

Ep #195: Urges are Just Feelings



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With Your Host

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[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 195, Urges Are Just Feelings.

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. So I got my baby girl headed off to Spain where she is going to study for 104 days if anyone is counting. I may be counting 104 days in Spain. I'm super excited for her. The process has involved as it did in the fall when she went off to Costa Rica, a lot of me allowing feelings.

And that really ties so well into what I want to cover in this podcast because once you understand that feelings can't hurt you and that you have the ability to allow feelings to flow through and you start to feel more powerful as it relates to your feelings. And you realize that urges are just feelings too then things start to change when you have urges. Behaviors start getting easier to understand and to change. So that's what we're going to talk about in today's podcast episode.

Before we do that though I want to tell you about something I'm very excited about that is coming up which is a masterclass on dating for widows. And it's free which is also very exciting. And it's such an important topic. I've done a couple of podcast episodes related to dating but I really want to do a masterclass to dive in a little bit more because for many widows dating is such a loaded topic. And it brings with it so many worries and fears and apprehension and sometimes even frustration and insecurity and resentment.

I remember the first time I realized that someone had taken me on a date even though I didn't think it was a date and how angry I was and how much resentment I felt. Because at that point in time, my thought was I don't want

Ep #195: Urges are Just Feelings

to be dating, I don't want this. I just want what I just had. So it's for sure a loaded topic. I want to talk about it. And I know we also have so many questions when it comes to dating. We want to know how we know when we're ready. What if our kids aren't ready? What if our kids don't approve? When do we tell them we're a widow?

What do we do if we're comparing people we're dating to our late person? How do we meet quality people? All those questions. So in this dating from widows masterclass, we're going to cover all of those questions and more. I'm going to break down exactly what you need to know before you decide to date again so you can feel calm and confident and prepared. And it's going to be completely free. Now, if you're interested you can upgrade to the VIP option and get a host of other goodies and benefits that we've put together for you.

But the basic masterclass I want it to be free for everyone. You can go to coachingwithkrista.com/datingmasterclass. coachingwithkrista.com/datingmasterclass and you can sign up for it. At the time that I'm recording this, I haven't actually chosen the date which is why I'm not announcing it right now because there are a couple of things that are moving around in my March schedule. But before this airs, I will have chosen the date and it will be live on that website waiting for you to register. So go get yourself registered.

And if you can't make it live because you're working, don't worry about it, we're going to record it. And it's online. You can watch the recordings any time you want. We're going to make it super easy for you to benefit from this and super accessible by making it free. So go register, alright, coachingwithkrista.com/datingmasterclass.

Okay, let's talk about urges because they really are just feelings. And I want you to listen to this episode and then feel better. So the reason this came up for me is because lately or recently I had been noticing that my work and personal boundaries were kind of not what I wanted. I was starting to

Ep #195: Urges are Just Feelings

fall away from the clean boundaries that I want. And so what was happening is that in the morning I would wake up, phone by the side of my bed which is my habit and I'm fine with that. I'm fine with my phone being on the side of my bed that is.

What I wasn't fine with is that the very first thing I did when I grabbed my phone is I looked at my work email and then I looked at Slack which is a work tool that I use, before I was even getting out of bed. Literally, starting my day by looking at email and looking at Slack. And then I would go downstairs still in my pajamas, get my coffee and I would be checking my emails. And I would be responding to those Slack messages and I would basically start working way before I really wanted to.

Putting my business which I do love, that's why it's so hard for me sometimes to have boundaries because I genuinely love what I do. But putting my business before my own wellness. And what I really wanted was what I had been doing before which was I didn't do any business stuff until I took care of myself and I did my own self-coaching and I got myself right. And I did a little reading and maybe I did some exercising depending on the day. But I took care of myself and then I made a conscious decision to go start working. And that is not what I was doing.

And then I was doing something very similar in the evening which was that even after I left my office I was still going to the phone and checking email and checking Slack. It was like a twitch. I would be sitting on the couch watching TV or doing something and feel the urge to look at my phone and then look at it and then all of a sudden I'm not present in my life. Or I'm in the car and we're driving somewhere and my partner's trying to have a conversation with me and I'm not paying attention because I'm looking at my phone.

I didn't like that so of course let's change it. And as I was changing it I was sharing it with the women who are in my Mom Goes On coaching program. And several of them said, "I'm so glad you shared, this is really helpful for

Ep #195: Urges are Just Feelings

me.” And I realized, yeah, I should share this on the podcast because maybe it would help you too.” So I want to talk about how we can change habits like this simply by learning to spot and allow the urges that drive those habits. And it's not as complicated as it sounds.

