

258. Grief with Krista St-Germain



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Jody Moore

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I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy* episode 258: Grief with Krista St-Germain.

Welcome to *Better Than Happy*. I'm your host, Jody Moore. I'm a mother to four children. I'm a huge Taylor Swift fan, and I'm a master certified life coach. I'm here to teach you how to manage your brain and manage your emotions so that you can create a life that's even better than happy. Are you ready? Let's go.

Hello everyone, welcome to the podcast. I have one of my most favorite colleagues, Krista St-Germain that I'm going to be sharing a conversation with you today, that I'm super excited for you to hear. Krista is a certified coach through the Life Coach School and also a dear friend of mine. She's one of the people that I most look forward to seeing whenever I get to go to meetings, and conferences, and events where she's going to be, which I'm really missing right now, now that we're not traveling much.

Krista is just so insightful, she has a really, I think, interesting way of viewing things but also she makes it sound so simple. She makes complicated things sound very simple, and logical, and linear, which is why I love listening to her. She also has a pretty amazing story about how she came to find counseling and why she works now with widows, after losing her own husband to a pretty tragic accident at a young age. So she's going to share all of that with you. I won't spoil it. Let's get on with my conversation with Krista, please enjoy.

Okay, so, Krista St-Germain, tell us about you, first of all. I'm sorry, but you're going to have to tell us your story. You're tired of telling, but my listeners need to know your story.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah, sure. So I'm a life coach, I coach specifically widowed moms. And I came to this work because I had my own loss story. So almost four years ago, and it's crazy to me that it's almost four years,

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because it feels like a lifetime ago, but like simultaneously, yesterday, strangely, but...

Jody Moore: Wait. So four years ago was when this...

Krista St-Germain: Four years ago was when the incident happened.

Jody Moore: I thought it was longer than that.

Krista St-Germain: I know.

Jody Moore: Because when did you go through coach training?

Krista St-Germain: Hugo died in 2016, in August of 2016, and I went through coach training in September of 2017.

Jody Moore: So that was pretty fresh for you then.

Krista St-Germain: It was, yeah.

Jody Moore: I didn't realize that.

Krista St-Germain: It was magically timed.

Jody Moore: Oh.

Krista St-Germain: Because I had discovered Brooke before Hugo died, and had been listening to the podcast almost – I mean it was really early on that I discovered her. And so I feel like even though I had never been coached, I never had a coach, I'd had lots of therapy, but never had a coach. I had all these tools in my back pocket.

Jody Moore: Like you were supposed to find Brooke before that happened, was preparing you.

Krista St-Germain: I fully believe that, fully believe that. And so yeah, we were coming back from a trip and we had been in – I volunteer with a group

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that's called Heather's Camp which interestingly enough is, it's something we established 20 years ago actually, this year, in memory of my sorority sister who was murdered. And it's a camp for kids who are blind or visually impaired.

And so we had been away at this camp for the weekend. And we had driven separately and we were on our way home, we were just north of my city, right on this county line, but on the interstate and I had a flat tire. So I pulled over and I called Hugo and said, "I have a flat tire." And he said, "No problem, I'm right behind you, we'll fix it." And so he pulled off to the shoulder of the highway and he got pulled up behind me, hazard lights on.

I had AAA, there was a little voice inside of me that said, "Call AAA." But he, "No. No, baby, I can do it," typical, "It'll take forever for them to get here, it's just a tire, I can change it, not a problem." So, alright, so he's in my trunk, in between his car and my car, getting access to the spare tire. And I'm on the side of the road, facing away from the car, but texting my oldest daughter to tell her that we would be late because she was also on the trip with us, but she'd ridden the bus back. No warning, no brakes, just impact.

And so a man that we later found out had meth and alcohol in his system, this was about 5:30 on a Sunday, slammed into the back of Hugo's Durango and trapped him in between his Durango and my car, and so, loss that you just don't see coming. So 24 hours – less than 24 hours and he was gone, it just happened really fast.

Jody Moore: What did you do in that moment? I can't even...

Krista St-Germain: It's weird, it's like I look back on it and it's kind of – parts of it are really clear to me and parts of it are still very cloudy. But I had my phone in my hand and I couldn't see, I could see the impact obviously, but I couldn't really see Hugo. But I knew that the thing I needed to do immediately was to call for help, and so that's what I did, I called for help, just shaking in the whole deal. And cars started pulling over and I really

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didn't know where I was. I mean I knew the highway that I was on, but I didn't exactly know the closest exit and I couldn't see a sign.

