

## Ep #129: When You Don't Feel Motivated



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Krista St-Germain**

[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

## Ep #129: When You Don't Feel Motivated

Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 129, When You Don't Feel Motivated.

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 truly look forward to. Here's your host, Master Certified Life Coach, grief expert, widow, and mom, Krista St-Germain.

Hey there. Welcome to another episode of the podcast. How are things going in your world?

Halloween is over as I'm recording this. It was a lot of fun in the new house and a fun lesson learned, that I thought, "Why isn't everyone doing this?" It didn't occur to me until the boyfriend decided to do it, but we have a Nest camera on the front porch. And early into trick-or-treating, he streamed the Nest camera onto our family room television.

And that was so fun because every time a trick-or-treater came to the door, the kids would beat me to the door, and I didn't get to see all the trick-or-treaters. And then we put them up on the Nest camera, and it was so fun.

Also, it was kind of fun because before they come up to your door, they usually do something pretty cute. You know, like look at your decorations or adjust their costume. And it's kind of also fun to see and hear what they do when they walk away and what they say to their parents about the candy. It was just super fun. So, if you have a Nest camera, next year, broadcast it to your TV. So fun.

Okay. Another thing I wanted to tell you before we get into it is that—and I mentioned it in last week's podcast—but my live private training is coming. It's going to be December 2. I still can't give you all of the details, but I will tell you that I have never taught this information in quite this way before.

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So, if you want to love your life again and you're a widowed mom, you definitely want to attend this training. It will be on my four-part framework to loving your life again, even after the death of your spouse, and you will understand exactly what needs to change so that you can break through a grief plateau and genuinely love your life again.

So, details forthcoming. It will only be—because it's a private training—available to people who have applied to work with me. And, if you've ever applied in the past, those applications no longer count because, as I have learned, I have adapted.

And I'm only inviting people to this training who I have prequalified, meaning that you're not going to get an invitation to this training unless I genuinely believe I can help you. And the way to find that out is to go to [CoachingwithKrista.com](http://CoachingwithKrista.com), click on the "Work with Me" link, and you will see a new, updated, shortened application, actually. I'm getting better at this.

So, go fill that out. It's literally three questions plus your contact information. And then, as soon as the details are released and the invitations are set, you will be the first to know. Okay? So, don't miss that. It's going to be really good.

All right. How often have you told yourself that you want to do something, but you don't feel motivated? Ugh. It's really frustrating in the short-term, and it can be downright depressing in the long-term, right? So, in today's podcast, I'm going to give you seven things to consider when you don't feel motivated. All right.

So, motivation, like all things, is caused by our thinking. We think things like, "Uh, this is going to be awesome," or "I can't wait to get started," or "This is amazing." And then we feel motivated.

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But sometimes, those thoughts aren't accessible. Those thoughts aren't believable. We just don't believe what is required to feel motivated. And that's what I want to talk to you about here. What do we do then? Okay?

So, here are my seven things. Number one: engineer your environment. There is a brilliant book by James Clear called *Atomic Habits*, and probably you've heard of it before. It's definitely worth reading.

He teaches many, many things, but one of the things that he teaches is about how motivation really isn't all that important. He has a chapter called Motivation is Overrated. Environment Often Matters More.

And he cites an example of a hospital in Boston that wanted to increase bottled water sales and decrease the sales of pop. (In the Midwest, we call it "pop," by the way. Maybe you call it "soda." We call it "pop." I digress.)

So, what they did over a three-month period by engineering their environment, was to boost the sales of bottled water by 11.4% and decrease pop sales by 25.8%.

But it had nothing to do with motivating people to drink less pop and buy more water. It had nothing to do with the benefits of water or telling them how terrible sugar was. It had everything to do with reengineering their environment, specifically where water in the cafeteria was located.

Before this, it was only in two places. In the pop fountains, there was no water choice. It was just carbonated beverages only. So, they added water there as a choice. And then they added water to several other places, including the main refrigerator and just a couple of other baskets of bottled water in the cafeteria.

They didn't say anything about it. They didn't mention any sort of campaign to get people to drink more water. They just reengineered the environment.

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And lo and behold, people started buying more water and less pop. Not because they felt motivated to do so, but because the water was in front of them. Their environment had changed.

So, he teaches, in this book, four specific ideas. Not all of them are related to engineering your environment. So, I want to tell you all of them anyway, and then let's think about how we can do this with our environment. And let's make it relevant to you and whatever it is that you might notice you're struggling to feel motivated to do.

So, he teaches that the way to change a habit is to, number one: make it more obvious. Number two: make it more attractive. Number three: make it easier. And number four: make it satisfying.

And then also, the opposite of that is true. So, if we're trying to make something more obvious, then it benefits us to see if we can make it invisible. If the cookies are on the counter, can we put them somewhere else?

