



# WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Hey there my friend. Welcome back to the podcast. So glad to have you here. If you are new, then absolutely huge major, welcome to you. You are in the right place.

Quickly to reintroduce my guest from last week. I have a wonderful interview with Krista St-Germain, who is a certified life coach who came to life coaching through the loss of her husband. So she now coaches widowed mothers, and is just an overall grief expert. So many of us have been experiencing a lot of grief, you might have actually lost people recently, whether it's to COVID or to something else but there's been just a lot of loss and grief in general, just the way our lives used to be.

Things that we thought were just a given about the way life would be and it's not anymore and we don't know when it's going to end and a lot of people are really struggling. So in this second part of my conversation with her, we talk about how to heal relationships with people even after they've died. We talk about the concept of the new normal. We hear that so much right now where everyone thinks about like, well, we just want to get into the new normal, what is the new normal?

Can we figure out the new normal, and Krista talks about how that concept can keep us stuck. Then we spend a lot of time talking about how to support someone who's experienced a loss, and how to support yourself after a loss. I think that these are really important things to discuss. So many people just don't know how to support somebody, and I think that this is going to be a really great episode for you to reference again in the future. Because as we know, grief and loss are part of our human experience.

Also feel free to share this with others who are struggling, and just not knowing how to respond knowing how to help others or help themselves. So it's a great episode, Krista and I always have so much fun when we talk and it's certainly not something that's super heavy handed, you're not going to be sobbing by the end of the episode, no worries. I just know that she's going to be able to help so many people with the information that she shares on this episode, so please enjoy, and I'll talk to you next week. Take care.

All right, Krista, welcome back. So glad to have you.

Krista St-Germain: Thank you glad to be here as the thunder rolls outside of my window. I don't know if you can hear it.

Katrina Ubell: Well, I just had a dog that was moving all around. I think someone finally let him out of where he was trapped. So that's good. So for anybody who missed part one of this two part discussion on grief, let's just have you give a just a brief rundown on who you are and what you do.

Krista St-Germain: So I'm a certified life coach and I coach widowed moms. So I have a slight obsession with grief and Post Traumatic Growth and the like and I got into this work because my husband was killed in a car accident by a drunk driver about four years ago and life coaching was just really transformative to me. So I just take great joy in helping other people figure out how to navigate their own loss and create life that they love on the other side of that.

Katrina Ubell: That's so good. Oh my gosh. It's like thank god, there's people like you in the world is what I want say. We really need people like you who will do that. So oftentimes I hear this that people will think that because someone that they had a relationship with died, that they never will have a chance to improve that relationship, heal that relationship, make amends, whatever they kind of struggle.

So often that's with a parent or some other loved one, or it can be like in your case, somebody just had an argument or something with their husband and then their husband died. Then what do you do when you're feeling really awful about that and you're just feeling stuck, I would imagine, right? You're like, well, now that person died now. Now I'm stuck with this problem

Krista St-Germain: Yeah, I have time to go back in time change time in order for me to heal a relationship.

Katrina Ubell: Exactly. So I coach a lot on how to improve relationships, but generally we're talking about both parties being alive.

Krista St-Germain: Details, small details.

Katrina Ubell: So how do you coach on the relationship when the other party is deceased?

Krista St-Germain: Well, interestingly enough, it's actually very similar because the way that we improve relationships with the living is really through the way that we think about them. We know that the other person doesn't have to actually change, for us to experience a higher quality relationship with them. Because relationships really happen from our mind and our thoughts and the stories we tell ourselves. So that's possible in any relationship, whether the person is living or deceased. First, I think we have to realize we're still having relationships with people we don't see even if they're living and with people who have died because we're still having thoughts about them and that is what creates our emotional experience of them. That is what determines how we show up in our own lives and that's what creates ultimately what we call a relationship. It's always a product of our thinking.

Katrina Ubell: I sometimes think about it, like the person is still very much alive just in our minds.

Krista St-Germain: In our mind. Right. We'll tell ourselves, well, I don't have a relationship with someone because they're not in my life anymore. It's absolutely not true. As long as we have thoughts about them, we have a relationship with them. So we have the opportunity, even if they aren't living any longer to go back and look at what is the work that's left to be done in our own brain, in our own story, in our own interpretation of who they were and what they meant to us and how we showed up for them or how we didn't show up for them.

