me to binge. So I closed my eyes and just tried to open up to it. Then I did a felt feeling..." which is something that I teach all of my clients, "Even as I write this, I still feel anxious. But the normally overwhelming desire to eat everything in the cabinet has passed. This is so huge for me. For the first time in a long time, I'm hopeful that I can break out of this cycle I've been in."

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Like, how good is that? If you've struggled with trying to numb a feeling with food or a substance or with shopping or any sort of behavior, you know how it feels when you feel like you're doing something against your own will and that's what this client came to me to work on and here she is only a few days into the program and already experiencing progress.

It's not because what I'm teaching is magical. They're the ones doing the work. It's because when you allow yourself and you invest in yourself, invest in your mental wellbeing, you put yourself in an environment where you get the opportunity to learn all the things you should have learned in school – how to feel your feelings, how to manage your mind, how to live intentionally, how to create on purpose, you know, all the things that make post-traumatic growth possible, then good things happen.

And so if you're in that group already, you know I'm proud of you. It really is, I think, what I've been put on this planet to do is to coach widows and to help them create happy lives again, which is so possible for all of you. So, if you're in the group, I love you so much. I'm so proud of you. If you're not in the group, you should come in. you should at least go to my website, click request a consultation, coachingwithkrista.com, and see if it's a good fit for you, see if it's what you need.

The worst thing that can happen is that it's not, and then I give you resources to help you find out what is. So actually, the worst thing that can happen, let's be honest, the worst thing that can happen is that you don't see if it's for you, you don't give yourself the opportunity to experience it and you submit to this idea that, as widows, we have to resign ourselves to a new normal that feels like meh, which I don't want for you.

So, okay, anyway, let's get into the topic at hand because listen, 2020 is coming and almost here, a new decade. And if you're anything like most of the world, if you do set New Year's resolutions, you probably don't actually

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accomplish them. So what I want to share with you is three main issues I see with New Year's resolutions and how to fix them.

And the first one of the three is that we seem to think the accomplishment with our New Year's resolutions has something to do with our worth, that we aren't good enough until we accomplish the goal. Most people I encounter, myself included – I am always a work in progress, we teach that which we most need to know – is that we don't tend to go into New Year's resolutions with a fun lighthearted, "What would I like to add to my life this year because it's what I want to get out of the human experience" kind of attitude.

It's more like, "This will be the one year where I finally show myself that I'm..." fill in the blank, "Enough." Right? Good enough, smart enough, whatever. We look at our past year and we go, "I still didn't get that thing that I should have gotten already, I should have been able to do this. Everybody else can do this. I should be able to do this. And if I could do this, I would truly be enough."

And we've bought into society's marketing messages, and specifically for widows, we put all of this pressure on ourselves to be strong enough to handle it, to be the solo parent that we think we should be able to be, to not emote in front of others, to keep it together. And we make our healing, our progress, we get it all tied up and twisted into resolutions, somehow coming up with some arbitrary measurements as though, until we do the thing, we don't get to believe we're doing well enough.

So, "Until I get his stuff organized in the garage, I don't get to believe that I'm processing it well enough, that I'm as far as I should be in my grief, or that I'm organized. I don't really have it all together until I accomplish this goal. But once I accomplish the goal, then I get to believe that I have it all together."

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No, that doesn't work that way at all because, guess what, the accomplishment of a goal isn't what causes your worth or your self-belief. First of all, our worth is totally intact, nonnegotiable. It just is. There's nothing we can do about our worth. We're just worthy because we're here on the planet and we're humans and our worth has nothing to do with us. It was just given to us at birth.

We don't have anything to prove to anybody. And as it relates to our healing, same thing, nothing to prove. It's a different journey for everybody. We don't need to accomplish anything to believe that we're on track. We don't need to accomplish anything to believe that we're good enough. We just get to believe that. And every time we try to hustle for a belief, even if we accomplish the thing that we think is the answer, our brain will move the line. It always happens.

You think, "Well, I've got to lose all the weight. Once I lose the weight, then I can believe I'm beautiful." No, because you know what happens? You lose all the weight and then, guess what you believe, "Well I should have done it sooner." Or, "Now my skin is so loose." Or, "I have all of these wrinkles. I have stretch marks. I'm still not beautiful. Now I need some sort of surgery. Then I'll believe I'm beautiful."

