

Ep #37: Valentine's Day On Purpose



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With Your Host

Krista St-Germain

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 37, Valentine's Day On Purpose.

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, everybody, welcome to another episode of the podcast. So, Valentine's day is right around the corner. And, for many widows, it's one of the worst days of the year, right? So, in this episode, we're going to talk about how you can change your experience of Valentine's day by doing it on purpose. And, no matter where you are in your grieving or where you are in your love life, if you follow the two steps that I'm going to teach you, I promise, you're going to be so glad that you did.

Before we jump into that though, I want to share with you a podcast review, a little listener shoutout. I really appreciate it when you write reviews about the podcast, not only because it helps me know what you find valuable about the podcast, but just because it helps other people find the podcast.

So, I want to thank Marika, who wrote a great review, "Great podcast for anybody." And she gave five stars and wrote, "Losing a spouse is so difficult. I didn't realize how difficult it is to learn to live without them too. This podcast really helped me understand and sort through all of my feelings. Highly recommend."

Thank you for that review, Marika. I very much appreciate it. and for those of you who have taken the time to submit a review, even if I haven't read yours, it is so much appreciated.

So, what's going on in my life – just because you might want to know – I have told you before that I'm currently going through a master coach

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certification program with The Life Coach School, which is where I did my life coach certification. I also teach for this school. And so, I'm going through their master coach training program.

And, of course, my goal is just to up-level my coach, to be the best coach that I can be. And so, as part of that, we got to spend a week in Grand Cayman, which was not the worst place you could have a training. So, I did that earlier this year. And then, after the in-person training, we are all doing a large project.

And the purpose of the project is to up-level, to evolve into the next best version of ourselves, both as coaches and as individuals. So, what I'm going to be working on, which is a little counterintuitive, I think to most, is I'm going to be working on learning to fail.

I know that I have perfectionist tendencies, and perfectionism, for me, is just a symptom of some beliefs that I have, an unwillingness to risk rejection, an unwillingness to be vulnerable. And you might disagree. If you've listened to the podcast, you might think that I am very vulnerable. But I really want to take that to the next level.

I want to get past my hesitation to put myself out there in certain ways and I want to be able to fail on purpose knowing that the worst thing that can ever happen to me is a feeling, and knowing that I can handle any feeling, and that I create those feelings with my mind.

So, what I've done is I've set an impossible goal for myself. So, between the beginning of February and the end of April, I've set an impossible goal, which my brain truly believes is impossible, of making \$150,000, generating that for myself. I've never done that. That feels truly impossible to me, and that's kind of the point.

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I've set this impossible goal because I know we can just get straight out of the way any ideas that I might actually hit this goal. Hitting the goal is not the purpose of the impossible goal. Growth is the purpose of the impossible goal.

So, I've set a goal that I genuinely don't believe I can hit. And it doesn't even matter if I hit it. but the byproduct of having worked towards this goal for the time that I'm going to work towards it is that by the end of it, I'm going to be more willing to take massive imperfect action. I'm going to be more willing to show up for myself and show up for you and be vulnerable and honest and take risks and really do some of the things that I've been wanting to do but have held myself back from doing.

I'm going to up-level. I'm going to work on my perfectionism by getting really good at failing. And when I say failing, I don't mean the type of failing where I set an intention and then I don't follow through; I take the easy way out. I mean the type of failing where I set an intention, I have a desired result, and I go like crazy towards that result and I don't get it.

But it's not because I didn't try. It's not because I didn't show up for myself. It's not because I didn't show up for my clients. I'm going all in, putting myself in the ring, the scary ring where you get dirty and maybe bloody, and that's okay, that's the point of it, so that I can take my growth to the next level, because that's the kind of master coach that I want to be. That's the kind of human that I want to be.

So, I'm going to bring you along with that, with the hopes that one, it helps me be more vulnerable with you, but also maybe it will help you embrace this idea of massive imperfect action, embrace this idea that discomfort is the path to where you want to go and that you can handle any emotion and you can fail on purpose and be successful in terms of deciding who you want to become.

