

**Episode 71 – How We Manage Expectations**  
***Barb Knows Best***  
**Episode Transcripts**

**Michelle Maros:** [00:00:12] Hello, friends. Welcome back to Barb Knows Best, the podcast. It's another great day to be alive and to chat about life and all of the nitty gritty topics that we just can't quite figure out. And hopefully Barbara will know best enough today so that we can get to the bottom of things.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:00:35] You just too funny. Michelle. Hi everyone. You are so funny. We do. We tackle all the difficult things. I just want to say I really appreciate all of you writing in your suggestions and your comments and your thoughts because it's why we do this podcast and this episode. Every episode really gets into the the nuts and bolts, really, and the deep workings of how do we live the life that we came here to live, and how do we make it more peaceful, more powerful, more joyful. And so we tackle all the subjects that are taking away some of our creativity or our curiosity or our joy or our ease. And today is no different. We have a hot topic for you guys today.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:01:21] We do have a hot topic. It's hot between the two of us as we were discussing this going into it. We had some ideas. So I think you're going to get. Both sides of the equation about this topic, but. It's going to be interesting. And going back to what you were just saying, know what do we all want? I think obviously all of our lives are different and unique and we have different life paths. But at the root of it all, I think what we all want in life is to be happy. And when I think about what are the things that get in the way of our happiness or rob us of happiness or. Make us feel like happiness is out of reach. One of the top things that I've experienced in my life and we've heard from a lot of you and just it's, you know, across the board a difficult. Dynamic that robs of happiness is expectations. Dun dun dun.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:02:35] Yeah. Having expectations. And it's such a tricky subject. First, I want to take a second to define what I think of happiness as being. For me, happiness is feeling confident, feeling strong, feeling that I can know how to manage and handle all the ebbs and flows and all the waves and all the suffering that life has in store for us at any given moment and be able to come out the other side stronger, wiser, more confident. So that that's happiness. It's not it's not a state of euphoria or a necessarily feeling. It's it is a feeling, but it's

also a feeling of groundedness for me. It's a feeling of I got this, I've got my life. I'm doing what it is that I want to do with my life and doing what it is that I feel like I came here to do. And and so I can manage and handle whatever life sends my way so that I feel like, you know, people want to feel that sense of strength and confidence and and ultimately some joy along the way as the suffering and the pain comes, the joy and the ease can come right along with it. So and I think expectations that that word is is very is a little bit tricky because certainly we do have expectations for our lives. We have things that we you know, we just did an episode on disrespect. We have an expectation that that people aren't going to disrespect us. And if they do, then we are going to stand up and say something or have a boundary for it or whatever it is. Our response is going to be. So it's a very interesting topic, I think expectations. So I think our diving into it today is going to be fascinating.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:04:15] Fascinating indeed, you know. Like I said before, I've struggled a lot with expectations. And. It's been a great teacher for me to reframe expectations, to redefine my own expectations of life, and to really shift from expectation to acceptance in life. Because holding so tightly to what I expect to happen. Is not totally based in reality, and it's not helpful for me in creating the life that I want to be living and to feel my best and to do my best. And when I hold tightly to certain expectations, I set myself up for disappointment, for sadness, for heartache. You know that William Shakespeare quote, Expectation is the root of all heartache. And so what I really wanted this episode to be about is to just really break down expectations where they come from, you know, what's a reasonable expectation and what's unreasonable, how can we communicate our expectations and really just get a better handle about expectations so that they're not running our lives?

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:05:43] I think you said the key words there Michelle really beautifully, that idea that we hold our expectations so tightly. Right. And I would also love for us in this episode to break down the how we define expectation, because I feel like expectation. Sure, we all have goals and desires and highest ideals and intentions and all of the things for our life, aspirations for our lives. And we can kind of look at those as a form of an expectation like this is what this is what we want to do or this is what we desire to do. But I think the other side of that is having it held so tightly that if I don't achieve it, then I'm nothing, then I'm worthless, then I failed, then I'm not good enough. I knew I wasn't smart enough. I knew I didn't measure up to what I hoped that I could have done or all those things, all those damaging things that we say to ourselves

