

Ep #55: How to Be Your Own Champion



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With Your Host

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 55, How to Be Your Own Champion.

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 back to another episode of the podcast. So, we're going to talk about how to be your own champion today. And let me tell you, this morning, I was not being my own champion at all. I was feeling really, really stressed and I sat down to do my own coaching on it.

I self-coach regularly. It's something I also teach all of my clients to do. But I was coaching myself and I was realizing – and I kind of knew it last night when I went to bed, to be honest, but I just let myself go to bed anyway and kind of tried to avoid it.

But what I was realizing this mornings is that even with all of this knowledge and all of this coaching experience, I was still holding myself to an impeccably high standard, right, trying to be responsible for everyone's happiness; my children, my parents, all the people in the world, and trying to plan a summer that everyone wants in the middle of a pandemic. And basically, just trying to control so many things that are outside of my control and really stressing myself out in the process.

And then, not being kind to myself through all of it. In my chest, I was taking these deep breaths and just feeling so tight. And so, I first decided to do a little tapping; an emotional freedom technique. I talk about it on the podcast quite a bit. But I use it regularly. I teach my clients how to do it. I use it with my children. I find it to be one of the most amazing and helpful parts of my self-coaching.

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And so, I did some tapping and just allowed myself to acknowledge all that I was thinking and all that I was feeling and kind of make space for it. and I just let it all be okay and let it all be part of my experience. And I opened up to it. Which sounds weird, right?

Who wants to open up to a tight chest? Who wants to open up to stress? But when I did that – and this is why I teach it – it helped me let that flow through me. It helped me process all of those emotions and then reconsider things from a different perspective. It helped me kind of get my nervous system in a place where I could access the wisdom of my higher brain.

And that's when I sat down and I wrote this podcast episode and all of what I'm about to tell you just kind of poured out of me. And it's really all related, right? It's why we aren't being our own champions. And I know this firsthand because I've done it so many times myself. And how to do it. So, that's what I want to teach you today. And I think it's going to be incredibly useful for you.

But, before we jump in, I want to do a couple of listener shoutouts. You know I love listener appreciation. And today, I just wanted to read a couple of reviews submitted, first by CaliforniaGrammie, which I love that name, CaliforniaGrammie.

And CaliforniaGrammie wrote, "Thank you, Krista, for this podcast. It's helped me so much, I literally recommend this podcast to every widow I speak to. I lost my husband three months ago unexpectedly and I've never experienced grief before, so your guidance has been a huge blessing to me."

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I'm so sorry for your loss, CaliforniaGrammie, but I'm really glad that my podcast is helping you as you work your way through it. And then the next one was from a listener who calls themselves MontereyND.

And she wrote, "Thank you so much for your podcast. I may be in the minority. I'm not a widow, but likely facing the end of my marriage, which is not what I want. I'm familiar with grief as I lost my first son suddenly when he was seven months old. I find myself processing through the same thoughts and emotions as I face the end of this chapter as I faced when my son died. I'm so grateful my friend told me about your podcast and work. I've been listening to a lot of different coaching and your words really, really resonate and have helped me so much. Thank you."

Listen, you're welcome. And let's all remind ourselves that in the context of this podcast, yes, I'm talking about grief and I'm specifically talking about the loss of a spouse, the loss of our husband or partner. But grief is not limited to death. Grief is a natural human response to loss and loss has so many different definitions and so many different ways of showing up in our lives.

So, MontereyND, I'm glad this is helping you as you work through what's going on in your marriage. And don't let anybody tell you that any loss is invalid. Your thoughts and your feelings about this loss for you are just as valid as anyone else's thoughts and feelings about whatever loss it is that they're going through. And so, I just want to extend that to you and I hold you in my heart.

