

Ep #32: Dealing with Toxic People



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With Your Host

Krista St-Germain

[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 32, Dealing with Toxic People.

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.

Hello, my widowed friends. I'm wondering, do you have a toxic person in your life? Somebody you can't stand being around? Somebody you keep trying to figure out how to get away from because they just get under your skin and you feel icky when you're around them? I think most of us do.

And today. On the podcast, I'm going to challenge the idea, which might be new to you, I'm going to challenge the idea that there is such a thing as a toxic person and I'm going to tell you why thinking of people as toxic actually makes your relationship harder instead of easier.

Before we jump into that though, just to kind of bring you up to speed, I always record the podcast a little early but this time, when this podcast releases, I'm going to be knee-deep in master coach training in – get this, of all places – the Cayman Islands. What? I've never been to the Cayman Islands. And to say I'm excited would be an understatement.

I, as you probably have heard me talk about on the podcast, have studied and taught for The Life Coach School. And so since the fall, I've been working on getting master coach certified. It's important to me, as a life coach, to continue honing my craft, to continue becoming better at what I do so that I can serve my clients at a higher level. And so this year, I decided to take the leap and apply for master coach certification. I was accepted.

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And so while you're listening to this podcast, if you're listening the week it comes out, I'm going to be in the Cayman Islands with a group of kindred spirit life coaches who I just love to pieces, and all of the master coaches from The Life Coach School that I respect so very much, and learning to become an even better coach.

Honestly, it's kind of an investment. It's an investment of time, it's an investment of money, but an investment is what makes me take it so seriously. If it was just free, if it was easy, I probably wouldn't be as dedicated to it as I am and it wouldn't be as transformative as it is.

And I've been watching the women in my Mom Goes On small group coaching program, and I think the reason they are getting such transformation, even though the program's only been going for a couple of months now, I think the reason they're getting such transformation is because of what the program requires of them. It actually does require an investment of time and energy, and because they've gone all in on themselves and because they're willing to show up and get coached and come to the calls or ask for coaching in the online community and they're actually applying the tools that I'm teaching them, that's why they're seeing such changes. It's the product of consistent application.

So, I guess, if you're listening, what I want to tell you is that I wish there was a magic pill I could give you that just makes you love your life, but that's just not the way that it works. We actually have to invest in applying what we're learning. We actually have to invest in thinking about ourselves differently and making powerful decisions about what we want in our lives and committing to go and get them. And that's when transformation comes.

That's what I did in my life. That's what I teach you to do. That's what I teach my clients to do. And the women that are really interested in applying that work are the women I love working with. So I wonder if that's you. Are you the kind of person that really wants to take what I'm teaching and figure

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out how to put it into practice in your life so that you really can be obsessed with your life again, like love it truly, not just faking it, but truly love it?

If that sounds like you, I just want to tell you, spaces for February are open, and you can go to coachingwithkrista.com and just request a call with me and then we'll see if it's a good fit.

Okay, let's talk about toxic people. I'm going to tell you about one of my clients. I never say names, but one of my former clients came to me very upset, specifically about her toxic in-laws. And she told me that she really just resented them, the way they treated her. She didn't think they'd ever really liked her. They'd kind of always disapproved of her decision to marry their son, or I guess maybe his decision to marry her.

And she thought that they looked for really just every opportunity to belittle her, cut her out. After her husband died, they told her that they were leaving all of their money to her children and not to her. But even before that, she'd always felt uncomfortable around them. She didn't think they respected her career. She didn't think they respected her decisions as a mom.

And then, when her husband died, she felt really conflicted because for so long she wasn't happy around them, and now with her husband not there to be the buffer, she didn't want to be near them. She believed they were toxic. But out of respect for her late husband, she didn't want to cut them out either.

Then, of course, there were her children who loved their grandparents. And my client didn't want to interfere with their relationship, but at the same time, she really never wanted to see them again. She really believed that there was no possible way for her to be in their presence and not be miserable.

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She thought they were just toxic people and she felt so trapped, and there was no way for her to win. And she came to me wanting help to deal with these people who, in her mind, were toxic. It was just a done deal.

So, I wonder if you can relate to this, maybe not her exact story, but who is that person in your life that you consider toxic? Is it a family member? Is it a coworker, a neighbor? Maybe it's an environment. You know, we hear a lot about work environments being toxic. So who is it for you?

So often, I really do see that it has something to do with our late husband's family or friends, or something that just wasn't there before he died that now since he died, maybe we could manage it before or he was the buffer before, but now there's somebody that we just don't know how to deal with, and so we consider them toxic and we just want to get away.

And so what I want to teach you are three things about toxic people, so stay with me, because I think this is going to help you. So, number one, there is no such thing as a toxic person. Chemicals are toxic. People are not toxic. There is really, truly no such thing as a toxic person.

And here's why I say that; no matter how someone is around us, whatever they are, even if everyone would agree that they have a very negative energy or that they make bad choices or that their behaviors are universally disliked, none of that can rub off on us. If you're around a toxic chemical or you breathe in toxic fumes, it seeps into you. The only way to not be impacted by a chemical or a fume that's toxic is to get away from it.

People are not like that. Emotions are not contagious. If someone is stressed or angry, that stress or anger that they create with their own thoughts can't leak onto us. We can be completely calm, even when someone around us is running around like a chicken with their head cut off, even if somebody is yelling at us, their behavior is not contagious.