So I'm screaming and trying to get people to tell me where I am to figure it out so I can call and get somebody there. And so that's what I did, but some amazing people pulled over. A nurse happened to be among them and she did such a good job of keeping me calm and it was, yeah, you do the best you can and sometimes that involves a lot of panic.

Jody Moore: Yeah, okay. And do you mind me asking how old you and your husband were at this point?

Krista St-Germain: So I had just turned 40 and he was 43.

Jody Moore: Okay, so, young.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah, young. Yeah, and he was my second...

Jody Moore: Yeah. And you have kids?

Krista St-Germain: Well, he's my second husband, so I had been through a divorce. So I have two biological children, but they're from my first marriage. And that marriage didn't end well. Most marriages ever that end probably end well, but Hugo was kind of my redemption story. He was kind of my like true love does exist, the hope of the next chapter. And so it wasn't just the loss of what I believed was my soul mate, but it was the loss of this happy life that I was just so grateful to finally be living into.

Jody Moore: Man.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah.

Jody Moore: Okay. So what was your experience like after that? Tell us about your grieving process, or how would you describe it?

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Krista St-Germain: So I immediately went back to therapy, I already had a good therapist. And so what helped me the most was just – obviously I didn't go back to work immediately, was just telling my story to her as many times as I needed to, just talking about it, telling it, processing it, coming to terms with the reality of it. There was a lot of oscillation between numbness and intense feelings. I remember just thinking, surely, he's coming home, he's just on a business trip and he's coming home, this can't possibly be real.

You kind of intellectually know that it's real, but yet it doesn't feel real. And so I remember a lot of going back and forth there. I wrote to him a lot in a journal and that was very helpful to me. I was so afraid I would forget things, would forget memories. And so I did a lot of writing, I did a lot of sitting on my back porch and just kind of being with my thoughts, and being with my feelings, and just letting it be what it was.

We worked together at the same company, I didn't go back to work for about six weeks. But going back, even though it was challenging because I had so many memories of him there, it was actually quite comforting. Because so many people loved him there, they loved me and so it was kind of this shared experience that I had, where everybody else also – they really realized the depth of the loss for me, and they also had a loss. So that was helpful.

So therapy kind of got me back to what I would consider that baseline level of functioning where I could go back to work and I could do the things on my to do list. And get to that point where everyone starts telling you, "You're so strong and you're doing so great." And to the outside world, we kind of understand why they think that, but on the inside I got to a point where I thought, if this is great, this isn't what I want, it's not great. I'm still feeling hollow and empty and...

Jody Moore: So did it frustrate you when people would say that, "You're so strong and you're doing great," and you didn't feel that way?

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Krista St-Germain: It didn't frustrate me because I always believed they were just trying to help me feel better. And I also knew that I had no idea what it felt like to be on this side of it until I was. And so I knew that they also had no idea what it felt like. And so I can see how in the past I had told people those same things, because I really did genuinely think, they're so strong. I couldn't imagine myself going through that myself, but then when you're on the other side of it and it's your life, you don't see yourself as strong, you're just doing the best you know how to do.

Jody Moore: You don't really have any other choice.

Krista St-Germain: Alright. I mean I always tell my clients though, I do hope they give themselves credit. That they really could just throw in the towel and stay in the fetal position. And so even sometimes getting up and taking a shower, it doesn't seem like a big accomplishment, but sometimes it really is.

Jody Moore: For sure, yeah.

Krista St-Germain: Right, in those early days. But yeah, and I still see my therapist, going back to work and really contemplating, okay, what do I want to do next? Not that I didn't love my work environment, but I was never particularly passionate about business jets. I was a Project Manager in Engineering, yeah, and I loved the team, didn't love the job. And that kind of loss is a great impetus to reevaluate what you want to do with your life. I wanted to do something more meaningful.

My therapist was telling me, "You should be a therapist. Come work for me and I'll help you get into therapy school, there's a great MFT program here, and then you can come work for me and when I sell my practice you can buy it." She kind of had my life planned out.

Jody Moore: Just like had it all figured out.