because we had this expectation that maybe it wasn't so unrealistic or we weren't breaking it down into small bites so that we could actually get there. I just want to I really want us to tease out this word expectation so that people can get an idea of what we're trying to say, of why what Shakespeare said is actually true when we hold on to an expectation so tightly and it doesn't materialize, we're devastated.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:07:07] A lot of heartache. We're angry, we're irritated, we're set back. We're you know, we are angry. We have all we run the gamut of all those emotions that happen to us when an expectation that we've had has not met, has not been met. And I believe it's what you just said, Michelle that we're holding it so tightly that there's no room for space, there's no room for error. There's no room for well, maybe something else will happen or there's just no room. It's like this way or the highway. There's no other way to look at it. And I think that for me, when I am so all the way to one side, all or nothing kind of an attitude about anything in life, it's always not a good place for me to be and I don't think it's a good place for any of us to be if we have to have things be a certain way. Otherwise we are miserable or we are devastated. So that's why I really love that Shakespeare quote. It is a form of a heartache.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:08:05] Of course. And what I heard you explaining just now is expectation is rigidity in life and when we're so rigid and unwavering in. How we think life should be. Knowing that life is not. It's not possible to have life that way. We are setting ourselves up for disappointment or failure or whatever that negative connotation is. But. Also while you are talking and talking about the word expectation and what it means and just thinking about its meaning, its kind of obvious to me why its problematic because in the dictionary an expectation is a strong belief that something will happen or be the case in the future. So something within you. It's a belief or an assumption that you're making, but you're not doing anything external. To let it be. So you're holding it within you. You're not communicating it necessarily or not taking the actions that need to be taken. You're just kind of willing it to happen. And I think that's why it's setting ourselves up for heartache because. If we want to make things happen in our lives, we have to have all of the elements of the equation. We have to have the thoughts, the actions, the the means, the desire, the motivation, the perseverance. Know all of the things. And still, sometimes it might not end up as we want it to. But for me, when thinking about this definition of expectation that it's just a belief that something will happen, it's just it's so weak. So no wonder it can't be true.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:09:59] And I will add to that, it's a belief that something will happen. So you're right, it's a belief. So I believe that this will happen. And so what I hear in that whole definition and that whole equation of what you just said, it also is my opinion, my strong opinion. Right. And it is my strong opinion and the thought that it I'm right. It's got to happen. You know, it's like there's no there's no as I said earlier, there's no place for space here. There's no there's no other way. It's got to be this way. I'm holding this so tightly that it's got to be this way. It and we actually have the the mistaken thought that we can control it, that we can do all the work or that we can have this expectation or have this thing that we think we are right about and it be that way. And then when it's not, we're devastated. We are upset. We're angry. Oh, I just spent all my money going to that movie. And it was just horrible because maybe we had such a high expectation or whatever it was, instead of it just being a bad movie, we've we've ruined our whole night about it.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:11:05] And this is what I'm trying to say. We can have unpleasant things happen. We can have pleasant things happen, we can be disappointed. But how are we internalizing it? Like I knew this, I was wrong. They're wrong. It's just how how we're internalizing it and how we're allowing our lives to be co-opted by it. That's that's the whole point, I think of our conversations in the living room like this every single week. How do we stay in our power and stay in our sense of ease and kindness about life and knowing that it's not really disrupting our our our self-worth and our confidence and our attitudes and our energy from within. And so I think that that's it's an expectation is a huge word of causing us to feel like we're right, causing us to hold tightly to our opinions of the way things should be. And when it doesn't happen that way, we're or we're angry. We're devastated. We're heartbroken.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:12:04] Yeah. And what I heard you saying is that X were really hinging our emotions and feelings on our expectations. And our expectations are totally out of our control. But we set ourselves up in our minds thinking that. The outcome of our expectations are in our control. And so it's kind of like a. A mind trap because we expect something to happen. And in our minds, we're so right that we think that there's no way that it won't be so, or that it's out of the realm of possibility that it won't be so, and then totally attach our feelings and emotions on it going exactly how we want it to go. And then when it doesn't. We're totally off the rails