And then, if you have the surgery and you still don't believe you're beautiful, your brain will keep finding evidence that you're not. So setting a New Year's resolution and accomplishing it or not doesn't have anything to do with our worthiness. It doesn't have anything to do with what we get to believe about ourselves.

And as long as we believe that we have to accomplish a goal before we get to believe that we're worthy or before we get to see ourselves the way we want to see ourselves and believe what we want to believe about ourselves, we're always going to be chasing a result, and it will never be what changes our belief.

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So that's number one. We think the goal has something to do with our worth, that we're not good enough without it, we think it's the answer to a belief and it isn't. We have to believe. We have to know that our worth has nothing to do with our accomplishments.

And then we can just set New Year's resolutions for fun. We can just set New Year's resolutions because it's what we want to do with our time on the planet. It's a little more of who we want to be and it's a little more of the experiences that we want to have. And we aren't trying to prove anything to anybody, ourselves or otherwise, because there's nothing to prove because we're already amazing, we're already wonderful, exactly as we are, no resolution required.

Number two, we think the New Year's resolution is the answer to a feeling. We think, "If I just accomplish the thing, then I get to feel how I want to feel. I'll be happier. I'll be better. I'll be more fulfilled. Somehow I will have less negative emotion if I accomplish the New Year's resolution than if I don't." Not true.

Negative emotion is just part of life. It's always going to be there. It would be very weird if negative emotion weren't there. It will always be there. Now, will it be different? Yes. Will it be caused by the same sorts of things? No. It's always going to be caused by our thoughts because thoughts cause feelings. But there will always be peaks and valleys in life, always. That's just the way of it.

That's what makes emotions work, that we always have a wide variety of them. So accomplishing a goal, a New Year's resolution, will not take you to greener pastures. It will take you to different pastures, but there will still be negative emotion over there.

Like, if we think, "Okay, I need to start dating because when I start dating, then I get to be confident that I'm datable, I'm not damaged goods." Or, "I

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want to start dating because then I'll be confident and I'll feel desirable." Can you see where I'm headed here?

It doesn't work. It's not the answer to a feeling because feelings aren't caused by dating. Feelings aren't caused by weight loss. Feelings aren't caused by our finances. Feelings aren't caused by whether or not we yell at our kids. Feelings are caused by what we think about.

I used to own some fitness centers, way back in the day. Gosh, at least 10 years ago when my kids were – before they were born and then as I was having them. That was a business I was in. And my fitness centers were specifically for women. When they would come in, we always knew that what they were going to tell us, when we asked them why they wanted to lose weight, was that they were going to say forwards. And man, you could put some money on it.

They would say, "Well I want to look better and I want to feel better." And when you would dig into what does feel better mean, or why do you want to look better? The answer was often an emotion. They wanted to feel pretty. They wanted to feel confident. They wanted to feel proud. They wanted to feel capable. They wanted to feel some sort of feeling that they didn't believe was possible for them until they lost the weight, because nobody had ever taught them, and I didn't have these skills at the time or I would have done it, but I didn't learn this until so much later, nobody ever taught any of us that what causes our feelings isn't an accomplishment.

It isn't our weight. It isn't the number on a scale. It isn't any of that stuff. It isn't the number in our bank account. It isn't whether we have a husband or don't. It isn't whether we're a solo parent or not. It isn't whether we get the promotion or don't. What causes our feelings is our thinking.

And so if you want to feel proud, then what is it you need to believe to make yourself feel proud? If you want to feel organized, you don't need to

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organize a room to feel organized. You need to believe that you're a person who is organized, and that will make you feel organized, and then you will go and organize. Craziest thing.

You don't need to be supermom in order to believe that you're an amazing parent. You don't need to be supermom in order to feel confident as a mom. You need to believe you're an amazing mom and then you will feel confident. And then, because you feel confident, you'll probably show up in a totally different way as a parent. But when we think that the goal is the answer to the feeling, that the goal is responsible to a feeling, we have not yet understood the power of our thinking, of our mindset.