By healing our own thoughts, we create or change that relationship as we experience it, which is really all it ever is. It kind of flies in the face of some of the early grief theory of how we really just need to get to a point where we need to be able to move on. It's such a relief I find for people to realize that there actually is grief theory that says no, continuing bonds are not only possible, but they're valuable. We can still have a feeling of closeness and proximity to someone who's no longer living. It's normal. It's common. It's possible. It's available. It's advisable, actually.

Katrina Ubell: Right. You'll hear that often, people will say that they feel like they can sense the presence or somehow they just feel like a connection to someone who's passed and they're having a conversation with them or something and they have that connection, and they think that's great. It really supports them.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah, and that all I think is important to understand that that's self created. We can do that for ourselves. So sometimes people will yearn for a feeling of connection because they think that it comes from outside of them. So they're scanning their environment. They're looking for ways that the person that they love, who has died is communicating with them or reaching out to them, and because they don't feel it, they then cut themselves off from the possibility of connection because they don't realize that they can generate that connected feeling for themselves, regardless of whether they're getting whatever sign it is that they're looking for, or whether their loved one is showing up in their dreams. None of that needs to happen for us to feel a connection and continue to have a relationship with someone who's

Katrina Ubell: That's really powerful because you're right. People talk about, oh, I had this dream and then they feel so great about having had the dream or I know when I went to some support groups for after infant loss, some people will talk about, well, whatever, maybe the bedding that they'd gotten had dragonflies on it or something like that. Then every time they saw dragon fly, they're like, oh, that's the sign and I totally didn't have anything like that. I'm like, I got nothing. I don't know what the signs are.

Krista St-Germain: Then for those of us who want it and don't get it, then sometimes we think that's not fair. What am I doing wrong that these other people are seeing dragonflies everywhere and I can't see. I feel connected to Hugo because I decided to feel connected to him. I decided to find the connections and create them and I'm fully in charge of that. He doesn't have to show up in my dreams, he doesn't have to send me signs from anywhere for me to feel like he's still a part of my life and I talk to him and it's all very healthy.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, totally. What are your thoughts about the line of thinking as time passes of, well, it's been two years or five years or 10 years? What would the person be like then, what if they lived? I just bring this up because last month was 10 years since my daughter passed and somebody reached out to me on the day and said, I just think what would she have been like, as a 10 year old? I honestly never think about her like that. For me, I don't really see the utility.

If I think about her, I think of her as a baby and for me spending time thinking about what she would have been like had she lived seems kind of futile to me. It feels a little bit like a way to hurt me. Because it's like, if I can concoct some sort of imaginative idea of who she would be, then I don't get to have that. So then, am I just asking to be disappointed or sad? I don't know. Anyway, I'm just curious what your thoughts are, if that can be helpful for some people?

Krista St-Germain: Well, I think we know based on how we feel when we have those thoughts, and so it isn't universal. So what might be experienced as you're experiencing it is completely not useful for somebody else might feel really good, and that's the case with almost everything in grief, is that when we can stop trying to make everything fit into nice, neat categories, and make some things right and something's wrong and just decide that different things work for different people and whatever you're experiencing is okay, pick what works for you and leave the rest

Katrina Ubell: If it doesn't resonate, leave it.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah. So if it brings you amazing peace and comfort or joy to think about what that person would have been like at a particular age, why not? If it doesn't, don't do it.

Katrina Ubell: Just leave it. Doesn't land. It's just not a big deal. It's good advice. Very good advice. So, sometimes people talk about trying to get back into the new normal and I think that this is so, so, so so, so applicable right now, just with everything going on with coronavirus and everyone kind of saying like, there's going to be a new normal, but we're all in a rush to get there. Because we kind of hope the new normal is similar to the old normal, which I think is always hilarious. Because we were still pretty miserable many of us back in that old normal. We're like, wait, can I go back to that familiar misery because this unfamiliar misery feel worse.

Krista St-Germain: It's terrible.

Katrina Ubell: So how does that play in with everything that you do?

Krista St-Germain: I think there can be ways to use that term that are useful and then there can be ways to use that term that are not useful. So the useful use of that term to me is to acknowledge that the destination, first of all, it's not like there's ever this place that we reach where the grief goes away. It's always a part of our life, but when you think about, I need to get back to normal and then you recognize that what I will now experience as normal will never be the same as what normal used to be, but I can still have the peace of a normal experience, it's just that it's going to be different.