because how could it be? How could it be? And so what I hear you say is like, really the first step is to detach our feelings from our expectations.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:13:10] Well, I think it goes back to what you said a few minutes ago. I want to piggyback on that, that we have our highest ideals, our aspirations, all the the. Outcomes that we would like to have for our lives. How would we like for our lives to look? What do we love? What do we care about what matters most? What are our values? All the things that we've talked about on these episodes of the podcast, we have all of that. Those are strong, important things, intentions for our lives. We have to have all of those. Those are the shining star and the Guideposts for our lives. And in addition to that, though. So if we've got these aspirations, then we've got these highest ideals, then we have to do the work. Then we do the work to have a plan and take a step at a time to get there. We can't just expect it to happen overnight without doing the work. So then we do what we need to do. We take the next step, we take the next step and we take the next step. We do everything that we need to do, all the while with this highest ideal or aspiration for our lives. But we don't know what the outcome is going to be, and we also don't know the timing of the outcome. We also don't know how it's going to unfold. We don't know what things are going to come along the way. So I feel really strongly that the power that we have in our lives is having the ideal and the intention to begin with, and then living every moment in alignment with that, taking the choices, making the choices, making the decisions, taking the actions that have the best chance of leading us to where it is we want to go.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:14:38] So I think I want to make sure that everyone understands that we're not saying that, Oh, just let life be and don't have any expectations. No, we're saying we can have our desires and the things that we want in our life and do one step at a time to get there. But understand that what's out that's in our control, but understand what's out of our control are all the things in the outside world that can interfere with that or that can change in a moment's notice. Notice. And then we've got to pivot or we've got to course correct. And so not allowing ourselves to kind of go with the flow of life really actually going with the flow of life, all the while having your highest ideal and aspiration or intention in front of you knowing that it's not going to be a straight line from A to Z. There are going to be detours and valleys and pits and falls and all the things. I think that's where we get into trouble when we think the expectation is, okay, I got this. I read it in a book that if I do A, B, C, D, E, F, I'll get to G and be on

top of the mountain. It isn't always necessarily the way it's going to go in life. There are no absolutes like that. So I think that's where expectations can get in the way of our energy of actually accomplishing what it is that we want. It might take a little bit longer or you might have to take a little detour somewhere else.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:15:59] Well, and even hearing you say that, you know, you think A plus B gets you to Z or whatever, but you're leaving the present to get to the future when you're expecting an outcome. And something I noticed with a lot of my personal experience with expectation and as I was romanticizing so much things that were going to happen in the future and expecting them to be exactly as I wanted them to be and really not living life in the present. You know, I'm forward future tripping about something that hasn't happened yet and letting the excitement of whatever expectation that I might have take me out of the present, which of course, as we know, is where our power is.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:16:47] It's so beautifully said. Here's an example for me. I married your dad very young and thought that we were going to live happily ever after. In a million years. Never thought that we would get divorced. Got married again. Many years later. In a million years, never thought that I would be divorced again. So it's really that idea that my expectation was I'm going to get married and stay married. You know, is that thought that that's what it was. So we can have those thoughts. But I almost like to think you have those thoughts and you have those ideals. But if we allow the reality of what actually happens to derail us to a point where we can't live our lives still in alignment with what it is that we want in life. It makes us sad. It makes us incapable, then of really taking the next step. It makes it difficult and certainly we're going to have difficulties. I mean, I'm not saying that overnight. I would just. Okay, let me pick up the pieces and move on. It takes time. It takes a long, long time. So I think. But having the tight hold on that expectation would ultimately cause me more suffering, which is what I realized in that first divorce from your dad. Having going through the divorce was suffering enough. Okay? This expectation that I had that I'm going to stay married happily ever after isn't happening. But for me to hang on to not being okay with that, with this is the outcome was causing me more suffering. So how can we live life feeling the suffering of an expectation not being met, but not piling on more suffering by our thoughts and our expectations and thinking about this isn't right. This isn't okay. I can't live this way. Oh, my gosh. I didn't even think that

that was going to happen. All the things that we say to ourselves that cause us to suffer more. Because we had an expectation that something was not absolutely not going to go that way.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:18:45] Interesting. And it didn't.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:18:46] Help that I was raised Catholic. And you're not allowed. You weren't allowed to get divorced back then. So, I mean, it's just interesting all the things that society puts on us, too, that tells us that we can't we have to have this expectation. I mean, it can't be any other way, right? Don't you have people saying that to you? Well, it has to be that way.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:19:02] Yeah.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:19:03] You know so it's very tricky. I like that word. Tricky because I think it's hard to navigate. I think it's really, really, really hard as humans for us to navigate this idea of not having an expectation and then it not being met and being sad and being disappointed or being hurt. And then how do we pick up the pieces later? So I think we're going to have expectations. I mean, we're human, right? We got expectations.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:19:25] It's how to manage them.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:19:26] It's how do we manage them, How do we actually look at them and say, okay, I'm suffering, How do I best not pile on the suffering? So this lasts a really long time. How can I actually what's one little step after I've done the. Feeling of the feelings and felt all the hurt or whatever it is that we're feeling in the moment, Then what can I do next? Like what next step could I take? And that can take a while to get to that point. And there's nothing wrong with it. Taking a while and there's nothing wrong with you. I think the ultimate is when you don't meet an expectation or someone hasn't met an expectation that you had of them. I think the ultimate is not thinking less of yourself or that you failed or that you're something wrong with you or that you're not enough, or while everyone else has this going perfectly for them, I wonder what's wrong with me. That's really for me has been the ultimate. Not taking it on personally, like something is wrong with me. And generalizing that the rest of the world doesn't have this problem. Only I have it.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:20:26] Yes, everyone has this problem. And it sounds like I think since we're basing this off of the assumption that we all will have expectations and how do we manage them, it sounds like we know that we're going to have expectations, but how can we cultivate and become more accepting of outcomes, especially when they're not what we wanted them to be?