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Krista St-Germain: Yeah, she had it all figured out. But I was kind of the person that people came to, so I could see myself in that role. So I actually did enroll in that MFT program. But at the same time then Brooke had launched Self Coaching Scholars. And so I decided I have to be in Self Coaching Scholars because if her free stuff has helped me this much, Scholars will be amazing.

So I joined Scholars, a couple of months in, I had amazing impactful coaching experiences there, even though I was never coached by Brooke, but just participating in the calls and the tutoring sessions and so on. And then I decided, well, maybe I'll be a life coach. We had these information calls where you meet with this person and she talks to you about Life Coach School.

Jody Moore: And that person happened to be Jody Moore. Not everybody listening knows that, but I used to work for the Life Coach School and talked to people about going to coach training.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah. So I talked to you and I thought, okay, this will be a good side gig as I get through the Marriage and Family Therapy program. And then I got coached some more and finally I just decided, no, Marriage and Family Therapy feels safe, but coaching is the magic. Coaching was what was helping me start to live into the future that I wanted. Coaching was what was giving me the tools to actually take charge of my brain and my life, and my emotional state, and create results on purpose.

And so it was just – not that therapy hadn't helped, because it definitely had, but coaching was so transformative for me, and I was like, "No, we have to go with coaching, it has to be what we do."

Jody Moore: Okay, so I love that you're bringing this up because I feel like a lot of people are confused, even though I try to speak to it. But the difference between therapy and coaching, and I'm always trying to send the

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message that in my mind they are not at odds with each other. It's not an either or, there are amazing benefits from both. And appropriate situations for either or, or sometimes both at the same time. But I'd love to hear your thoughts as a person who has a lot of experience with both now.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah. And I think it's always important to understand that my experience of therapy is just my experience. So just because I have had a couple of different therapists doesn't mean that those experiences speak for all therapists. But what I got from therapy was a safe place to talk about my story, to tell my story. And I got a lot of empathy and understanding. But it was, now that I understand coaching it was a lot of validating my thought.

Jody Moore: Which is what you needed at first.

Krista St-Germain: It's exactly what I needed. But at a certain point I also needed somebody to just reflect them back to me and show me that they were optional. Not to make me feel guilty or bad for having them, but to show me that they were optional, so that once I could see that for myself then if I wanted to change then I could, and I never got that from therapy. But maybe it's just because I discovered coaching at the point in which I did, I don't know.

Jody Moore: Yeah, maybe. Okay.

Krista St-Germain: But for me it just it felt like okay, I'm done telling my story, I've made peace kind of with the past and now I'm ready to go and move forward, and in order to do that I 'm going to need to think differently.

Jody Moore: And do you have a lot of clients in a similar situation where they have experience with therapy and then they're coming to you?

Krista St-Germain: Yeah.

Jody Moore: And is that pretty common?

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Krista St-Germain: Yeah. And a lot of frustrations that I hear from my clients often have to do with the experience that they had in a grief group. Where because their thoughts are kind of in this precarious place, they want their experience to be normalized, that's helpful for everyone. Then at a certain point many of them have told me, "Okay, now I'm feeling pulled down, I can't – I need an environment that helps me move forward, not move on, but move forward. And this constant pullback to the negative, I'm just not strong enough on my own thoughts to do that in that environment."

Jody Moore: Yeah. I have seen that a lot too, I see a lot of – to your point, it's helpful to a point, until you decide, like you said, when people are like, "You're so strong." And you're thinking this is what it feels like. When you decide you're done with that, you've got to be willing to put down the story and put down parts of it anyway. And that's where coaching, I think is the magic. Okay, so today you coach, how do you describe who you coach, who your target market is?

Krista St-Germain: So my target market is kind of me at that point when I came out of there.

Jody Moore: Yeah, which is so funny, we all end up coaching ourselves probably.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah, it's the woman who she is functioning in the world, and other people are telling her how strong she is. But yet, she hasn't really figured out what's next, or she hasn't particularly enjoyed what's come next. But she sees the potential, she believes that something greater in her life is possible, and she just doesn't know how to get there yet. Maybe there are still some things she needs to process with the loss.

Jody Moore: So these are women in grief typically, widows for the most part?