Okay, so number one, we think the goal has something to do with our worth, or we think the goal has something to do with our belief, so we have to check that. We have to pursue those things independently. We have to know that we are worthy and we can believe anything we want to believe. And number two is that we think the goal, the resolution, is the answer to a feeling, and it never is because any goal, the accomplishment or lack of accomplishment of a goal isn't what causes a feeling. Our thoughts are.

Number three, this is what I see, we set too many resolutions, too many and they're often unrealistic. Again, because we aren't setting resolutions for fun, most of us. We're setting them because we're hustling for something, we're hustling for our worth, we're hustling for a belief, we're hustling for a feeling.

We think something has to change in order for us to have the experience we want to have, in order for us to feel how we want to feel and believe what we want to believe, that we actually have to create something different outside of us, so we start setting too many goals. And it makes sense because we really, really want these feelings. We want to believe we're enough. We want to think we're okay. We want to feel differently. And so we start setting too many goals.

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And because we set so many goals, then our focus is all over the place. We aren't focused. And so because we aren't focused, we don't really get as far on any of the goals as we would if we just set one goal and pursued it mightily.

So I know it might be painful, but I want to offer that, as you go into the New Year and you're thinking about resolutions, that you cut it back significantly. In fact, I'm going to say, try setting one resolution, one area of focus. And that's not to say you can't do lots of different things with your time this next year. But let's try them one at a time. Let's put all of our focus on one area.

And what I love about doing that is that what happens is that that will very clearly show you where you're hustling for your worth, a belief, or a feeling. When you pair it down to one goal and your brain says, "Ah, but, but, but, but we have to do this or we don't get to feel that. We've got to do this or we don't get to believe that. Well if we don't do this, how will we ever be happier here?" And it will show you all the areas, all the ways in which you're falling into the first two traps, that you think the resolution has something to do with your worth, something to do with a belief, or that it's the answer to a feeling. So set one, do one at a time, then set the next one, and so on.

Alright, one more time, bringing it on home. So the three issues and how to fix them, the first one, we think the goal has something to do with our worth. We're hustling. We think that we aren't good enough without it. So check yourself. Why do you want this goal? Do you know that you're worthy and amazing and wonderful, even without it? Do you know that the goal is just something you get to do as the human who is in charge of her life or are you trying to prove something to you or someone else?

Number two, we think the goal is the answer to a feeling. It never is. Thoughts cause feelings. So ask yourself, what is it I think that I'm going to

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feel if I accomplish this resolution? Why, what is it? What would be different about my belief, about my thinking if I had accomplished the goal, and let's just work on that now. Chances are, that's what's required to go accomplish that goal anyway is that you have to change how you see yourself and what you believe about yourself, which is what creates your feelings and what fuels your actions.

And P.S. feelings aren't problems to be solved. They're just vibrations to be felt. We can handle any of them. If anyone knows that feelings aren't problems, my friends, it is us because we have felt a lot of them. So feelings aren't problems to be fixed and they certainly aren't going to change just because we accomplish a goal or a resolution. And number three is that we set too many resolutions; too many, too many.

Our focus is all over the place, and as a result of that, we don't accomplish typically any of our goals all the way through. We give up at some point. So narrow it down. Try one and see how that goes.

Alright, your New Year's resolutions have nothing to do with your worth. You don't need any goal to believe whatever it is you want to believe about yourself, about your healing, about your worth, about your future happiness. You get to choose that with your own brain. And feelings aren't going to be solved with New Year's resolutions. The grass will not be greener over there. Feelings are not problems and they do not change just because we do or don't accomplish a resolution.

And constraint, as it relates to resolutions, shall be your friend, so limit it, alright? That's what I have for you I hope you have an amazing week. I hope you know that I love you and you've got this. I'll see you next week. Take care, bye-bye.

Ready to start building a future you can actually look forward to? Get a free copy of Krista's Love Your Life Again Game Plan, and learn her three-step

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process so you can stop feeling stuck and start creating your next great chapter. No matter what you've been through, your past does not have to define what's possible in your future.

Text the word PLAN to 1-858-widows-1, or visit coachingwithkrista.com/plan and get Krista's Love Your Life Again Game Plan delivered straight to your inbox. A future you love is still possible and you are worth it. Text the word PLAN to 1-858-widows-1, or visit coachingwithkrista.com/plan and get your free game plan today.