Okay, let's get into it. Here's the problem, as I see it. We aren't being our own champions. We are judging ourselves at every turn. We are expecting the impossible from ourselves. I kind of see it like, we're acting like circus ringmasters, trying to control everything and everyone, trying to make everyone happy, put on the show, solve all the problems, do all the things,

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be the mother and the father, meet everyone's needs, manage the finances, handle the house, keep everyone happy, prove to ourselves and others how strong we are and that we've got it all under control.

We're expecting the impossible. We're expecting perfection. And we've adopted the standards of consumerism as our own, right? We have to look the part. We have to have all the things. We have to be happy all the time. And we don't because we can't, because it isn't possible and because that's not where happiness comes from.

But we hold ourselves to this standard that doesn't make any sense and isn't possible and we make ourselves miserable and we put so much pressure on ourselves, it's literally killing us. I'm not exaggerating. Our nervous systems are exhausted. And I'm not even talking about how out of whack things already are just because of grief.

Our adrenal fatigue, off the charts. We're anxious, we're stressed, we're sad. And that's why I want to do this episode, because it doesn't have to be this way. But most of us, we're either dwelling in the past or we're worried about the future and we're wishing things hadn't happened the way that they did or we're wishing that we could get a do-over.

Or we're looking forward and we're feeling anxious about what's coming our way. And we're allowing ourselves to believe the terrible stories that our brains are making up about how things are going to unfold instead of choosing on purpose what we want to believe and what we want to create and we're feeling very helpless and powerless. And we're doing it to ourselves and we don't know we're doing it.

And we don't know how to feel our feelings, and so we're distracting ourselves from what we feel and we're using food and alcohol and work and projects and Netflix and shopping and cellphones and social media.

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And we're not able to stay present with ourselves and we're desperately seeking pleasure from things outside of ourselves instead of figuring out how to create pleasure on purpose in the ways that we want.

And we're judging. We are judging so much. We're judging how we feel. We're telling ourselves we should be feeling differently. We're judging our grief. We're telling ourselves we should be farther along or we should be doing it differently. We're judging ourselves as parents, as mothers.

We're using whatever is going on in our kids' lives as weapons against us, as evidence that we aren't good enough parents. We're comparing ourselves to other people. We're using their success as weapons against ourselves. We're judging how other people show up and wishing that they were different.

And this judgment is keeping us so frustrated and so resentful and so stuck. And most of us are not making ourselves and our mental health a priority. We aren't figuring out how to take care of ourselves from a place of self-love. We're not choosing to make time to invest in what will ultimately allow us to create the life we want. We aren't being our own champions.

And listen, I say this with love. I say this as a woman who has done this to herself and still has to constantly remind herself to be her own champion, right? We teach what we most need to learn. I continue to try and learn this for myself and so therefore I will teach it to you.

So, this doesn't come from a high preachy place. This doesn't come from any sort of judgment, as though I am better than you. I am struggling with this as much as anyone on the planet.

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So, what do we do? How do we become our own champion? I think there are essentially three steps. Just three. I'm not saying they're easy, but they're simple to understand.

So, first, we actually have to make a decision that we will be our own champion. We have to decide that for ourselves. We have to decide that we will figure out how to do it, that we won't give up until we create a different relationship with ourselves.

We have to decide now to treat ourselves with loving kindness, no matter what. And not only do we have to decide now, but we have to keep choosing it over and over every day for the rest of our lives. We have to keep reminding ourselves that we are our own advocate, our own ally, our own cheerleader, our own champion.

There is no one more qualified. No one else can do this job. But we have to choose to do it. So, are you with me? I want you to choose to do it now. Even if you think you've already chosen it, choose it again. Reaffirm to yourself that you choose to be your own champion, no matter what. That's step number one.

We have to choose to make a decision that we are our own champion, we will be our own champion. Step number two is we have to get clear on how we want to measure our success. We have to decide that perfect is not the goal. It is not possible. It is not the goal.

How about – here's my suggestion – we decide that the goal is to be an imperfect messy human whose heart is in the right place, that we wake up every day and that we do the best we can with what we know and that that is a measure of our success, that we figure out how to love ourselves, including our flaws, how to love our imperfect human selves.