That's the way that we can use that term usefully. It's become almost a term we use when we're resigning to a life that we don't really want and we tell ourselves, well, I'm just getting used to my new normal.

Katrina Ubell: You're sucky normal is what we're really saying.

Krista St-Germain: My sucky normal. I used to like my life, and I can get used to this new life that I have, but I'm not really going to like it. We say it with this era of resignation, as though we can't create something in the future that is equally as amazing, if not more than what we had before.

Loss is part of life, but it doesn't have to limit what's possible in the future. So if we use new normal as a way to just resign ourselves to an existence that is meh, less than what we want, we keep ourselves stuck. We limit what's possible and literally, my skin crawls when I hear people say it that way. I just want to have conversations about what is possible in their life.

Katrina Ubell: It doesn't have to be like that. There's been so much talk about grief recently with like, just as one example, high school seniors who are missing out on many of the very typical rite of passage things like their prom and walking on stage in front of all their family and friends for graduation and just a lot of experiences that they're not going to be able to have, that they were counting on having. A lot of awards and recitals and things like that are all canceled and the grief that goes along with that.

What I think is so interesting is when people are comparing it, I know this even happened when I lost my baby, I remember a friend who ended up, well, she wasn't a friend at the time, but we ended up meeting, or becoming friends through our loss, joint losses. She lost her baby four days before I lost mine, but she knew before her baby was born that her baby wasn't going to live very long. Her baby ended up living about an hour. So she was telling her mom then about what happened to me and her mom's like, oh, Betsy, that's so much worse because of XYZ.

Then she felt not great. Like, wait, this is not a competition about who had the worst baby death story. So I think it's kind of like when you're sad that you can't go to prom or you can't do some of the things you want to do or even just go on a vacation you were looking forward to your family, then people could be so quick to be like, well just be glad you're alive. There's all these other people who are suffering and brink of death or have died or whatever. The other comparison thing that some perspective is so much worse, like how do we just allow ourselves to grieve even when other people think that it might be silly, or just self indulgent or something like that?

Krista St-Germain: So I think it's whatever we're feeling is supposed to be there. It's there. So basically what we're doing when we say, it could be harder, it could be worse or that person had it worse than you, is we're telling that person or we're telling ourselves that how we're feeling is invalid, shouldn't be there. Now we know that our feelings are caused by our thoughts, but that doesn't matter.

In the moment where we're in pain where we're feeling the emotion, that's what's real for us. To tell ourselves that it shouldn't be there because someone else had it worse than we did or that we should be grateful when gratitude is not what we feel is not useful. We need to process what's there and make space for what's there. We can have pain, and still then later make space for whatever comes after it. It's very difficult to do that if we don't acknowledge and allow what is and shame or try to shame ourselves out of it or guilt ourselves out of it. None of that is useful.

Katrina Ubell: Totally, totally. So, let's talk now more about support systems. Because, hopefully, for most of us, we're going to have the experience of consoling more people than us being the one who's actually grieving the loss ourselves. What I've noticed just, I'm not on Facebook personally anymore, but I used to be for a while and I noticed how there would be different things that would circulate and everyone's got an opinion like, never say this, it's the worst thing.

The five things you should never say to someone who's just lost someone or who's lost her baby or had a miscarriage or whatever. So sometimes that's like clickbait for me. I'm like, what are they saying? I'm so curious because, of course, I had my own opinions about what people told me and what I thought was helpful and what wasn't. What I find with most of those things is like, I'm like, see if someone had said that to me, I wouldn't have been upset about that. Or yeah, I agree. I didn't like that one, either but there's no universal list of rules in general.

Krista St-Germain: It's almost like what other people say to us doesn't actually cause our feelings.

Katrina Ubell: I know, it is almost like that, Krista.

Krista St-Germain: Almost like that.

Katrina Ubell: What they say is neutral and then we get to interpret it however we want. So if your interpretation of that is, here's a prime example. So, everyone at the hospitals and everything where I used to go see newborns and stuff knew that my baby had died and I went into one of the hospitals and one of the women who was one of the floor assistants, she had lost her son a couple years prior, as a newborn. I think he was premature and then died.