If we want to make something more attractive, can we also make it less attractive? Make it unattractive? If we want to make something easier, can we also make the opposite more difficult? If we want to make something more satisfying, can we make something about it more unsatisfying?

So, thinking about specifically making it obvious—engineering your environment—maybe you want to use social media less and read more, or journal more, or paint more, for instance. Because some of us turn to social media and we notice that we aren't as present in our lives and we aren't doing the things that we want to do.

So, where is the app on your phone that you're not wanting to use? Is it right on that main screen? And if so, can you hide it somewhere off the main screen? Can you make it difficult to find? Can you put it three pages,

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four pages deep in your app list? Can you actually move your phone into another room?

If you notice that you're using social media after the kids go to bed and it's interfering with your sleep patterns, can you put your phone in another room? Or maybe you're doing it during dinner, and you want to pay more attention to your kids? Can you move your phone to the utility room? Can you put it in a drawer? Can you change your environment so that getting to your phone is hard or harder? It's literally invisible to you?

And then, can you make the thing that you want to do more visible, more obvious? If you want to read a book, can you put the book where you will see it? If you're wanting to journal, can you put the journal in your obvious path? If you're wanting to paint more, can you put the painting supplies where you absolutely cannot miss them? If you're wanting to go for a walk, can you put your shoes in your way to get to your coffee? I don't know. How can you make what you want to do really, really obvious?

And in his book, he goes through—you know, it's called *Atomic Habits*, so it's talking about micro-changes and how to create systems for the cue, the craving, the response, and the reward, which are the basics of a habit pattern.

I'm not going to go into all the details there, but a lot of it has to do with engineering our environment. So, I want you to think about that. How can I engineer my environment?

All right. Number two. I want you to consider finding your "why." Why is it that you want to do the thing that you aren't motivated to do? Why does what you want to do matter to you? What's the immediate impact of having done it or not having done it? What's the longer-term impact on your life of having done it or not having done it?

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I want you to consider, what is the “why”? Because when the gratification doesn't feel immediate, sometimes channeling into our “why” makes all the difference.

This is what I used to do when I was early in my business, and sometimes I still do it, but when I was doubting myself or what I was about to do felt scary or hard, I would imagine a widowed mom who was miserable and needed help. I would think of her.

What was she going through? What was her day like? Where was she in this exact moment? What was she feeling? What was holding her back? What did she want? What was she dreaming of? What was she unable to dream of?

I would use her and literally light a fire under my own butt. Not my thinking about my own fear and my own self-doubt and the thing that was immediately in front of me, but by really connecting myself to why that thing that I had on my to-do list and didn't really feel motivated to do—why that thing mattered in the first place. And it mattered because of her.

And sometimes I still do that. It's a lot easier now because the things that used to feel scary don't anymore. But it was very helpful to me.

And now, in my weekly planning, I use a tool called “The Positive Focus,” which is a Dan Sullivan tool. And I'm in his strategic coach program. Love his teachings. And one of the reasons this tool connects so much with me is because it has me focusing on my “why.”

So, every week, before I start thinking about what I'm going to do, in this Positive Focus tool—which is not mine; I just want to be clear—is that I write down achievements from the last week. Five of them. What were my achievements from the last week?

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And then, I write down why those achievements matter to me. So, it's not just about celebrating the achievement. It's about writing down why that matters.

And then I kind of get myself fired up and connected to my "why." And I'll do this for all of the projects—the main projects that I'm working on or the main things that are important to me. So, sometimes they're related to my coaching business. Sometimes they're related to my children, my family. They can be different things. Usually it's a balance of both.

But I write down the achievement. I write down the reason why that achievement matters. And that kind of gets me fired up. And then I fill out the column on the worksheet for "Further Progress."

So, what are the next things I could do to make even more progress in this area of my life that matters to me? And then the tool has it narrowing down to just, what's the next action? What's the first or next action I could take? Because sometimes we kind of overwhelm ourselves.

So, that leads me to number three, which is to break it down into micro-steps. Because you start thinking about something that you're proud of, and then you think about why you're proud of it, and then you think about how you can move the needle even more. My brain starts to come up with a lot of ideas.

And then it's really easy to overwhelm myself. And so, if I break it down into micro-steps, what's just the next thing that I could do? Then it makes it easier for me to stay out of overwhelm. So, I just pick the next thing. I break it down into micro-steps.

And I don't need to do all the steps right now. I just need to think about, "Okay, what's the next step in each one of these areas?" And that's what I focus on for my week. I don't try to do it all. I do the next things.

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So, that's number three: break it down into micro-steps. Don't get yourself all overwhelmed. Okay?

Number four—which is really helpful when you're trying to implement the micro-steps—is to use a timer. I swear this helps. I've talked about it before.