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If someone yells at us, we're not forced or required to yell back. We're not even required to feel bad about it. So I want to offer that, number one, this whole popular concept of toxic people is hogwash. There really is no such thing.

And thank goodness because, if there were, we'd have to be running from these people. We would need some sort of shelter. We would need protective gear. It would be like a health epidemic. So can we just stop calling people toxic? It's really not how it works, right?

Number two, what makes a person difficult to deal with isn't actually the person. It's not even their behaviors. It's not what they say or what they do. It's what we think about what they say or do. It's our thoughts about that person that make them difficult. And this is good news because we're in charge of our thoughts.

Because really, people aren't difficult or easy. People just are. And they do things and they say things. We all do, right? And then, when people in our lives say things or do things, we have thoughts about what those people say and do. And most of those thoughts aren't ones we're picking on purpose. But those thoughts are what create our experience of people around us. It's not what people actually do that creates our experience of them, it's what we think about what they do.

My client's in-laws told her that their money was going to their grandchildren. That wasn't what upset my client. What upset my client were her thoughts about her in-laws that, if they had loved her, they would have made arrangements for her to receive her husband's inheritance and not her children.

So, she made what they said mean that they didn't love her. She wanted them to love her and she didn't think that they did. Now, I'm really not saying that she should be thinking about them any differently. That's

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completely her decision to make. It's not mine. There's no right or wrong when it comes to thinking.

But what I want to point out is that the reason her experience of those in-laws was so awful was because of the story that she was telling herself about them. And whenever we think awful thoughts about other humans, we feel awful, not the other humans. Because, remember, feelings aren't contagious, so when we think thoughts about other people that create frustration or anger or resentment or helplessness, then we feel those feelings. My client's in-laws didn't feel all the feelings she was having about them. They were just living life the way that they wanted to, meanwhile she was completely miserable.

So, there's no such thing as a toxic person. What makes a person difficult to deal with isn't actually the person, it's our thoughts about them. Honestly, we don't really know what's going on in the minds of other people. My client didn't know what was going on in the minds of her in-laws. But the good news is that it doesn't even matter because someone can truly hate us, like truly hate us, and we don't have to be affected by that. We don't have to hate them back.

We can let them experience the hate that they feel toward us and we don't have to experience any hate for them. No one is so powerful that they can make us feel an emotion because, since thoughts cause feelings, the only way that would ever be possible is if they could actually think our thoughts, and they can't do that because that happens inside of our brain.

We're the boss of our thinking. And we can think anything we want with or without someone's consent. So, there's no such thing as a toxic person. Number two, what makes a person difficult to deal with isn't actually the person, it's our thoughts about them, which we're in charge of. And number three, why this matters, we don't have to keep anyone in our lives who we

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don't want to. But thinking of them as toxic makes us their victim and it makes them our villain.

So I'm not saying that you have to love everybody and keep them in your life and become a doormat. But what I'm saying is that thinking of someone as toxic actually makes us less powerful and them more powerful. Because if we assign someone the role of villain in our lives, we give them power. And we begin to think about them more and now they're taking up real estate in our brain and we're believing that they have to change in order for us to be happy. And so we're trying so hard to get them to follow our manual for how we believe they should behave because we think we can't be happy around them because of who they are and how they show up.

Think about that person that came to mind earlier when I asked you who the toxic person in your life was. How do you feel when you're around them and you're thinking of them as toxic? Powerless, right, helpless, frustrated, at their expense. And this matters because emotions are what fuel our behavior. Emotions are the reason we do or don't take any action in our lives.

And so how do we behave because we're feeling powerless or helpless or frustrated or at someone's expense? We shrink. We retract. We avoid. We blame. We're less able to advocate for ourselves, not because of the person, but because of how we're thinking about that person and because of the emotions that we're creating for ourselves.

But on the contrary, if we believe that people around us can say and do as they please and that their behavior has no power over us, then we take responsibility for our emotions and our behaviors, and we become more powerful and we can be around someone whose behaviors we don't enjoy, but see them as no more or less powerful than we are. And that's when we feel empowered. And that's when the playing field becomes even.

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And when we don't make them our villain and we don't see ourselves as their victim, then we can decide how we want to respond, do we want to have them in our lives? Not out of fear or anger or frustration or helplessness, but because we're fully in charge of us, we're driving the bus of our lives.

And if we need to remove ourselves from situations, we can. If we want to advocate for ourselves or for our children, we can, and that is power. And that is only possible when we realize that it doesn't matter what other people say or do. We don't have to feel anything. We get to be the boss of that. We get to choose what we think. We get to choose how we feel. And we get to choose how we show up and who we want to be, no matter how anyone else shows up in our lives.

So here's what I want you to do. I want you to think about that person or that environment that you labelled as toxic. And I want you to consider that maybe they aren't as powerful as you've been thinking that they were; consider that they really have no power over you. And then, I want you to decide on purpose how you want to think of them in a way that keeps you fully in your own power instead of at their expense.

Okay, so one more time, no such thing as a toxic person. What makes a person difficult isn't actually the person. It's just our thoughts about them and we're in charge of our thoughts. And we don't have to keep anyone in our lives who we don't want to. But thinking about them as toxic makes us the victim and them our villain.

I hope that was useful to you. If this podcast helped you, I'd love it if you subscribed and if you gave a quick rating or a review so that other widows like us can find it, okay. Alright, remember, I love you and you've got this. I hope you have an amazing week and I'll see you next time. Take care, bye-bye.

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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 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.