So she came up to me and she was just like, I'm telling you what, we have got our angels in heaven and that just makes me feel so peaceful everyday knowing he's there. I was like, wow, because people would be like, I guess God needed another angel and I'm like, I could punch you in the throat right now.

That was a really good perspective for me, like that actually is a really nice thing to say to some people and it really resonates for some people and I just was not one of those people. So what is someone supposed to do when they're trying to support someone who's good, they're like, I just don't want to make it worse?

Krista St-Germain: I think the first thing is compassion. Compassion for you, the person who's trying to be supportive, and is going to stick their foot in their mouth, and compassion for the person who's going through the loss, just recognizing that we don't get a lot of education or help here and that we are probably going to say something that won't come out the way that we intended it or won't be received the way that we intended it to be received, but knowing that we're doing our best, show some great

Katrina Ubell: At least we're showing up. See, that's what I want to say is like, what most people do is they just want to run the other way and ignore you because they're so afraid. So if someone's even there trying to talk to you, we just have to love them because they're there.

Krista St-Germain: It's awkward and sometimes it's hard and sometimes we don't know what to say and we can hold ourselves in a space of grace, when we don't know what to say and when we say the thing that we wish we hadn't have said. So I think that in and of itself can go so far, but the other thing that's probably big realizing that it's okay, and actually valuable for someone to go through the pain that they're having, and it's not your job, nor is it even possible for you to fix their pain.

Their pain is not a problem, and it's nothing you created and it's nothing, that there's anything in the world that you can say that would take it away, nor do you want to. So when we can figure out how to allow someone to have their own emotional experience, and then not experience that as a problem, but just bear witness to it. Be with them as they go through it and not try to say things that make them feel better, because most of the time, that's not how they'll be received.

This is hard. I love you. I'm here for you, and we don't try to put lipstick on a pig and you'll find someone else and there's someone better out there and you're strong and we just bear witness and sometimes silence is an incredibly powerful way to do that.

Katrina Ubell: You're like, I couldn't do it like you're doing it and I'm like, how would you know?

Krista St-Germain: How many times do you hear that you're so strong. I'm like, what are you talking about? I'm just doing the best I can.

Katrina Ubell: You look amazing. I'm like I don't care about that all right now. My heart is ripped into a million pieces. I think there were actually a couple things that people either did or said to me that I actually thought were helpful. I'm curious what your thoughts are. One was just saying, I really have no words, I'm so sorry. So it allows you to say something.

You're acknowledging that you don't know what to say and that nothing can make it better, but you are sorry. So you said something and then you're also saying I don't know what else to say. So I'm just not going to. I think is actually really useful thing to say and often the other person, the bereaved, they often do want to talk to someone who's willing to talk to them about it, because so many people are so like, hush, hush, I can't talk about it with that person.

Then the other thing that I thought was super helpful was when people were willing to spend time, they weren't in a rush. It's like, sometimes you can tell people are like, it's almost like you're contagious or something. They're like, if I stay too long, I'm going to get really sad, and I don't want to feel that way. So has it been enough time? Can I leave now?

The people where I felt like I knew they were all in on the conversation, I didn't feel like any rush and they truly were holding space for me. They were just totally there to discuss what happened to me. They didn't make it about them. They didn't pretend to try to know a solution or understand or anything. They were like, just they're like you said to bear witness.

Krista St-Germain: They didn't compare it to a loss that they had that one time when their cat died.

Katrina Ubell: Exactly.

Krista St-Germain: Well meaning, well meaning.

Katrina Ubell: We don't even know, like their cat dying could have been the worst horrible tragedy to them. So maybe it was similar but it's just not useful.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah, comparison is just not helpful.

Katrina Ubell: Right, exactly. So I thought that those two things were very, very useful just being willing to be there and be present and not trying to make it better like you said.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah, one thing that was really useful for me too, and that I always encourage is talking about the person that has been lost and we have a tendency to think that well, that'll just remind them or that'll just bring it all up for them. It's already there. The person who's experienced a loss

Katrina Ubell: It's not like they forgot.

Krista St-Germain: We didn't forget, we didn't forget. I always found such great comfort when people would tell stories about Hugo and they would laugh about him. I felt really lucky because we had worked at the same company and so everyone that I spent all day with knew him. So we had a lot of shared memories and we could just pop a joke in a meeting about something that he would have done or found funny. So whenever we talk, even to say the name, share a sentiment I think actually makes the griever or helps the griever remember that they haven't been forgotten and their loved one hasn't been forgotten and it's just so important.