Krista St-Germain: All widows, yeah, all moms. Well, I shouldn't say that, in my group program it's all widowed moms, and widowed moms of all

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ages. So some of them have adult children who are out of the house, some of them have very young children. I still do a little bit of one-on-one coaching. And so I'm a little bit more open to who I coach in that setting. But in the group it's all widows, all moms.

Jody Moore: Okay. And we'll find out at the end if any of you are thinking that you want to get help from Krista, we'll make sure you know where to go. But let's talk a little bit about grief, can we?

Krista St-Germain: Yeah.

Jody Moore: Because even for people who aren't in a widow or widower situation, a lot of us are going to experience, I dare say, all of us are going to experience grief at one point in our lives. Which I am so fascinated with the topic of grief and I'll be the first to admit that I'm pretty ill informed about it.

Krista St-Germain: You and most people.

Jody Moore: Yeah, because in coach training, it's more of a psychology therapy traditionally that it falls in the realm of psychology or therapy. So all I know is what I learned in the little bit I've read on the internet about it. So what do you think is important for people to know about grief?

Krista St-Germain: So I think it's important to know that grief is just the natural response to loss. And so when I'm talking about grief in my setting, we're talking about death.

Jody Moore: Yeah. But that can be a lot of things, right?

Krista St-Germain: Yeah, grief is anything that we perceive that we have lost, our response to it, so the thoughts and feelings associated with a perceived loss. And I also think it's really important to understand that while there are some theories that are more well known than others, like anything there are lots of different theories about grief. And I think it's useful to

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understand or to choose to believe that none of them are universal, there's just lots of options about how humans can respond to loss. And so we want to do that consciously and intentionally.

Jody Moore: Okay. So I love that you said it's a perceived loss, because if a loved one passes away, we perceive that as a loss. And at the same time, depending on what you believe about life after death, maybe not a loss, but certainly a change. And I notice for a lot of my clients, it's the kind of loss like I thought my teenagers were going to never take drugs, and lie to me and all of these things, and it turns out they are. Or, I didn't realize my child was going to be transgendered.

It's the loss, like you described with Hugo, the loss also not just of him in his presence in your life but the story that you had about how your life was going to be.

Krista St-Germain: Right. There's so many different types of loss, I mean we could just have a whole podcast where we just talked about types of loss.

Jody Moore: It would be kind of depressing, but.

Krista St-Germain: Well, we won't do it.

Jody Moore: We won't do it, but.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah, it's, you know, all we hear is five stages of grief, and there's so much more to it than that.

Jody Moore: But don't you think that when there's a loss like that, even if it's just a perceived, like I thought this was going to happen, I thought my life was going to go this way, and now it seems like it's not going to. Or this is person isn't going to be this way in my life, that it's important that you allow yourself the space to 'grieve', that.

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I think we're in such a hurry to feel better, and what I find, I don't know about you, but I find that my clients, they've been listening to me for a while, they understand that thoughts create feelings, and that thoughts are optional. And so they think that if they were stronger or something then they would hurry and think something more positive, and they wouldn't be suffering. And I don't know, I think that that doesn't serve us, what do you think?

Krista St-Germain: And I think the reason we think that, like what's underneath that is this idea, consciously or unconsciously that negative emotions are a problem, therefore, grief is a problem, that it's something that we have to solve.

Jody Moore: That's an excellent point.

Krista St-Germain: Not useful.

Jody Moore: Not something we have to solve. I was thinking about this the other day because of the pandemic going on. And how if somebody gets coronavirus or any other illness, then we would say, "Oh, there's something wrong, they're sick, we need to treat that," in whatever way, whether that's rest, or a doctor, or a what have you. Something's wrong in your body, and we tend to think that, people come to me with the same type of verbiage when they're like, "My teenager has anxiety," or, "I'm just really mad all the time."

Now, not that it's not useful to take a look at it, but it's not the same as, "Oh, you have coronavirus, something's wrong." It's just like, yeah, welcome to the human...

Krista St-Germain: Right. And you're like [inaudible] again?

Jody Moore: Yeah, I'm like, "Okay, so what's your question for me?"

Krista St-Germain: You're having a feeling.

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Jody Moore: Yeah, what's your question for me? And I do it myself of course too. But this idea that we have, like you said, and I don't know, I think for me, I was thinking, where did we develop this idea? Because I think growing up I heard a lot of sayings like, "Happiness is a choice," things like that that are well intended. But I think the way I interpreted that message was, so you should choose it as much as possible.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah, and if you don't, you're doing it wrong.