But way back in the '90s, I came across a woman named Martha Cilley. Seely? Cilley. I don't remember. I'm probably mispronouncing it. But she went by the name "The FlyLady."

And she's still around. She's a little more religious than I am, and so her teachings don't quite resonate with me now as much as they did before. But FlyLady—one, for her love of fly fishing, but also "FLY" as an acronym for "Finally Love Yourself," which, gosh, we all need that, right?

And she would teach the idea that you could do anything for 15 minutes. And to set a timer. Because if you have perfectionist tendencies like I do, or you get overwhelmed when you think about everything you want to do—and it can be easy just to not do anything from that place—then one way out of that is to just use a timer and decide, "I can do anything for 15 minutes, but after 15 minutes, I have full permission to stop."

In fact, in the beginning, I would require yourself to stop. Because if you don't believe you'll stop, then if you tell yourself you can do anything for 15 minutes, but you really do think, "I'm not going to allow myself to stop after 15 minutes," you lose the plot. It's not as useful anymore. So, set a timer.

Another timer that I love is called "Focus@Will." And it's an app that you can get. I pay for it. I think it costs me \$9.95 a month. But I find it very valuable. I'm not affiliated with this app, by the way, but I just think it's useful.

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And what it does is it allows you to set a timer, and pick a style of instrumental music, and the timer will go off. The music will play until the timer goes off, and then it will ding.

And so, I can use this, especially when I'm trying to write or I'm trying to do something that requires my focus. Not so much a task around the house, but something that really requires cognitive ability.

As I will use that app, decide how long I'm going to work, and I will not do anything else while the Focus@Will music is playing. I do not allow myself to check email. I do not allow myself to pick up my phone and look at social media. Nothing else but what I'm focused on.

And it helps me because I know it's only going to be that particular amount of time. Often, I'll work in 30-minute chunks. And I know that a break is coming after that. It's kind of a—you might have heard of pomodoro work, where you work for a short burst of time and then you take a break. And it makes it easier for us to maintain our focus that way.

So, use a timer. Use the Focus@Will app. Whatever it takes. Sometimes I'll do it just on my watch. I have an Apple Watch, and I'll just set the timer on my watch. Fifteen minutes of whatever it is that I'm going to do.

And if you can, make it fun. How can you use that timer to make it fun? Maybe it's a cognitive task, like writing, and in that case, we're not probably going to benefit so much from making it fun.

But it could be something like a cleaning chore. The FlyLady used to teach this idea called a Hot Spot Fire Drill, and I loved it. And I would make my kids do it with me. And they loved it too.

So, we would find a spot in the house that was a mess. One spot. Not a whole room. But a messy table or the bedstand in my bedroom or one

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toybox. Something small. And then set the timer and go as fast as you can to clean up the thing. Because it makes it fun. So, if we can make it fun, that helps too.

All right. So, here's where we are. So, we've talked about engineering our environment—making it obvious.

Connecting with our “why.”

Breaking it down into micro-steps.

And using a timer.

Number five is to act “as if.” And this one can be a little bit mind bend-y. But I want you to imagine, what is that thing that you've got in mind that you want to do but you're not motivated to do it?

And if you got it done, how would you feel? Emotionally, what would you be feeling? Feel that feeling in your body. Where is it? What is it like? What does it make you want to do?

So, let's say your goal is to get through a pile of financial paperwork. And as you look at that pile, you start feeling overwhelmed and you start doubting whether you can do it and you start dreading how long it's going to take. Or maybe you start shaming yourself for not having done it already. Okay? We've all been there.

So, stop. Imagine, how will you feel when that pile of paperwork has been dealt with? Maybe you'll feel proud. And then find that feeling in your body. Where does it live? What is it like? Feel it now.

So, when I think of “pride” and I feel it in my body, for me—which might be very different than for you—but for me, it's kind of a warm, bubbling feeling

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and it's in my chest. And it moves upward. And it feels expansive. And it makes me want to smile.

That's what pride is like in my body. Because thoughts cause feelings, and feelings are experiences in the body. So, if I'm looking at that pile of paper and I'm imagining that when it's done, I'm going to feel proud and I'm generating that feeling in my body now. And then I'm holding it for as many seconds as I can.

And then, I notice, "What is it that this feeling makes me want to do right now?" This feeling that I think I can only have access to after I've done the thing, "What does it make me want to do now?"

If I were acting from that feeling, what would I do? And then I do that thing. So, I act as if the thing is already done and I'm already feeling the emotional response of my thought about it. And then I'm acting from that feeling.

This is how we literally act our way—not in a fake, phony sense, but in a useful sense—in a way of, "How do I get myself into a new thought-feeling-action pattern?"