I would also point you back towards the episodes I did on Why We Numb and How to Stop parts one and two, quite a bit earlier in the podcast but if this is interesting to you and you want a little bit more go check out Why We Numb and How to Stop parts one and two because they're very related. So first of all an urge is the same thing as a feeling in that it's just something that happens in our body caused by something that's happening in our brain and it can't hurt us. That is a huge takeaway.

An urge when it's happening, an urge to do something feels like this torturous itch that we have to scratch if we're in the habit of answering that urge. It becomes very hard to not answer it until we pull away from it and do what I'm going to teach you to do today. And first, what that requires of us is the understanding that an urge is the same as a feeling and it can't actually hurt us. And the best news about that is that because those things are true, an urge is the same as a feeling and urges can't hurt us. We don't even need urges to go away to completely change our response to them.

We have human brains and our human brains tend to prioritize immediate pleasure over long-term pleasure, that's just what they do. We don't need to change that tendency in our brain. We don't need to change the basic way our programming shows up in our brain. We just need to notice the urges and consciously choose a response so that the urges stop becoming problems, which means allowing them to be there and letting them pass on their own.

So here's what this looks like for me and then I'm going to give you the steps so that you can do it too. So I decided that what I want to do before I check my email and Slack, in other words before I start working, is that I want to get up and I want to do the things that are important to me for

Ep #195: Urges are Just Feelings

self-care for me which is probably different than what it's going to be for you. But for me I want to get up, I'm going to get my coffee, I'm going to do a little self-coaching, some meditation, some tapping, some exercise. It's different depending on the day. I don't do all of those things every day.

And then I want to get ready and go to my office and get going with work. And I want to do my work at that designated time, not as a reflex when I get up out of bed. Now, I don't mind checking my phone. So I'm not anti-phone checking in the morning. I just don't want to do work on my phone. But I love it. I wear an Oura ring and it's the very first thing I do is I look at that Oura ring and I see what my sleep was like. And I'm fascinated by this information and I don't have a problem with that at all. Sometimes I'll check the weather and see what the weather's going to be like.

So I don't mind using my phone. I just want to make sure that I'm actually taking care of myself in the morning and then I'm beginning work. So that's what I decided that I was going to do. Self-care, here's what it looks like then we're going to go to the office and get going with work. And the same thing in the evening once I leave the office no more email and no more Slack. I'm not going to check email and Slack on my phone. And maybe at some point I'll loosen up when it doesn't feel like it's a problem. Maybe occasionally I'll allow it.

But in the beginning I'm just going to be very black and white about it. So at first after I had made that decision the urges to check my phone were so frequent, so intense especially in the morning when I picked up my phone. And the reason I knew I was having them is because I would feel it in my body and it felt like a pull, just a pull up the middle of my torso, if I could just kind of pull some imaginary thing in the middle of my abdomen up towards my throat. That's how it felt to me.

Now, I'm not saying that's how an urge feels for everyone. They don't need to feel the same for you as they do for me. What matters here though is that I knew what it felt like for me. I knew how to recognize the urge. And

Ep #195: Urges are Just Feelings

then I practiced allowing it. It doesn't mean it went away but I practiced allowing the urge to flow through me. Now, it only took a couple of weeks, the urges to check my phone in the morning are almost gone. I'm very rarely having them. It's just not a thing that my brain is wanting me to do right now.

And again that's not the point is for the urge to go away. It just so happens that that urge kind of did go away for me. I'm still noticing some urges in the evening depending on where my brain goes, kind of what happened in the day and what I'm thinking about. Again not the point, we're not trying to get rid of the urges, we're just trying to notice them. So that's how it worked for me, really only took a couple of weeks of planning what I was going to do, noticing the urge as it came up, allowing the urge to pass and repeating that.

Proving to myself that an urge just goes through my body. It doesn't last more than 90 seconds typically when I allow it to be there. So specifically here are the steps. First, decide on the change that you want to make. It does not matter what you choose, something that is urge driven. So maybe you decide that instead of scrolling on social media multiple times a day you only want to scroll between 7:00 and 7:30pm. Or you only want to do it while your daughter is in piano lessons. You decide the change that you want to make. And you're very specific and clear about it.

So you will have no question as to whether you did it or not. So it was very clear for me to say I don't check email until I've taken care of myself and I'm in my office and I'm ready for the day. And after I leave my office at the end of the day I don't check email or Slack, it was very clear. Maybe you want to stop working when you come home, which means you don't get on your laptop after 5:00pm. Maybe you've decided that you want to tell your child no when they ask for a toy at the grocery store even when you have an urge to give in to their request.