Jody Moore: Yeah. It's been so mind blowing to me through coaching to learn, no, nothing's wrong.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah. I talk about this sometimes. I actually kind of like missing Hugo.

Jody Moore: Tell us more about that.

Krista St-Germain: Well, it feels good to me to miss him, because in missing him it just validates what was amazing about him in our relationship. And so if you could take that away from me, I wouldn't want you to, it feels healthy, it feels clean, it feels cathartic, it feels right to me.

Jody Moore: And it connects you, it keeps you connected with him. You don't want to lose that part. That's beautiful. It kind of goes with this other idea I've been playing with of like, so if somebody could have the thought, I miss my husband. And they might think that and feel – I don't know – sad or overwhelmed or even maybe some self-pity.

Krista St-Germain: Hopeless, yeah.

Jody Moore: Some hopelessness, yes. Whereas we could keep the same thought, I miss my husband, and even maybe keep some of the sadness behind it. But to your point, because you don't think it's a problem, you feel love, it seems like around that.

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Krista St-Germain: Right, yeah.

Jody Moore: You feel more alive. That's what I think about clean, what I call clean pain, which is that useful, like you said, really healing, cathartic kind of pain. Is like it makes me feel more alive if I'm more connected to myself and the other people in my life when I allow for that, that pain.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah. And I think sometimes we think that with grief it's supposed to be some sort of process or steps that at some point we reach an end to. Like somehow there's like...

Jody Moore: Like we've got to do step one through five, and then we're done.

Krista St-Germain: Right, and then we're done, which is just absolutely not the way that it works. But because we think that then I think we also put these expectations on ourselves that if there's somewhere that we're trying to get then we assume that there are some thoughts, or feelings that we can't bring with us to get to that point. And I don't think that's at all true.

I think you can go all the way to posttraumatic growth. Where you experience growth and deeper meaning, or deeper satisfaction, increased kind of sense of purpose of your life, and still not wish the loss had happened.

Jody Moore: That's right.

Krista St-Germain: Like we can have all of those different thoughts and feeling combinations and still be okay.

Jody Moore: And still miss my husband and wish that that had not happened.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah, right.

Jody Moore: Yes.

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Krista St-Germain: Yeah. It doesn't have to be like, I'm so happy he died, I'm so happy this person, no, you can still.

Jody Moore: Our brains are so binary I feel like, when I'm trying to coach a client around, like you don't have to be – we don't have to be angry that he died. We don't have to think that something's gone wrong. Then our brains immediately go to, so I should be happy about it and I should think this is amazing. No, there's probably a million different thoughts we can think about that. And it just seems like this one isn't serving you, that doesn't mean we have to go to the exact opposite thought, necessarily.

Sometimes that's useful, but – Brené Brown said this once, because someone was saying to her like, you know, she talks about how shame is not useful and we shouldn't shame people. And somebody said, "So we should just," – I can't remember the verbiage, something about, "We should just validate everyone?" And she goes, "If your only options are either shaming or validating, then we are missing a lot of tools in our toolkit."

Krista St-Germain: Right, mainly acceptance, yeah, it's not quite so black and white.

Jody Moore: Interesting. Okay, so one of the things I hear a lot from people experiencing grief, especially if it's around something like a death or a loss like this is that they're afraid to allow for the discomfort and the pain because they already feel like they're not functioning in their life the way they should be and want to be. And they think if they allow for it then for sure everything's going to break down.

I've coached a lot of women, I can picture even in live events saying to me, "You don't understand, I have kids I have to take care of. Somebody has to pay the bills, or I have to go to work. I can't just allow for this." So what do you say to somebody in that situation?

Krista St-Germain: I think that happens because we've never been taught the skill of allowing. And so we don't actually understand what it's like to

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allow. And so when we – because we don't understand, we imagine it's going to be some black hole that we get sucked into and can't come out of.

But really all it is, is just letting the emotion be with you as you carry on in your life. And so what we're actually doing when we're scared to allow, is we're trying to push it away, we're trying to resist. And that's what's so exhausting. The process of trying to not feel is actually really effortful and tiresome, and that's what we get tired of.