This is what I teach in Mom Goes On. How do we move from an old behavior pattern to a new one? Well, part of it is identifying the old one, and then identifying the new one, and then figuring out, "How do we get ourselves to act in that new one?"

And you can do this with yourself. Just act as if, "If it were already done, I would feel proud. If I felt proud, this is what I would do next." All right?

And over time, all of a sudden, the paperwork pile will be gone. You will have done the thing. And you will believe something different about yourself, which is also remarkable. Okay? So, that's number five. Act as if.

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Number six: tap while you're imagining yourself doing the thing. So good. I've done another podcast about tapping. You hear me talk about it regularly. We're doing it in Mom Goes On all the time now.

So, what you can do, of course, if you have a lot of negative emotion, is you can use tapping to decrease that negative emotion. You can use tapping to create safety in your nervous system and allow that emotion to pass. Very useful.

But then, you can actually tap through the points—and please go check out the episode I did with Jessica Ortner, who's the founder of the tapping solution, if you want to learn a little bit more about tapping basics. But as you can tap through the points while imagining yourself doing the thing or having done the thing, it's another way to act as if. It's kind of another degree of that.

So, you're just tapping through the points and you're visualizing and feeling into what it would be like to be doing the thing and/or to have it done. This is very powerful.

And the seventh thing I want to offer you—which I think, it took me a while to learn this one—is to celebrate each win. Celebrate every step along the way.

It seems kind of funny, but I literally write down things after I've done them just to check them off the list. Just to celebrate that I actually did it. Even if it wasn't on my to-do list and I did it, I will literally go back and write it on my to-do list and check it off.

Because my brain really wants to focus on how much I didn't get done and how far I am behind and how much there is left to do. And the next thing and the next thing and the next thing. And I have to purposefully use my brain to celebrate the wins—to find the wins.

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We all have to train our brain to do this—to a varying extent—but for me, I'm still constantly asking my brain to celebrate. Because my brain always wants to convince me that “I didn't get done as much as I thought I would get done” or “I have more work than I thought I did” or “I'm more behind than I actually am.” It's the craziest thing.

So, celebrate each win. Okay? You can do that however you want. If it's writing things down after you've done them, like I do. If it's at the beginning of a day, you write down three wins. At the end of a day, you write down three wins. You can do it in a lot of different ways.

The most important thing isn't how you 're doing it, it's that you're doing it. That you are allowing yourself to give credit to the things that you have done and to the wins. Because then that creates momentum. That gets your brain trained to focus on what's going well instead of what's not going well. It gets your brain focused on more of what you want. You see more of what you want; you do more of what you want. All right?

So, we don't need to wait on motivation. It's okay if we don't feel motivated. It's not nearly as relevant as we think it is. Most of us are sitting around not doing stuff because we aren't feeling motivated and we're kind of waiting for motivation to happen to us, when the truth is, it's not really all that necessary.

So, engineer your environment. What can you change in your environment to make the thing more obvious that you want to do or make the thing that you want to avoid less visible?

Connect to your “why.” Find that “why.” Why does this matter? What is the long-term impact of doing this thing or of not doing this thing? Light your own fire with that.

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Break it down into micro-steps. And then don't try to do all the steps at one time. Just focus on the next step. Use a timer if it helps. Make it fun.

Emotionally, use the "as if." Act as if. If you got it done, how would you feel? If you felt that feeling, what would that be like? What would that feeling motivate you to do next? And do it.

And then you can tap while imagining yourself doing the thing or having the thing done.

And celebrate, celebrate, celebrate. Celebrate it all. Always be celebrating. Before you plan what you're doing next, you better be celebrating what you already did.

Because if you come into your planning—if you come into whatever it is that you want to do and you're not feeling motivated to do it, and you aren't creating positive emotion for yourself, first, it's going to be so much harder for you. So, what went well? Celebrate first. Then use that momentum. All right? Okay.

I hope this was helpful to you. It's not a problem if you don't feel motivated. Don't beat yourself up if you don't feel motivated. All right? You don't need to feel motivated. There are other ways.

Okay. If you're not already in Mom Goes On, go register for my live private training that is coming. Do not wait. Be the first to get an invitation. It is quick. It will literally take you three minutes or less. All right? CoachingwithKrista.com and click on the "Work with Me" tab. All right?

I love you. You've got this. Take care and I will see you next week. Bye-bye.

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If you like what you've been hearing on this podcast and want to create a future you can truly get excited about, even after the loss of your spouse, I invite you to join my Mom Goes On coaching program. It's small group coaching just for widowed moms like you, where I'll help you figure out what's holding you back and give you the tools and support you need so you can move forward with confidence. Please don't settle for a new normal that's less than what you deserve.

Go to [CoachingwithKrista.com](http://CoachingwithKrista.com) and click "Work with Me" for details and next steps. I can't wait to meet you.