

**Episode 94 – Managing Feelings During the Holidays**  
***Barb Knows Best™***  
**Episode Transcripts**

**Michelle Maros:** [00:00:13] Hello everyone. Hi friends. Welcome back to Barb Knows Best the podcast. I am your co-host Michelle Maros and I am here with my mom, Barb, and I'm so excited to be here with my mom. Barb. Hi, Barb.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:00:30] Hi Michelle. I'm excited to be here with you today. We're doing kind of an extension of last week's episode, talking about holidays and the difficult feelings that may come up. And I'm looking at you and you look very tired, sweetie. You look very tired. Your voice even sounds a little bit tired.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:00:44] Yeah, the holidays.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:00:45] Can make us really drained. This is perfect. You are tired. And we're talking about all of the difficult feelings that the holidays bring up.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:00:53] I was going to say we've really only. Scratch the surface of the holiday stuff and I'm already tapped out. Best wishes to me.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:01:07] Well, we are late and we're getting late into November, so. And, you know, early December. So yeah, I hope you get to rest after this conversation.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:01:16] But you know, and I think we talked about this in the last episode, all of our birthdays are in November. So it's like.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:01:23] It's always draining.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:01:24] It's a marathon end of the year for us. Yeah. So by the time we even get to the actual holidays I'm like, put me in a padded room with a noise machine and I don't know my cat and don't talk to me for 5 to 7 days.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:01:45] Well, I will see you in 2024. No, that's why I love. I knew that we needed an extension or a second part of last week's episode of dealing with the holidays and moving through the holidays and stuff, because I know that it is. You're right. Usually we are after the birthdays. We you know, we had kind of a little bit of a wall and then we have a whole other extension of the rest of the holidays. So I'm excited to talk about today's episode of difficult feelings. And I'm so happy we have received so many messages about how to deal with, you know, family members and family members that don't respect our boundaries and how to deal with the, you know, the exhaustion of it all. So I'm really looking forward to talking about the feelings that we have during the holidays. How are you feeling today Michelle?

**Michelle Maros:** [00:02:33] I feel like we're having like a Freaky Friday situation where you're doing my part and I'm doing your part.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:02:38] Because you look barely awake. Your eyes are like little, almost closed and also barely open.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:02:43] Remember we switched our mics and our headsets today, so maybe we are Freaky Friday.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:02:48] Maybe.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:02:49] We actually talked about that the other day of. That I you know how they say to, I feel like girls and women maybe more often than men, that you know, they turn into their mothers. And I've been having feelings of that world. Do something or say something or act a certain way. And I'm like, oh my God, I'm turning into you. And on the flip side, I feel like you're kind of turning into me. So maybe we are having a Freaky Friday situation.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:03:21] I think we're just continuing to become the best version of who we are. So.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:03:24] How well said. So, yeah, as you were saying, we're going to continue from last week's conversation about the holidays. I really wanted to dive more into the feelings that come up in the holidays because I think oftentimes, you know, listening. If you

didn't listen to last week's episode, maybe pop over and then come back. But, you know, last week was really about some tangible steps and tools and setting boundaries and how to really maybe take control and take more ownership for what you want and how you want to feel during the holiday season. Because I don't know if anyone else can relate to this, but the time just goes by so fast. I'm a holiday freak. Like, I know time is too soon to get the decorations up or to watch a hallmark movie. I love it, I get so excited and I feel like you blink and it's over. And I feel a lot, especially this year. And I think with that in mind. We can maybe feel like we're trying to prepare with all of these tools and tips and boundaries and knowing what we want, and then it comes and goes, and maybe we have like, whiplash because maybe we didn't feel like.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:04:42] We necessarily had the presence to approach it how we really wanted to. And so last week, I feel like we really talked about how to. Get in touch with really what you want for yourself and how you want to feel in the holiday season and what to how to advocate for yourself. But I often find, and maybe this is just because I'm an Eeyore in nature, that. So many feelings come up at the holidays, and they're not even necessarily indicative of your. Maybe mental state or the state of your life, but it really brings up to the surface a lot because there's just so much going on. There's so many expectations, there's so many memories, there's so many movies that make us feel a certain way. And so I really wanted to dedicate this episode to the feelings of it and how to really feel the feelings and manage the feelings that come up at the holidays in particular, because it's for me it's different than like regular life.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:05:55] It really is. I agree, Michelle, and I think that's why one of our biggest tips today during this episode is that we do have the power. We do have the ability to be able to feel our feelings and know when we need to use our know, or when we need to use our power and our power of choice. Power of expressing what it is that we need in the moment when we need to. But for me, what always happens in the holiday season, and I don't know if all of you listening can agree with this, is that it brings up....Not only does it bring up a lot of feelings and emotions, which we do that in life, feelings and emotions come up all the time, but the holidays are wrapped for me. They're wrapped in a sentiment of cheer and merriment and oh my gosh, this is so amazing. Let's take advantage of being in the present moment because it's such a beautiful time of year. It only comes once a year. All the things, as you say, the