But if we can realize that, no, actually allowing a feeling doesn't require that much work. It just requires that we're aware of what's happening, we give ourselves permission to notice that vibration in our body, that's caused by what we think. And we can do that and take care of the kids. We can also schedule time to go cry in the closet or the shower, if that's what we need to do too, I'm all for that. But people don't understand this concept of allowing, and so that's why I think they think they can't do it.

Jody Moore: It's very counterintuitive, I love your description. It feels like a black hole that you'll get sucked into, but it's not, it's actually very peaceful.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah, that your experience, once you learn to allow is so much, I think, more helpful and peaceful than all of the willpower and resistance involved in trying to not feel it out of fear.

Jody Moore: That's right. And when people say to me, "But it's just so hard, it's hard to do." I'm like, "That's because you've never tried it." Once you experience it you'll realize it's so much easier than what you've been doing. And it's so much more peaceful. And it feels, it feels natural, it feels like I said, it feels human.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah. But first you have to decide that negative emotions aren't bad.

Jody Moore: Right, and then you become not afraid of them one day, which is really useful.

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Krista St-Germain: Right, the secret to the universe pretty much.

Jody Moore: The secret to anything you want to do.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah.

Jody Moore: Okay. So I know you said that your kids' biological dad was from your first marriage. Were they living with you at the time, or do you have joint custody, or what's the situation?

Krista St-Germain: We have joint custody, but they spend probably 90% of their time with me, so yeah.

Jody Moore: Okay. So were they pretty close to Hugo?

Krista St-Germain: They were, it was interesting. So let's see, Carson was nine, and Merissa was 12. Carson's experience of it, and he actually, I interpreted him to be the closer of the two with Hugo, and that he's always wanted to play with him and spend time with him. But his experience of the loss was really different than Merissa's. I don't think he felt the loss of Hugo as much as he realized you can lose people. And then he became very worried about losing me. And so his experience was different.

Whereas Merissa, even though she spent less time with Hugo, and they talked less, I think she experienced more of the loss of what could have been. For her it was, I wanted him to teach me French, and I wanted him to teach me how to snow ski and water ski. And she was just kind of in that point where she was realizing what she lost in the future in that relationship with him.

Jody Moore: Okay, interesting. And did you have any concern or do you ever experience this with your clients, the concern over, I don't want my kids to see me crying and upset, I don't want them to worry about me. What do you advise? I know I hear some of that too in my coaching.

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Krista St-Germain: Yeah, I hear a lot of that. But here's my thought, the emotions are there and if we pretend they aren't then the message that we're sending to our children is that they need to do the same. And so when we grieve, when we emote openly, and I'm not talking like tsunami wailing, that would scare your children, but like saying, "Mommy's sad." And that's okay, it's okay to be sad, then that gives them permission to feel their own feelings.

Carson, he's like an old little soul, he's always, "Mommy, are you sad?" He's been that way through his whole life. And my response to him has always been, "Buddy, whose job is it to make mommy happy? It's mommy's job, nobody else can do it. But it's okay, if I'm sad, that's caused by me and it's okay if you can't fix that, because it's not a problem, it's mommy's job."

Jody Moore: That's beautiful.

Krista St-Germain: So yeah, I think we have to be honest with our kids. And I think really, especially if you're in a situation where you're the surviving parent, which most of my clients are in that place, trust is so important between the child and the surviving parent. So this is the time where sometimes we worry about being 'too honest', and we try to shelter them from feelings. And so sometimes we end up not being fully truthful. In my experience that almost always comes back.

The real information, whether it's how the parent passed or some detail, it will get to the child and then that erodes trust between the child and the surviving parent. And we do it because we think that negative emotions are problems.

Jody Moore: And we're trying to protect them.

Krista St-Germain: We're trying to protect them.

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Jody Moore: When you teach Carson it's mommy's job to make mommy happy, it's also setting up the foundation for it's Carson's job to make Carson happy. And he won't always choose to and that's okay too.

Krista St-Germain: And that's okay.

Jody Moore: It's just such a beautiful thing, yeah.

Krista St-Germain: And we tell lots of stories and jokes about Hugo and lots of talking, and that's very encouraged even still.

Jody Moore: Yeah, awesome, I love it. Let's talk about buffering. I think most of my listeners know what that is, we distract ourselves from our emotions with, I prefer like a diet coke and a piece of banana bread. We all have our choice of buffers. What do you teach your clients about that topic?