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:20:51] Beautifully said.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:20:52] So it's like you can have the expectations, but you also have to have the acceptance of what actually is.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:21:01] Knowing we have no control otherwise. I mean, there is no control over what's going to happen. We only can do the best that we possibly can do in the moment. Moment by moment. By moment. And leave the results up to what they will be. And then we take once the results are in, once the outcome is in, then we take the next steps.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:21:21] Exactly. Let's take a break. And we're back. So I really like where we were going with this conversation of expectations and cultivating acceptance and letting go of what we can, can and can't control. And as I was thinking about this topic, I think there's two categories of expectations when it comes to life. And I just wanted to differentiate them for everyone and sort of put them into buckets so that we can manage them better. And I'll let you flesh this out a bit, but I think that there are reasonable and unreasonable expectations. And reasonable expectations. And this is where we were chatting before we started recording about this is like. The expectations that you have for your relationships and how you expect to be treated like respect, like we talked about last week or, you know those. Those foundations in life that are. Said and unsaid that you expect to be given on a daily basis.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:22:38] And I call those values. I think those are the values that I have for my life. But values are usually non-negotiable. It's hard to if you've got a value that you have in life, it's difficult to it can be accepting of other people and their values. Of course, we're all different, we're all unique. But if I'm going to have a partnership and be in a partnership with another person, it would be difficult to be in a partnership with another person that has opposite values of us. So we have to have a conversation. About that so that we're all on the



same page and we understand each other and what each other's values and expectations are in that regard.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:23:16] Right. And I think for probably most people in personal relationships and even work relationships, you know, you can set up expectations that, you know, you're going to show up every day and be respectful or that you're going to communicate kindly. You know, you and I are together almost every day, and you and I both kind of expect that we. Or assume that we're both going to show up and be loving towards each other because that's who we are and that's our relationship. I think if one day you showed up and you started chewing me out for no reason, like that would be weird and that would be different than my expectations. But I think my expectations of that on a daily basis are reasonable because they are pretty universal. They're communicated and they go both ways. You know, I expect you to be respectful. You expect me to be respectful. I expect you to be kind. You expect me to be kind. And so I think we can get into these reasonable expectations when they're two sided and they're both and they're understood by both parties.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:24:28] And the key there too, is communication and making sure that things are being communicated.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:24:32] Yeah. All of those things.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:24:35] And being understood. Yeah.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:24:36] Yeah. Because I think that is where. I think when we were talking about this before we were started, you know, people do have expectations that they don't want to give up. And I think this might be the piece where people are like, Well, I'm never going to give up the expectation that I want to be treated with respect or kindness.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:24:56] Definitely 100%. And that's that's why communication comes in into play big time. You have to be you have to communicate to the person what you want. And even a coworker, I think there has to be some understanding of what it is that you're. How you wanting to be treated and how you are going to treat others. Those are those are the basic baselines, I think, of relationships and you have to have a communication about it. If it's not