I also liked it when people, and I didn't get this very often but occasionally I remember the people who would, well meaning that ask you, how are you doing? Then they'll be like, no, how are you really doing? They're trying to get to

Katrina Ubell: They're like, I'm not like those people who are just expecting you to be like, I'm okay.

Krista St-Germain: I'm fine. No, really, how are you really doing? It's such a challenging question to answer, one when you probably don't even want to talk about the details with every single person, but then also, how do you even go about answering a question like how are you doing? How am I doing in this moment? How am I doing in the broader sense? What is the answer to that question? So, having somebody asked me how I'm doing today, how I'm doing right now, so much easier to answer.

Katrina Ubell: Because you have to formulate a response. Throw me a bone and make it easy for me to like, how am I doing right now?

Krista St-Germain: The how are you doing question you just kind of want to say fine and shut it down or you're all over the place because that's the experience that many people have when they're grieving and it's so hard to quantify how you are.

Katrina Ubell: Sometimes the how are you doing really, I felt like sometimes came from that person who was sort of like the gossipy person, sometimes it felt a little bit like people were like digging for details. A little like. It didn't feel always like a true genuine, I love you and care about you and I really want to be here for you kind of a thing. I think maybe that's where that repulsion to say it like that comes from maybe, at least for me. Just because it was like, well, the people who really did want to know weren't asking me that question.



Krista St-Germain: That question in that way. It's kind of almost more like, they're being skeptical of how you appear must not be how you're actually doing. So let's find out how you're really doing.

Katrina Ubell: You look like you're so great but how are you doing.

Krista St-Germain: Yeah, but how are you really doing.

Katrina Ubell: So then how can you support yourself after a loss? I think we do talk so much about other people, but I talk about this all the time with weight loss, just to be accountable to yourself, how to be like, I have got me and when I know I've got me, everybody else can just be who they are. I don't have to have all these expectations that they need to support me in a certain way or respond to me in a certain way or make comments in certain ways. They can just live their lives and be who they are because I know I've got me. So when you're in a state of incredible pain, how do you continue to do that?

Krista St-Germain: You allow the pain to be there, you allow the pain to be what it is, you allow yourself to be with it and not try to get away from it and you try to not judge it or yourself. You open up to it as the process and what I see a lot of happening is that we judge ourselves for how we think and how we feel. We tell ourselves, we should be somewhere other than where we are. So then we're unable to be where we are. So if we can just relax in to where we are, and let it be what it is without judgment, it's so much easier to get through.

Katrina Ubell: Can I just say for those listening, that is exactly the same thing for all uncomfortable emotions, not just grief. Listen to her. What she just said.

Krista St-Germain: Well, and that's what grief is. It's just a lot of different emotions. It's a lot of different thoughts and a lot of different emotions. So yeah, it's very much the same.

Katrina Ubell: That's really interesting. When you ask someone how they're feeling, they're not usually like grievous.

Krista St-Germain: I'm feeling grief.

Katrina Ubell: I'm feeling grief. Exactly. It's the collection, like we were talking about in the last episode of the stages of grief. Instead of calling them stages, it's just like a collection of emotions that you've experienced or may experience while you're grieving. That's what you're going through when you're grieving but what I find so interesting is there's not many other experiences that humans regularly go through, where we, in general, understand that there's a process to it, like there's a bit of a reverence to the process like it can't be rushed and even when we want to rush it, and we don't want to believe that, why did women wear black for a year.

It's like there's this reverence to this process of grieving that person and being sad and figuring out a way to put your life back together again, so that you can continue moving forward and we don't want to not feel sad when someone that we love dies, even though it feels painful. It's like how else are you supposed to feel? In fact, like I was saying, my doctor had come in the next day and again, I think he was just in such a state, he didn't even, I think he was completely thrown off guard.

Right away, he wrote me a prescription for an antidepressant, which I don't have a problem with. I think that's totally fine but I don't have a history of depression. I've never been on medication like that before. It was like right away, he was expecting me to not be able to handle it and he encouraged me to take it. He even then set me up to see a psychiatrist who specialized in women who experienced postpartum and pregnancy depression and then postpartum loss.