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So, that's the journey that I am undertaking. I look forward to taking you along on it with me and seeing who I become at the end of it and how it changes me, because that's what I want out of life.

Alright, let's talk about Valentine's Day, shall we? I was in the grocery store this weekend, and it looked pretty much like Cupid threw up on at least two full aisles. It was pink and red and fluffy and lots of Valentine's Day things, which, for widows, can really be super challenging.

There's so much in our environment that can be triggering. And you know that I don't love that word triggering, but we're seeing things because of the holiday in our physical environment that give us opportunities to think things that make us feel awful. And so, I want to talk about that.

And I want to teach you two really simple things that you can do to have a different experience of Valentine's Day, a more purposeful experience on Valentine's Day. I want you to have a Valentine's Day on purpose.

And I really don't care where you are in your healing. It doesn't matter to me if you're recently widowed and you're at that stage where you don't want to think about another relationship, you can't imagine another relationship. You're just trying to get through the day. Maybe you're at that point where a shower is a victory to you; this applies.

It doesn't matter if you're contemplating dating but you're not dating. Maybe you're wondering if true love is ever possible or if it's going to be worth the hassle, or how would you ever have time to fit it in. Or maybe you are dating. Maybe you're happily dating. Maybe you're miserably dating. Maybe you are comparing who you're dating to your late husband and comparing Valentine's Day the way it is now with this new person to the way that it used to be with your husband. It doesn't really matter where you are; this applies.

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So, the two steps, quite simple. The first step is that I want you to notice the extra thoughts in your brain. And by extra, I mean dramatic. Have you ever heard – I don't know how old your kids are, but mine use this phrase, "Extra. People are so extra," meaning they're over the top.

I want you to notice those over the top, those extra thoughts in your brain about Valentine's Day. I want you to notice your brain wanting to make Valentine's Day and being a widow and what's happening in your life right now mean something extra, something over the top, dramatic.

Our brain tends to have thought errors anyway, also sometimes called cognitive distortions. But on Valentine's Day, our brains offer those distortions on steroids. Like, sometimes, little dramatic, the human brain. So, this step one is not to change these thoughts. I just want you to notice them.

And I'm going to give you some examples because none of these thoughts are right or wrong. None of them are things you shouldn't be thinking. But I want you to start noticing what your brain is offering you on a day like Valentine's Day because once you can see it, then you can start making some decisions.

It's really difficult to get perspective when you're in the middle of the storm until you can actually notice that you're in the middle of the storm. And so, these extra thoughts can feel very stormy. And here are some patterns.

We tend to have extra thoughts that over-generalize. And over-generalizing is when we believe one instance applies to every situation. So, maybe you've had several Valentine's Days since your husband died and maybe you haven't enjoyed any of them. And over-generalizing would be to make it mean that, "I haven't enjoyed a Valentine's Day since he died, so I'll probably never enjoy one again. The day is tainted." That's over-generalizing.

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So, I want you to look for your brain and how it over-generalizes and how it offers to you that something that happens once applies to everything in your life, or every Valentine's Day in your life.

The brain also has a tendency to catastrophize. And catastrophizing is when we think a situation is much, much worse than it actually is. So, for Valentine's Day, a catastrophizing thought might look like, "I'm not in love today, so I'll never find love again. Nobody loves me today. I don't love anybody today, so it's doomsday. It's never going to be good again." That's catastrophizing.

Then, I also want you to be on the lookout for your brain wanting to outsource your happiness. And outsourcing happiness is when we give outside factors, things outside of us, the final say about our emotions.

So, if we aren't in a relationship, then when we're outsourcing our happiness, we might make it mean that we can't feel loved on Valentine's Day, unless we have someone to love us, that we forget that our thoughts cause our feelings and we give our emotional state away to external circumstances we outsource our happiness and we decide that if things outside of us are responsible for our happiness and they aren't the way we want them to be, then we can't be happy.