being done or it's not being met. And I think for what I've noticed in the past and even, you know, recently, I've had conversations with people, they're afraid to say, you know, it just kind of builds and builds and builds if someone's being disrespectful or if someone's not being nice. And I think when you when you when you're not up front about what your values are or what you how you want to be treated or how you want to see life go in that respect, when you're working or when you're in a family relationship or whatever it is or a friendship, it's always problematic. And so then you start getting harboring resentment. I had this expectation and they must not love me. They must not care about me because they wouldn't be treating me this way. And really, it just doesn't work that way. We have to be able to have a communication and a conversation with people. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Which is what you were saying before. I think of expectations more of in that regard. I think those are I agree with you, those are reasonable expectations. And we all have those values and those aspirations and those ideals of what it is we want out of a relationship in life. And I think if you look at relationship in other places in life, it gets a little bit more trickier like the work that we're doing or what's happening. I think to have a certain I think to have a certain expectation of an outcome is always going to be problematic.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:26:48] I agree. Which gets us into the unreasonable expectations, I think. And this is where I think the basis of this conversation is, because our unreasonable expectations are setting ourselves up for failure. They're setting ourselves up for heartache because we're living in the future of what we want to happen. And already imagining it to be so. And I think this also gets into the manifesting conversation and you know how people just expect things to happen and when they don't happen, we're totally devastated. And I find that the more power comes from being present, taking the aligned actions and doing everything I can do to foster what I want to happen while holding the acceptance that there could be an infinite amount of possibilities of different endings, different solutions and different conclusions.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:27:52] And you're going to meet each present moment with the space and the opportunity to take a different action if you need to, or course correct or go in a different direction, whatever it is. I think that what you're saying is brilliant. Michelle It is the key. I think too often we're looking at the outcome without taking the first step. It's kind of like that David White poem. Start close in. Don't take the second step or the third step. Take the step close in

the first step that you don't want to take. We're too busy looking at what we want the goal to be or the ideal to be, which is important to have. It's so tricky. It's so we have to be able to delineate between having that highest ideal aspiration for our lives, but then doing the mundane work, which is often mundane, hard, boring, whatever, doing the mundane work of taking the first step in the present moment, then taking the next step and then taking the next step. And I feel that what you just said is exactly the root of the heartache of the expectation. We are so busy looking at the outcome and expecting the outcome to happen no matter what, that we're not just taking the first step in the present moment. We're not living present, as you just said.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:29:06] And also we're hinging our happiness on something in the future without giving power to the present and thinking, okay, what can I be happy about right now? We're waiting. We're making ourselves wait for that gratification later. And then when that gratification doesn't come, we're pissed and angry and disappointed. And what happened? And that's why I think if we can start coming back to the present of being excited about the thing that we want or the thing that we're looking forward to or the goal that we have, having those feelings of, Oh my gosh, it'll be so great in five years when I can graduate with this degree or whatever, or I can get this job or whatever it might be. Have excited optimism and curious optimism, but being rooted in the present moment of having that vision, but knowing what you need to do every day to make it so, while still allowing yourself to have those feelings of excitement. Like, don't make yourself wait to feel it. You can feel it. Now give yourself permission.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:30:18] And don't you think you feel those feelings of excitement by having little successes?

**Michelle Maros:** [00:30:23] Of course.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:30:24] By setting yourself up. I love that. Michelle By by actually, when you take the first step and you have a little bit of a plan of what it is, when you take that first step, set yourself up. What's the one thing you're going to do today from beginning to end that you can accomplish in that 24 hour period and then the next day and then the next day so that you have those tiny joys that you talk about a lot. You have those little feelings of success. Oh, wow,

I accomplished this today. I feel good about this today. Having those little bit. I think that helps us from having these great big, huge, disappointing expectations. And then I actually also for me, I noticed I've noticed this way back in the day, I remember feeling like, wow, what happened? Why didn't this work out? Like, I didn't even I was so busy. Doing, Doing. Doing. Doing. Doing. Having this aspiration. This expectation that when something didn't work out, I would say to myself, Well, wait, wait. What? What just happened? How did this end up this way? What? What did I do? What? You know, without even the awareness of what was. What were the steps or what? What do I need to learn here to make it so? Or to get myself back on track for the aspiration that I have in my life. And I think that's the learning that takes place. All the things that we all go through, all these things that we're always here to learn and we're here to to course correct and do the things that we need to do to take us where we want to go.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:31:46] Absolutely. And I think what's interesting about the unreasonable, unreasonable or irrational expectations. Is there so rooted in a physical outcome coming to fruition? You know, I think we've heard a lot from people who have expectations of their kids becoming X, Y or Z in their adulthood or in their careers and are disappointed when they don't. Or, you know, in my personal life, having expectations that my time, my time line would line up in a certain way because I thought that's how it had to be. You expected not to be divorced twice in your life. It's all of these things that are outside of us and are things that we absolutely can't control. And. As I was thinking about this just now, what if we tethered our expectations to our values and our feelings rather than the physical things and the external world that we're never going to be able to control? Like. I expect to be happy and like in a real grounded way so that what do I need to do every day to be happy or feel centered or feel connected and knowing that when I live my life in connection with my values and those internal expectations, I'm going to do the things that are going to lead me to the physical stuff that I also want to see. But it's less. Rigid and specific to one thing, like, you know, in Gilmore Girls, when Rory expects her whole life to go to Harvard and then doesn't get in.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:33:41] No, she got in.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:33:42] Or no, Paris expects to go to Harvard and doesn't get in. And she was so rigid about Harvard. And then they go to Yale. Spoiler alert, I guess, but it ended up being amazing. So it's like getting rid of that rigidity of that one thing because understanding