I was super grateful for that because she was actually really great and what she did is she had me tell the whole story and she's like, listen, you don't need medication. Your baby died. You're sad. That's normal. I'm like, okay good because that's kind of what I was thinking. I don't think I want to take medication right now. It's what I called clean pain. It's healing to feel that whereas dirty pain is creating negative results in your life.

Krista St-Germain: Right. Allowing that initial layer of pain without judging it, I like to think of that as the clean pain. So when we judge it, we tell ourselves it shouldn't be there, we don't let it be there that's when it becomes dirty and that's when we experience the suffering, but pain is so much a part of life and most of us even though when we're in it, we think we want it to go away, later when we could process it if you said, would you have not wanted to be sad about your baby that died? No, the answer's no. Of course you want to be sad about it. That's what makes it meaningful.

Katrina Ubell: I feel like I'd be like a weird sociopath if I was like, it was no big deal.

Krista St-Germain: I still like missing Hugo. I like it. Actually, it feels good to me to miss him but it's not in like an aching way, like a yearning way. It's more of like a, I loved what we had and I like thinking about it kind of way.

Katrina Ubell: It's kind of like an honoring kind of way. Sounds like.

Krista St-Germain: This is how I feel now, if somebody had told me that in the moment, I probably would have wanted to punch him but now I look back and I think how lucky I was to have had that. I find great comfort and missing that. You get to choose, you get to choose what you want

Katrina Ubell: You get to choose, exactly what works for you. I think that's

Krista St-Germain: I also think, you asked about what we can do to support ourselves. I think another thing we can do to support ourselves is to assume the best in the others. Because when we decide that everyone really is just trying to make us feel better, or make themselves feel better, again, we're all just doing the best we can with what we know. Then it's so much more palatable, when we're on the receiving end of the words that came out the wrong way or the misintended advice, whatever. It's just a lot easier to not get so offended when you remind yourself that listen, nobody's good at this and we're all

Katrina Ubell: It's just a suggestion. All the thoughts they're offering you are just suggestions and you can just say no, thank you. Not necessarily out loud to them, but in your mind going like that one doesn't seem to do much for me.

So, for my husband and me, it was the, it's what God wanted. I was just like, no, I'm pretty sure God doesn't want babies to die. I don't know, I guess it just doesn't sit well with me. So once we heard it a few times, then it was just like, it was almost a tough one in my brain. Like that one came in and it just slid right out again. I'm not even going to pay any attention to that one because it doesn't help and they are just genuinely trying to help.

Krista St-Germain: We see where they're coming from when we can try to see where they're coming from, when we can assume positive intent that that's something that makes them feel good and they're trying to make us feel good. So maybe that thought really works for them, but it's okay if it doesn't work for us. Doesn't make it bad, it's just what works for one doesn't necessarily work for another and that's totally okay.

Katrina Ubell: So it's compassion for yourself, compassion for others, everyone's going through that hard time. A lot of what I had read was just about how we have sterilized death so much. It used to be like loved ones died in your home and they stayed there for days. There's like, in some cultures still, very much like a cleaning ritual and all these things that people do around the dead body.

All of that has been completely just hidden away now and we don't know what to do. I've never been, have I ever been to, no, I've been to maybe one funeral I think before my daughter's funeral. I just I'm like, what happens? I don't even know. We just don't know about that stuff. So of course we're not totally, highly skilled and adept at knowing how to move through that. That honestly says something even just about where we live in our society, how lucky we are that we don't live in a place where we're experiencing tons of death around us because that's not the case in every area of the world.

Krista St-Germain: Then the flip side of that coin is that we aren't as comfortable with death because we don't experience it as much. To your point, especially children, they don't often have

Katrina Ubell: Where it used to be, a child making it to age five was like a really big deal. I think that's where taking the dead baby away thing and not showing the mom and just moving on thing came from. It was like their goal was to have as many kids as they could, and this one didn't work out. Where I felt like, I don't know anyone who's gone through this before, probably their experience was, I actually know a ton of people who've been through something like this before, or my sister lost her baby when child was two or whatever. It was just so much more commonplace, still super sad. Even in Victoria kind of era, they would throw really big birthday parties for little kids, because it was like truly such a miracle. That's like pre antibiotic era, the child made it another year.