So, so far, we're watching for over-generalization, where we believe that one instance applies to every situation. We're watching for the extra thoughts of catastrophe, where our brain is telling us that things are much worse than they are. We're looking for our brain to outsource our happiness and tell us that things outside of us have the final say with regard to our emotions because we forget that our thoughts cause our feelings.

And then, we're also looking for our brain's tendency to have a false sense of helplessness. And this is when we believe that we have less power than

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we actually do. So, when we have a false sense of helplessness, we think that things that are inside of our control are outside of our control.

So, we think things like, for Valentine's Day, "There's no point in dating. There's no point in trying to find love again. I'll never find someone as good as him. No one will ever love me like he did. All the good ones are taken. Dating is hard. Love is hard." We put ourselves in this helpless place on accident with our thoughts. We forget how powerful we are when we're believing these extra thoughts that have this false sense of helplessness.

And then, the last kind of extra thought that I want you to be looking for is the shoulding thoughts, the shoulding thought patterns; thinking the way that we want things to be as the way that they should be. And that looks like "I should be farther along in my healing. I should have someone else in my life. This shouldn't have happened. He shouldn't have died. I shouldn't be alone on Valentine's Day. This was not how my life was supposed to go. Those are the shoulding thoughts. I should be doing better than I am.

All of these extra thoughts tend to show up around days like Valentine's Day. And there are more of them. I'm just giving you a few of the common thought errors or cognitive distortions. But I want you to be on the lookout for these. And I'm not asking you to change these thought patterns.

And this is important. Changing them can be work. This is the kind of work that I do when I'm coaching people and in my coaching program. So, I'm not asking that you change the patterns. I'm just asking you to be curious and notice them. Notice what's happening in your brain. Expect that your brain is going to offer you some thought storms.

Your brain is going to offer you some of these common thought errors. And be on the lookout for it so that you can see it and you can see that it doesn't mean you've done anything wrong. It doesn't mean there's anything wrong with you. It doesn't mean it's always going to be this way.

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It just means that you have a human brain with some thought patterns. And when you think those thoughts and your brain tends to want to be dramatic, which all brains do – my brain definitely does – it wants to over-generalize and believe that one instance applies to every situation, it wants to make catastrophes out of everything, it wants to blame your lack of happiness on things outside of you, it tends to make you think that you're way less powerful than you are, and it offers you all of these thoughts about the way things should be.

None of those things feel good. And once you can start to see them as optional, then you're going to be able to leverage your brain. You're going to be able to start choosing things on purpose.

But what I want you to do this Valentine's Day is not really even try to change any of it. Just notice it. The second step - Valentine's Day is an opportunity to love someone. And so, what I want you to do is I want you to choose, on purpose, who are you going to love on Valentine's day and how?

Now, this does not mean it has to be someone outside of you, maybe the person that you're going to love on Valentine's Day is you. It doesn't really matter who you're loving. The point is that you're choosing love on purpose. So, if you're going to love you, you get to decide what that looks like.

Maybe you just want to be sad, and maybe you just want to wallow. And that's okay. If that's what you choose on purpose, you have permission to wallow and to be sad with the best of them. I have definitely done this. You can be as sad as you want to be. There is never anything wrong with being sad.

Maybe you want to buy yourself flowers. Maybe you want to treat yourself to a new perfume or get a manicure or a pedicure or just have some time

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alone and read or watch a TV show that you want to watch. Like, what feels like love to you, for you? If you are the person you choose to love, what feels loving? Do that. That's what I want you to do.

Maybe you want to love your kids extra hard today and you want to do something nice for them. You want to maybe cook something that they love or buy them special treats or make them little presents or just spend some quality time with them or ply boardgames. But you want to love your kids on purpose.

Maybe you want to love your late husband on purpose. Maybe you want to go to his graveside and bring him flowers or you want to put on his pajamas and feel connected to him. I still love doing that. Maybe you want to buy something that he would have loved and give it to someone else, you know, not out of romantic love, but just as a kind gesture, just as a way to remember him and show some love for him.