that there's an infinite amount of possibilities that could be happening for you that could be better.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:34:09] I love that. I love that. I love that so much because Rory did live her whole life expecting to go to Harvard because her mother had that expectation for her. And then when she didn't go to Harvard and she went to Yale because that's where her grandfather went, it was a whole big to do And then a big fight. Yeah, a whole big to do. And then ultimately it ended up being a great choice for the whole family dynamic.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:34:34] So but you could I mean, that was one of the biggest. Yeah. Battles between the mother and daughter that were like besties. Yeah. And she had these expectations and even Rory had these expectations. And when it didn't go that way, their whole world was rocked because it was so rooted in something external rather than being rooted in I want my daughter to get the best education and be happy in her education and feel fulfilled in her next chapter in life.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:35:06] And she ultimately got there, which is the cool part of the story because sometimes we don't get there. I love the I first of all, what you said is just amen. It's it's so right on Michelle. And I feel like it's it's we never know the end of the story. It's that that Pema Chodron quote a good thing happens today. A bad thing happens today. We never quite know what's going to happen, so we never really know what the end of the story is going to be. And so having holding that loosely, like I think I've used this example before, but like pretend like you're holding a little baby bird in your hand, you wouldn't hold it so tightly, but you need to hold it enough that it doesn't fly away or you don't drop it or whatever it is. It's really that idea of how can we like Goldilocks and the Three Bears? Not too hard, not too soft, but just right that middle path. How can we actually really live true to ourselves, but also leaving enough space and grace to be able to be fluid in the flow of life, to be able to really be joining what life unfolds for us. Because certainly if we are so rigid, like you said, with our expectations of your timeline of where you thought you would be at this point in your life or where I thought that I would be, we can be miserable. We can really derail our whole lives. We can really not be happy or present to what it is that we really want and we lose track or lose sight of what really matters most.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:36:32] When you can disassociate from the truth. I mean, I, I remember and I hope you don't mind me saying this, but I remember when you were first going through your divorce, you're like, I can't be divorced twice. I can't be divorced twice. And it was almost like. You were not accepting that this could be true. And that was really tormenting you. I saw how much you suffered grappling with your expectation versus the reality. And of course, going into all of the stories that we have about our expectations and what happens when we don't get it. But you were suffering with just that one. One thing and. I think that. When something doesn't go our way. Or things don't unfold like we thought that they would. We have to stay connected to what's true, even if we don't like it, and even if it's uncomfortable, because at least that's the reality. And when you're rooted in reality, you can start to cultivate acceptance. Like, I really never thought that I was going to be divorced twice, but here I am and I'm in a new chapter, and now I'm being given some sort of new opportunity to create something different. And I think that's also the next piece of shifting expectations is to being open to another viewpoint or rewriting the story that you had about the expectation into a way that's open to different possibilities or different stories that we're writing.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:38:16] Beautifully, said Michelle. I absolutely don't mind you sharing that because it's so powerful and it brought me right back to I was already suffering and then I was loading on so much more suffering and you could see that and you could feel that in me. And I think what what you said so, so eloquently is that the day we decide to stop adding to the suffering, the day I decided to stop adding to my suffering and allowed myself to actually just feel the suffering of the reality that I was going to be divorced twice was the day that life cracked open just a tiny little bit and showed me other possibilities. And I think that's beautifully what you just said when we stop letting the mind. With these expectations, with these with these rigid ideas that this cannot be happening. Well, it is happening. I cannot handle this. Well, you can handle it. This will not be okay. Well, yes, it will be okay. When you start to understand that this is the reality of life and what life is presenting, when you really start to get that and you feel the sadness of it or the pain of it and you really feel it, then life opens up.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:39:29] And as you said, Michelle, you start to see the possibilities that are there. And there are endless possibilities. As you've seen, as I've made my way through this, it's endless as to what the possibilities are for me. So I think that's a perfect example of. Having this