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That we stop holding ourselves back from feeling good because of our own self-criticism and we allow our feelings to run their course and we stop judging ourselves for having them and we stop telling ourselves they shouldn't be there and we focus on what we can control. Which is just our thoughts and our feelings and our actions. That's what creates our results, right?

We can't control the way other people think or feel, even our children, and certainly not our in-laws or our late-husband's family or our coworkers or any of the people that have opinions about how we're running our lives. And we need to stay in our own lane, let other people have their own human experience.

Because the only thing we can control is our response to how other people choose to be. We can control our response to the things that happen to us. And we've got to stop using everybody else's thoughts and feelings as our measurement. So, let's get really clear on how we want to measure success because if it's based on how everybody else is feeling or the past which is over or the future which hasn't happened yet, we're going to keep ourselves miserable. And this is not being our own champion.

So, here's my measurement. Today, was I an imperfect and messy human who did the best she could with what she knew? And the answer to this question every day is... yes. No matter what kind of day you had, no matter what you thought, what you felt how you did, how you showed up.

No matter how often your brain or other people tell you that you should have, would have, could have been different or better, the answer to this question, "Was I an imperfect and messy human who did the best she could with what you knew?" the answer is always yes.

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Are you with me? That is how we measure success. So, first we've got to make a decision that we're going to be our own champion. And then, we've got to get clear on how we're going to measure our success. And it is not about making everybody else happy and it is not about adhering to impeccably perfect, ridiculous standards.

It is about allowing ourselves to be imperfect messy humans whose hearts are in the right place and we're doing the best job we can every day with what we know, okay. Okay.

Last step. And this may be the trickiest. This may require the most practice. And this is probably where I spend the most time when I'm helping my clients. We have to notice the judgmental thoughts, release them, and choose new thoughts on purpose.

Notice the judgmental thoughts, release them, and choose new thoughts on purpose. The thoughts we think are not us. We are not our thoughts. We are the awareness behind our thoughts. We are humans with thoughts.

We can think about our thoughts. We can notice them. We can turn them into objects. We can see them as things that float into our mind and not be attached to them. I'm quite convinced, these judgmental thoughts, these fear-causing thoughts, these stress-causing thoughts, all of these thoughts are just part of the human experience.

They will always show up in our human brain. That's fine. It doesn't matter. When we are able to detach ourselves from those thoughts because we can notice them and we can see them, "Oh, this is the part where my brain tells me that I should be doing it differently. I see that sentence in my mind, I should be doing it differently. It is a sentence. It is not useful. It is not serving me. Just because it showed up in my brain, doesn't mean I have to keep thinking it. It doesn't mean I have to focus my attention there. It

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doesn't mean I have to believe it. I can notice it and I can let it go and I can choose a new thought on purpose."

I love the idea – and this is another way of saying step three – talk to yourself more than you listen to yourself. That's the answer. Talk to yourself more than you listen to yourself. Because if all we do is listen to ourselves and we have all of these un-useful thoughts on repeat, all of these judgmental thoughts, all of these perfectionist thoughts, all of these thoughts that keep us from being our own champion, if all we do is listen to those same thoughts that have very well-established pathways in our brain and just keep showing up, guess what we create.

We create the same stuff we've always created. We create the same misery we've always created. We keep ourselves repeating the same cycles everywhere. So, we've got to notice the judgmental thoughts and see them for what they are; words strung together in the form of sentences with punctuation on repeat in our brain.

How do we notice them? We notice them first because of how we feel. When you feel – of course, all thoughts cause feelings. So, even when you're feeling great, it's because of a thought. When you're feeling bad, go, "Oh, what is it I'm feeling? This doesn't feel good. What is it I'm thinking that's making me feel this? What if I could just put that thought down? What if I could take off the glasses that I'm wearing and lay them on the table?"