Krista St-Germain: Yeah, so I teach my clients of course that numbing out our emotions with substances, if done unintentionally usually leads to a consequence they don't particularly like. So I'm not – I don't encourage people to eat their feelings. But there is a theory in grief called the dual process theory. That does say that it's actually quite healthy to take a break from the work of grief. So that there are some activities that don't have net negative consequences in life that when done intentionally actually can help us in our grieving.

So it basically gives us permission to watch Netflix, or garden, or do hobbies or things that get you away from the work, the mental work, because your brain can't do that forever, it needs a break. So we have to find that respite and that balance. The theory says that we oscillate back and forth, we kind of do the work, the thoughts and feelings kind of stuff of grief, but then we also need a break from that.

Jody Moore: I love that. So can it happen even within the same day, like the first part of the day I'm grieving, for part of the day I'm just [inaudible] myself?

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Krista St-Germain: 100%. And the problematic part too though is when we notice that we're not having the intense emotions. Sometimes we judge ourselves negatively for that. So we think, I'm not feeling sad right now, or I am feeling happy right now. And therefore that means something about the person that I lost, I didn't love them enough, or I'm not grieving right. But, no, we want to open ourselves up and give some space. We can think about the loss and feel the feelings, but it's also advisable and healthy to take a break and we just go back and forth, back and forth.

Jody Moore: Okay. Well, gosh, I love the work you're doing, it's such important work. If people want to learn more about how to get help from you, where should we send them?

Krista St-Germain: Probably the easiest place is just my website coachingwithkrista, it's K.r.i.s.t.a.com and they can connect with me on the various social platforms from there or listen to my podcast from there.

Jody Moore: Okay, Coaching with Krista, we'll link to it in the show notes. And you do group coaching with widowed moms.

Krista St-Germain: Primarily group coaching, some one-on-one, but yeah, primarily I have a system.

Jody Moore: Do you find that the group, do people get as much out of the group as private coaching?

Krista St-Germain: I think more. I think more, and that's why I switched to groups, because you probably know this, you run a group program. You see all these similarities, and you see people coming to you and saying, "Am I normal? Is this normal?" They all think there's something wrong with them. They all think they're doing something wrong. And so I think you can just normalize so many things straight out of the gate by showing people that they aren't alone and that these patterns are common and normal.

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And then you can get to the good stuff. But you can just get so much out of the way, plus I think when you're watching other people get coached, your brain is so much less resistant than when you're the one getting coached. And so you can take the lesson that somebody else is receiving, even if it's an unrelated subject, you can still – they're getting coached on their mother-in-law drama. And you apply that to your drama with your sister.

Jody Moore: I think I've had my biggest breakthroughs from hearing somebody else get coached on something that I can't even relate to what they're describing. But I hear something and it's like those light bulb moments, yeah, happen, yeah.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah. It's the same thing I hope for my podcast too, my podcast is specific towards widowed moms.

Jody Moore: What's your podcast called?

Krista St-Germain: The Widowed Mom Podcast.

Jody Moore: Okay, The Widowed Mom, very easy to remember.

Krista St-Germain: But my hope is that other people will find it useful in whatever loss that they are dealing with. And I've done some episodes that are with that in mind, how to support people who are grieving, how to deal with the responses from people who love us, that maybe aren't what we want to hear.

Jody Moore: Okay, awesome. So, coachingwithkrista.com, and then if somebody's lost a child or something, a little bit different situation, there's potential for a private option or something?

Krista St-Germain: Yeah, for sure. I'm pretty abreast of resources. I can always refer out if somebody needs a specific thing.

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Jody Moore: Nice, okay. Okay, perfect, thank you so much for your time, Krista.

Krista St-Germain: Thank you.

Jody Moore: It's so good to see you.

Who is your life coach? If you don't have one I would be so honored to be your coach. I created a virtual coaching program called Be Bold that I want to invite you to join me in. We can address challenges, we can work on goals, and we can do it in so many different ways.

We have group coaching, individual private coaching, and online chats along with hundreds of hours of courses and content that I've created just for you. When you're ready to really take what you're learning on the podcast to the 10x level, then come check out Be Bold at JodyMoore.com/membership.