Krista St-Germain: Which is interesting now, don't you think? Because now we tend to tell ourselves that when a child dies, it's not the natural order of things, but yet, for so long, the infant mortality rate was so high that it kind of was the natural order of things. The expectation is different and again, when the expectation is different than reality, that's when we have the problem. Child shouldn't pass before the parent.

Katrina Ubell: Yes, exactly. A parent shouldn't outlive their children's. It's like yeah, but it happens all the time. So apparently they should. Oh my gosh. So we could probably talk forever.

Krista St-Germain: I think so. That's one of the things I really do find fascinating about grief is how you can connect with people around grief, and shared loss in such a different way than you can connect with people that you don't have, even if it's not that you lost the same person, maybe you have a loss experience and you're willing to talk about what that experience was like for you, it's a connection and a bond that is so different than what you find without that, I think.

Katrina Ubell: For me, I just love deep conversation and a superficial conversation for me is just a little bit like torture. I just don't like that kind of stuff. So being able to get like really dig in and think about stuff and contemplate things and think about it in a different way, I love that. I love revisiting it. It's been a couple years now since I've had any more layers on this loss.

Like I said, we had 10 years go by and I thought, I wonder like, maybe something else will come up and it really didn't. Not to say that it won't, definitely there's been, just as my kids are aging especially my daughter, I kind of suspected that this might happen that as she got older, she would ask more about what happened and just kind of trying to put it together, whereas my boys have been a little more typical, boyish, I guess maybe where they just are like, oh, yeah well, we had a sister and she died and moving on with life.

It's been interesting to tell them, they're like, what exactly happened and trying to explain to them what happened and helping them through that process and what that means to them and even my daughter was saying something about not having a sister and I was like, yeah, but you do have a sister. She just died before you were born. Just my ways of trying to keep her memory alive and it's always an evolution right.

I don't want it to be that no one remembers that she was born. Every year on her birthday, we make cupcakes and we get balloons and flowers and we go to the cemetery and we sing her happy birthday and it's always like a cold and windy day, and many times we've really struggled to light the candle, but then the wind blows it out, we're like, well, she did a good job.

Krista St-Germain: A good job.

Katrina Ubell: We live the cupcake there and take a picture. It's actually been kind of a fun marker for our family to have pictures. We've had like infants in a car seat right by the headstone and seeing our family grow, there's so many special things that come from that and I feel like, I'm much more likely to share it with somebody who understands the significance of that and isn't like, that's weird. You're taking pictures at a cemetery.

Krista St-Germain: I love that. I think we also want to recognize that this year, you might celebrate her birthday and it might be fun and light hearted. Then some year you might do that, and it might hit you like a Mack truck and that's okay. It doesn't mean anything. Some days it's really different than other days and none of that means anything about how you're handling it.

Katrina Ubell: I find that it's really hard to predict. You'll think something will be hard and it'll be okay and then you'll be like, this won't be a big deal. You're like, oh, didn't expect that.

Krista St-Germain: The thing you thought would be hard maybe doesn't always turn out to be hard, and then something, I call this grief bombs, like grief grenades. You're not expecting it, it jumps out at you. I love the same thing. I love talking about Hugo, I love incorporating him into our lives and the stories that we tell. It's been interesting too, now that I'm dating to still talking about him and still figuring out how that relationship will always be important to me, and how to hold space for that relationship without making it mean anything about new relationships and figuring that out.

So I think, again, it's part of the fabric of who we are. So as we have new life experiences, but yet we bring that loss with us into those new life experiences, we just figure out how do we make room in that new phase of life. So your daughter's asking you about her sister and it'll be different now than when she's 20 and when she's 30, and when she has her own child, and she's

Katrina Ubell: I really thought once the kids get old enough to even have that on their radar, like having their own children, they'll have a whole new perspective and understanding of it, especially my daughter, I'm sure. It's one of those things, I never would have signed up for it but I can see so many amazing things that have happened and how much I've grown as a person because of it. I'm grateful for that experience. If it had to happen, I'm glad that I was willing to dive into it and not just the other direction.