idea that something just can't be. Well, anything can be. That's the problem. I mean, that's the situation. Anything can be in life. We have no control. Anything can be. So when you're feeling like it can't be what what's the what's the outcome there? The outcome is I can't do it. The outcome is you're, you're you're stuck. You can't you can't move forward. You can't think, you can't move, you can't anything because you're really blocking. That's what I think. I oh, that was the feeling that I had when you were speaking. It was so powerful that expectations like this really block our lives, really stop us. They stop us in our tracks and we cannot do anything. So they really. Block They are a huge impediment, absolutely. To living the life that we all really want to live our lives fully and completely.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:40:37] Absolutely. That's kind of why I said that. If we can cultivate expectations of feelings, because I think that's you know, when we talk about manifesting things that we want, you think about the feeling when we think about goals and how to achieve them. We think about the feeling. So if we can think about the feelings that we want to feel, obviously we're not going to feel that way all the time, you know, every day. But we can set our intention going back to the topic of intention on those feelings, then we can take those actions, like we said, to feel that way rather than being so rigid with something in the external. And what was interesting too, about. Your example of the two divorce things. It's also important to understand that sometimes we have these deep seated expectations that we didn't even know that can pop up when life happens to us. And really being present to whatever feelings come along with that and understanding it and really just acknowledging it as it comes. Because I guess obviously I'm not you, but when you kept saying to me, I can't have two divorces, I was so surprised that that was an expectation for you. I would not have expected that. You know, I was like, whatever, you know, you did it once. Do it again. But that was something really deep seated in you, probably from, like you said, growing up Catholic and and everything else where you never would have expected to have had that happen. And that's something that came up that you probably didn't think that you would have to deal with. So sometimes life will surprise us and bring in situations that are rooted in our expectations that we might not have even been able to prepare for.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:42:28] Amen. Amen. Amen. Michelle. It's so good. It's so good. It's life. It's full of surprises. You're exactly right. And often we're not prepared for it. Often we're taken aback or we're caught off guard or whatever, whatever is happening in the moment and how

we how we ride those waves of life. That's why the more that we can kind of be less rigid and less holding on to these beliefs or these ideas, that things have to be a certain way or people have to. Act a certain way or say a certain thing or be a certain way. They have to be this way. The easier that we start to get into the ease and the flow of life and the easier life becomes because we're not so burdened with all these half twos and should have and could have and would have and all those things that we say to ourselves, I wish I had done this or I wish I had all those things. You know, it would have worked out this way if that one hadn't done this or if this hadn't happened or, you know, it's just very it's very it's very tricky. I like that word. It's very tricky because for us to be able to navigate all of this is never easy. No, but it's a worthwhile navigation to have. It's worth our lives to be able to do this.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:43:50] It's worth our lives to take the time and the space to be able to think about what? What are we holding on so tightly? What beliefs do we hold on so tightly? That it will shake the foundation of our lives or who we think that we are, who we think that others are, what we think life is. Or actually what you said beautifully. I was certainly not living in reality back then. I thought that I literally said to myself, I cannot. And so whenever you're saying to yourself, I cannot if it's not going against one of your values. Or something like that. It's really interesting to kind of tease that apart and say, okay, what what I mean, but I cannot. Am I saying that I'm not strong enough? Am I saying I'm not worthy enough? Am I saying I'm not capable enough? What does that mean when you say to yourself, I cannot. And maybe it could just mean, you know, I'm not I don't have the the expertise in this field to do it, but I could do it if I wanted to. Maybe. So it's like that idea. I cannot it's such an absolute that I think it's very harmful for us sometimes and not maybe not harmful. Maybe the right word is useful. It's not helpful. It's not useful. It's not helpful for us to have those words. I cannot.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:45:01] Well, I think like what you always say, this is a perfect example of becoming the scientist of your life. If something happens and you it's different than what you expected, you're going to have all of these feelings, probably like all of the stages of grief, really of denial and anger and, you know, all of it. And it's up to us to examine it and to be the witness of it and see. Okay. Ask ourselves the questions. And, you know, this is painful, but I can also see the good in it or it's really difficult, but I can light there's a light at the end of the tunnel, you know. Becoming that scientist so you don't get all consumed with what is reality. And that despair and disappointment of the the expectation that wasn't met.