That's how it is with thoughts. Our thoughts, it's like wearing a pair of glasses. They color our whole world. They make everything seem the color of that thought. And if it's a thought we don't want, guess what we're going to see. We're going to see more evidence of what we don't want. So, can we see the thought as an optional sentence? Can we take the glasses off, lay them on the table, and choose new thoughts on purpose?

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Because if our thoughts aren't us, then we get to be the intentional creator of the thoughts we want. And when we start doing that on purpose, we start creating more of what we want. We start giving ourselves the opportunity to see more of what we want.

And if our current thoughts are that we're terrible and we're doing it all wrong and we notice that those are optional ways of seeing ourselves and we don't get mad at ourselves for thinking that way and we don't shame ourselves for thinking that way, we just see the optionality of all of it and we lay it down, and then we keep talking to ourselves more than we listen to ourselves and we keep deciding, "No. I am imperfect and that's okay. I'm beautiful and wonderful and worthy and capable and lovable and I'm doing the best I can with what I know at every turn. I'm an imperfect messy human whose heart is in the right place and I choose to think that on purpose and I choose to look for evidence of that."

And when I notice thoughts that are different than that, I just release them and I tell myself the new thought that I want to think on purpose. Again, I'm not saying it's easy. Sometimes, we have some really ingrained pathways in our brain; thoughts that we've been thinking for so long that they've now become beliefs and we have a hard time even seeing that they're optional because we just think it's who we are.

We just think there's something wrong with us. We just think it's the type of person we've always been or the way we've always been or how it always goes in our family or just our lives. So, I'm not saying it's easy to do, but it is simple to understand. And I want to help you with it if you need my help.

So, let's go back through it. Three steps. Make a decision that we'll be our own champion. That's step one. Step two, get clear on how we want to measure our success. And my suggestion is that the goal is to be an

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imperfect and messy human whose heart is in the right place, who does the best she can with what she knows.

That's my suggestion. Because the answer to that question, "Did I do those things?" is always yes, always. And then the third step is that we have to notice the judgmental thoughts as thoughts. We have to release them and we have to choose new thoughts on purpose. We're going to talk to ourselves more than we listen to ourselves. And that is how we become our own champions. That's it.

So, if you relate to any of this, welcome to the human experience. It's not just you, I swear. I have so many conversations with people all the time who think that whatever it is they're thinking and feeling is unique to them and that surely other people don't struggle with these same things. And I just want to tell you that that is not true.

We're all humans and we're all struggling with these same things. And so, if this resonated with you, it's because you're a human on the planet. And I hear you.

So, I hope it was helpful and, as always, especially if you want help with step number three, noticing the thoughts, releasing them, and choosing new thoughts on purpose, I do so much coaching and I have tools and strategies of exactly how to do this in more detail.

So, if you're interested, I highly encourage you, go to my website, coachingwithkrista.com and click on request a consultation. That's how you apply to be part of my Mom Goes On coaching group. And I still do a little bit of one-on-one coaching here and there for people who aren't widows, but it's rare. But don't let that stop you.

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If this is something that you really want, go ahead and follow that same process and, if I have openings and it seems like a good fit, I'll let you know. But right now, there are openings for the July Mom Goes On new cohort that we'll be bringing in. At least, I assume so. I'm recording this podcast a little bit in advance. But I assume, at the time that this podcast releases, there are probably still at least a couple of spots open for July.

So, head on over there, you can request a consultation at any time and we'll see if it's a good fit for you. I hope this is really helpful. Listen, nobody else can be our own champion. That is a job that is uniquely reserved for us. We are the only ones qualified to do it. And if you aren't doing it, I want you to commit to learning how.

It is possible for you. You do not have to be mean to yourself. You do not have to hold yourself to standards that are unreachable. You can have a different experience and that all starts with a decision to be your own champion and to figure that out for yourself. And that's what I want for you. I believe in you. I know it is possible. It's possible for all of us.

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.