I can't tell you how many people told me oh, I know someone that something similar happened and the couple are breaking up. I was just like, well, I'm going to do my darnedest to make sure that doesn't happen to me

Krista St-Germain: Yeah, and this might be another podcast another day, but the whole concept of post traumatic growth, that we can actually leverage a loss. We can use it, not that we have to or should, but that we can actually take a loss and use it to become more resilient, to become more on purpose, to become more of whatever it is we want in our lives. It's not always about just getting back to the baseline of functioning. Growth beyond and because of, not in spite of, but because of loss, that really is a thing.

Katrina Ubell: Right. It is available to you if it's something you're open to. I love that. All right, Krista. So if anybody wants more information, you have a podcast. What's the name of your podcast?

Krista St-Germain: It's called The Widowed Mom podcast. Katrina Ubell: Okay, great. They can find you at, what's your website? Krista St-Germain: Coachingwithkrista.com.

Katrina Ubell: Krista with a K. K-R-I-S-T-A.

Krista St-Germain: Krista with the K. K-R-I-S-T-A.

Katrina Ubell: All right. Perfect. I just think it's even, just having your information would be just such a great resource for my listeners, if they have any patients who have a loss of a spouse or something like that. I just think that it's just really good for people to know that this help is out there and they're really not alone as much as sometimes people really feel like they want to be alone.

Krista St-Germain: Some of the podcast episodes that I do, of course they're specific to widows but they're applicable to any loss. I did one specifically on how to support someone in a loss. So that might be useful to some people too,

Katrina Ubell: Definitely. Awesome. Probably if you're the one with the loss, sending people to that podcast that you know love.

Krista St-Germain: What I say is, send the person to the podcast, listen to it, but then have a discussion. Then talk about what is it in that episode that resonated with you and what didn't? What works for you, what didn't and use it as a way to approach an awkward conversation like this that's so hard to have otherwise. So I hope that's how people in my community are using it anyway.

Katrina Ubell: Now I think about it too, so I had to go back to my OBs office, obviously for a six week check after I'd had the baby and most people bring their baby with them and then they show all the staff who've been seeing you because at the end, you're going in like super regularly and stuff. I went in, I'll never forget. I went in, signed in, talked to these women at the front desk that I had seen so many times, totally knew I was going to be having a baby and they did not say one word to me.

It was almost like they acted like they didn't know me and it felt so hurtful to me. I remember at the time thinking, well, what did you want them to do? Say something nice, and then you're sobbing in the waiting room? What would have really been better? I remember then at some point, talking to my OB at the time, and he told me because I just thought that they just didn't know or it felt personal.

My interpretation of that was like that that was painful and hurtful and he told me later that he actually told them not to say anything to me. I think that, I don't know, I guess, again, he was just trying to do what he thought would be best but I also think that it can be helpful to just let people, like you don't want someone bumbling or making it about them but giving people the opportunity to say they're sorry, or just acknowledge like I see you.

I understand like, you're here. I think it's okay to let people say things. So just maybe for people who are listening too, just that idea of like, you don't have to shut everyone down and pretend nothing happened. That maybe isn't..

Krista St-Germain: If no one says something to you, it's also a great lesson that we have no idea why. We have no idea why but we can assume that they had positive intent, and maybe they have their own story that we don't know about. Maybe this is a really uncomfortable thing for them for reasons we aren't aware of. Maybe somebody told them not to say something, who knows? Most people, they don't just say, I'm not going to bring up her baby because I really would like her to feel terribly awkward and unheard.

Katrina Ubell: Stick it to her.

Krista St-Germain: Right. If I have the opportunity to do that, by golly...

Katrina Ubell: Totally.

Krista St-Germain: We don't do that.

Katrina Ubell: Oh my gosh. So everybody check out Krista because she's so great as you can tell, and Krista, thank you. Thank you so much for coming on and sharing all your wisdom. This is definitely an area we have not discussed in enough detail on this podcast. It's so important, because like we were saying, you don't process the grief, what do you do? You're like, hey, I know. I can entertain myself with food and sometimes alcohol too. We didn't even really touch on that so much, but drinking and just wanting to numb and just to check out.

So sometimes we're like, I don't know why I can't stop eating, I don't know why I want to have this alcohol so much. Well, when you stop, you find out, there's actually all this other stuff going on that I've just been avoiding

Krista St-Germain: There might be some feelings under there.

Katrina Ubell: There might be some feelings and they might be worth looking into. So, Krista, thank you. Thank you so much. I really appreciate it.

Krista St-Germain: My pleasure. Thank you.