**Barb Schmidt:** [00:45:57] And so you don't block yourself from ultimately being able to see the silver lining in it all or the blessing. We hear that all the time. It was a real blessing that this happened because this happened. So I think, of course, what you always said, you always talk about silver linings a lot. We can't see the silver lining unless we're open to the possibility of it may not happen the way that I think that it will happen or the way that I would want for it to happen.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:46:23] Well, I mean, using you again. Thank you. If. What if you hadn't let that go? And what if you stayed stuck in the. I cannot have two divorces and fought the divorce and maybe tried to force it not to happen or compromised yourself to to go fit back in something that wasn't good for you or, you know, had to get into some sort of legal thing that was going to cost you time and money. And, you know, forcing something is never. I think the choice that we want to make, if it to make it align with our expectations. So just thinking about. If you think that you have to force it, it's probably not right. And so knowing that. You don't want to force things being open to what the other possibility could be, because once you started to embrace it, I mean, you're thriving. I mean, it's difficult, but I mean, you have so many open doors for a different chapter in your life, and that's wonderful. And you can still feel the sadness that also comes along with that.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:47:34] And as the open doors and all the other possibilities and you start taking that first step in the next chapter of life, the sadness goes, the opportunities come and you start to feel the joy. Oh, this is working out on my behalf. Life is not working against me. It's working for me. This is how we get to those quotes that we hear all the time. I actually have the joy of feeling like life is working for me right now, not against me. And so it's it's not like any it's not like anything out there changed. I changed. It's like I changed my perception of what the reality is and opening up just the tiny little light to come in that you were talking about. Michelle brings a massive feeling of possibility. And I think whenever we feel possibility, it brings so much joy and hope and so much excitement and and confidence, which is what you were talking about earlier of you can actually feel that in every given moment. You don't have to wait till you actually get to the your attained goal or desire or intention for aspiration for life. You can actually feel the tiny joys in every moment.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:48:43] Yeah. And I really think like the last little piece of how to manage the expectations is to really cultivate. Like, what if? Kind of mentality. Like what? What good could come of this? You know, instead of a why me or why why? Like what if, like being open? Like, what if I did embrace this?

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:49:06] What could it look like?

**Michelle Maros:** [00:49:08] Curious optimism.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:49:09] Curious optimism. And even if it's hard to be optimistic because that's a tall order sometimes we're in the middle of the sadness and we're in the middle of the suffering. So not to pile on more suffering. Yeah, we can just be curious. Let me just be curious. I don't know if I can be optimistic yet, but I could be curious. Let me just put aside my rigid thoughts that it had to be this way. And I cannot live if it's not this way or whatever is happening in the moment inside of us. Let me just be curious what what could be a possibility and maybe even naming one is always helpful, which is what I was doing. I was naming a couple of possibilities that were very helpful. So it's it's baby steps. It's baby steps. We can't jump to acceptance without taking all the little tiny baby steps along the way.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:49:57] Yeah, it's like the curious optimism of like being excited about a new potential outcome. While accepting what is.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:50:09] Yeah. I love it. I love it. I love it. Wow. This conversation. Far surpassed my expectations.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:50:16] See you just got to buckle up for the ride.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:50:18] You just have to trust and believe that it's going to unfold in exactly the way it's meant to.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:50:24] Exactly.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:50:24] I loved it.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:50:25] Me too. Thank you for letting us. Dive into your life as an example.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:50:31] Always, Always. That's the whole point of this podcast, right?

**Michelle Maros:** [00:50:34] Yes, ma'am.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:50:35] Be as be as authentic and be as true to who we are and share it all.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:50:40] Exactly. Well, thank you so much for you all for listening and being such a wonderful community of listeners for the podcast. We're very grateful for all of you, and we do not take your time and energy and support for granted. It really means a lot to us. So thank you so much. If you would like to stay in touch with us, ask us questions, let us know what you think. Thought about this topic, this conversation. Make sure you're connected to us on social media at Peaceful\_Barb, at Michelle Maros, and at Barb Knows Best Pod. You can ask us all the things over there. Also, if you haven't yet, make sure you're liked and subscribed to the podcast. Wherever you listen to podcasts and give us a five star rating and a review. If you haven't yet, that would make us oh so happy. Lastly, have you checked out our Barb knows best merch. We have some styles that are still for sale and they are amazing and we love them. I've been wearing my Charlotte hoodie in my travels over the summer. I love to wear a hoodie on airplanes and it is the perfect travel hoodie. So if you're traveling this summer, grab a Charlotte hoodie and we can be twins. You can click the link in the show notes to check it out and make an order today. Thank you so much again for listening. Thank you, Mom. And we'll chat with you next week because as we know, Barb knows best. Bye.