Ep #195: Urges are Just Feelings

Maybe you want to stop looking at TikTok after 9 o'clock because it's interfering with your sleep. So maybe you decide I will not look at TikTok after 9 o'clock. My TikTok time is after the kids go to bed but before 9.00pm. I don't know. Be specific. Maybe it's because I am only going to drink two cups of coffee and no coffee after 10 because it's making me jittery. So be very clear on deciding the change that you want to make. And what I really want you to hear is that this is not about good or bad or right or wrong or should or shouldn't.

It is not morally superior or inferior. These are not shoulds. Please don't let these be shoulds. Please let these be things that you genuinely want to change. I cannot emphasize this enough, not because your culture told you to, not because someone outside of you said you should, not because you're making yourself feel guilty if you don't, not because you think you'll be a better person if you do. Genuinely let it come from a place of true wanting, not some sort of should. Steps off the soapbox. But I really, I want you to use this for yourself and not against yourself.

So decide on the change that you want to make, be so specific so that you know whether you're making it or not. Then don't expect yourself to not feel urges. Expect yourself to feel urges. Expect your brain to be like yes, let's do that, let's do the thing we just said we don't want to do, expect it. And I think it's even kind of a hack, if you can expect it so much to the point that you're actually hoping it will happen. You're actually hoping you will notice an urge to do the thing because then that's your opportunity to practice.

If you notice the urge and you're like, "Urges, why won't it go away? I don't want this." We just make it harder on ourselves. When we expect the urges to come and then they do, that's when we can start increasing our awareness. That's when we can get curious. That's when we can practice the skill of allowing, which is the whole exciting point of this. So expect the urges to come and when they do be like, "Aha, it's my chance. Here is my opportunity." There is that feeling in my body.

Ep #195: Urges are Just Feelings

And that's how you will know the urge is there, something in your body happens where you feel an urge. What is that like for you? Do you know? Can you slow it down and see what's going on in your body? And it is trippy at first because if you're really used to just answering that urge with a behavior you probably have no idea what the actual urge feels like when you let it go unanswered.

So number one, decide on the change you want to make. Number two, expect yourself to feel urges to do the opposite. and number three, allow those urges to pass because they're just feelings and they can't hurt you. And you can do this in one of two ways. Well, there's probably more ways to do it but there's two ways that I like to do it. One is to use the NOW process that I teach in episode three of the podcast, How to Feel Better Now. If you join Mom Goes On we go over this in a lot of detail and we practice it.

The other way you can do it is you can tap. And you don't even have to tap through all the points, you could if you wanted to. But even if you tapped on side of your hand, or even if you just tapped on the collarbone point. Even though I have this urge, this urge, or I release this urge and let it go. You can tap on it until it lessens. When we let it go, when we let it go through us, I like to think of it like digesting. It's just going to run its course. It's not going to hurt you. It can't do anything bad. And you're going to prove to yourself, this isn't a problem to me.

Urges can come and urges can go and I get to be the boss of how I think about what's happening in my body. I get to be the boss of how I think about my urges. Urges are a very human thing. Having an urge to get an immediate reward right now doesn't mean I'm a bad human. It just means I'm a human. And if you'll follow these three steps and you'll make it your goal not to eliminate the urge, just like we don't need to get rid of any emotions either. We just get good at recognizing them and allowing them to pass through.

Ep #195: Urges are Just Feelings

So make it the goal that when the urge shows up you get good at recognizing it. And you see that the urge is nothing more than a feeling and you recognize that you're fully capable of letting it flow right through you. And you don't need to answer that urge with the behavior which in my case was the phone. So think about it this way, just like you wouldn't be upset with the grass when it grows, you don't have to be upset with yourself when you have urges. It's not a problem. It doesn't mean anything's gone wrong. It just means you're human and humans have urges.

Urges aren't problems to solve. Feelings aren't problems to solve. Urges are just feelings, experiences that you can choose to allow. So let the possibility of that freedom, that relief sink in right now. Nothing you have to control there, we don't have to make it go away, just going to get good at letting it flow through. And from that place where you sense the freedom of that then go practice if you want.

If there's something that you want to change like I did, not because someone is telling you, you should but because you genuinely want to. Decide on the change, expect the urges and allow the urges to pass because they're just feelings and they can't hurt you. That's what I have for you this week. I love you and you've got this. Take care and I'll see you next week.

If you like what you've been hearing on this podcast and want to create a future you can truly get excited about 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 you deserve. Go to coachingwithkrista.com and click work with me for details and the next steps. I can't wait to meet you.