Maybe you want to love a stranger. Maybe you want to do a random act of kindness and pay it forward. It doesn't really matter. But love is something that we generate. We generate the emotion of love. We generate actions that come from love. We can be love. We can feel love. We can show love. And that's what Valentine's Day is about.

And so, I want you to pick, who are you going to love today? How are you going to love them? Don't let Valentine's Day happen to you. Don't feel like you are the victim of Valentine's Day because we haven't gotten there yet. We can make some choices.

We get to decide, no matter what's happened to us, whether we're in a relationship or not or widowed or remarried or remarried and divorced, or who knows, all of you are coming from very different circumstances. It doesn't matter.

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What matters is that we are human beings on the planet who get to decide who we want to love and how. And so, I want you to do that on purpose.

So, here's what I've decided to do for Valentine's Day. I'm not currently dating. I'm not in a relationship. So, I'm going to love me and I'm going to love my kids, and I'm going to love someone else that I don't know. And so, what I'm going to do is, number one, I'm going to buy myself flowers.

I never do that. I used to do it a little more regularly, but lately I haven't. and so, I'm going to buy myself a beautiful arrangement. And I'm going to enjoy it. I'm going to put it on the dining room table and I'm going to look at it and I'm going to smell it and I'm going to love it. I'm going to spoil myself with flowers, which is not something I've done lately.

And I'm going to love my kids. I'm going to make them something. I don't know what yet. But I will make them a nice meal and I'm going to spend some extra time with them. There's this game that my son and I have been playing lately, which is like a super-simple block game that's really fast-paced. And I'm going to make time for us to play that game. Maybe we'll do a puzzle or something else, but we're going to do something together and I'm going to spend quality time with them and love them.

And the third thing I'm going to do – and you don't have to do this many things, I'm just telling you what I'm going to do. The third thing I'm going to do is I'm going to go to Starbucks, because I love Starbucks, who doesn't? And I'm going to get my cinnamon dolce breve venti and I am going to buy the drinks for the people behind me.

And I don't care how much it costs. Who knows, maybe it will be one. But to me, there is nothing better than a random act of kindness like that. It feels so good to me. I love knowing that I've made somebody else's day. It's super simple. I get a coffee I love. I get the thrill of loving other people, and doing it not only for them, but doing it for me.

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I'm going to choose that on purpose and I'm going to love me, I'm going to love my kids, and I'm going to put some extra love out into the world. So that's what I'm going to do. And I'm going to watch my brain. I'm going to notice my extra thoughts, my dramatic thoughts.

I'm going to notice if my brain wants to over-generalize or catastrophize or should on me or make me think that my happiness is outside of me. I'm just going to be interested and curious and fascinated with anything that my brain has to offer me, knowing that it doesn't mean I've done anything wrong; it just means I'm a human. It just means that I have a human brain with human thought patterns, and it's all okay.

So, that's what I want for you to do, alright? Notice the extra dramatic thoughts. You don't have to change them. Just notice them. And then decide, on purpose, if Valentine's Day is a day about loving, who do you want to love? Who are you going to love? Is it you? Is it your kids? Is it your late husband? Is it someone new? Is it some stranger? How are you going to generate love for yourself and experience love on purpose so that Valentine's Day isn't happening to you, you are deciding how you want to experience it?

Alright, that is what I have for you today. And hey, if we haven't talked on the phone, if you have not requested a consultation call with me, a free coaching call with me, what's going on? Why haven't you done this?

I love to do them. I only do a few a week, but it is my goal to help as many widows as I possibly can. So, if you are genuinely interested in seeing if coaching is a good fit for you, then I want you to go to coachingwithkrista.com and click request a consultation. And that will take you to a little questionnaire and my calendar and you can request a consult. I'll review your questionnaire. If it seems like a good fit, we'll hop on the phone and I'll see how I can help you.

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Maybe my group coaching program is right for you, maybe my one on one coaching is right for you. But I would love to talk with you and get to know you. So fun.

Alright, listen, go out there and make Valentine's Day on purpose, alright. And remember, I love you, you've got this, and 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 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.