hallmark movies, all of the things represent joyfulness and cheer and being present and everything. But for me, it does that. But then in the next breath, it can represent feeling sad, or feeling isolated, or feeling resentful, or feeling grief, or feeling nostalgia like you were talking about all the things that we do, past memories. So I feel like we really have to give ourselves a break. We really have to be gentle with ourselves. During this season especially, we always have to be gentle with ourselves. But we really, really, really have to make it a point that no matter how much you set the best intention for yourself, you may take a sharp right turn into sadness or anger or resentment.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:07:36] And that's what I found myself crying one day. I don't even know what I was crying about. But.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:07:41] Recently?

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:07:42] Yeah, in the past couple of days. So it really is important to be gentle with yourself and know that the swings can be momentary and they also can be out of the blue. So I think you and I talk about emotions a lot. We talk about feeling our feelings a lot on these episodes and in our own lives and our own daily life. I know I always ask you how you're feeling today, Michelle, and I ask you today because you look so tired, but we do that all of the time. And so recently, I think you and I have been doing it with each other even more. So let's get into it, because we know that to manage this wide range of emotions during the holiday time when we're supposed to be, quote, "supposed to be" remember in the last episode we talked about getting rid of, you have three buckets in life. I have to do this. I want to do this, and I'm supposed to do that? And we talked about getting rid of the supposed to bucket. So we want you to know before we start talking about this, that whatever you're feeling and whatever is happening for you right now is normal, whatever normal means. But it means we all go through this. For me, normal means every human goes through a wide range of emotions because it is the human condition. So please be gentle with yourself and don't beat yourself up. Why is everyone else seem really happy and I'm struggling.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:08:58] Yeah. So.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:09:00] So let's get into it. How we how we manage difficult feelings. And I think it's, it's very indicative of for me because it's so extreme during the holidays. It always is a good platform for moving into the new year because a lot of us feel like we've been through hell and back during the holidays. You know, it feels fun, we feel good and all the things, but we also feel very, very, very drained and that it was a struggle emotionally and physically sometimes. So these are some of the difficult feelings that you and I have talked about over the years. And we've spent a great deal of time talking about it in the past month, given the year that we've had. That's been so traumatic with my divorce, with all of the things that have been happening emotionally for both of us. So this has been a really rough year, and coming through this year the best that we possibly can moving into the new year, ready to go with whatever it might bring us.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:10:00] I'm excited. You just gave me a funny look because I'm giving less energy than my usual self.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:10:13] No, I'm accepting exactly how you are. No, I just I feel bad that you're tired, but no, I you look beautiful, sweetie.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:10:21] Thank you. Um, so the first feeling that always, always comes up for me at the holidays. And I think it's a pesky one for a lot of us at the holiday time is nostalgia. And, I don't know, I feel like I have a really interesting relationship with nostalgia, where I love to lean into and engage with nostalgia. I love, you know, reminiscing about those good old days where life felt so much simpler and happier and easier and. I love remembering happy memories. I love going through old photos I love. Just the. The nature of nostalgia. The past and, you know, glamorizing the past. And it's funny because. I don't know. I'm sure you'll have a lot to say about this, but nostalgia is such an interesting thing because. It is a glamorization of the past, and it's not often the whole story, but our minds tell us that things, things were so much better than they are now, and somehow, we've digressed. Or we've gotten worse in the present. And so. I can remember sitting here thinking about so many holidays where I would get really wrapped up in the feelings of nostalgia and thinking about how holidays of the past were so much better. And woe is me, because it's just not as nice as it is now. And wouldn't it be great if things were like how they used to be? And it's, I mean, obviously the first piece of just not being in the present of what is right now and comparing something that's happening

versus what has already happened. But I don't know. I'm curious to hear your thoughts about it because nostalgia is really tricky for me.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:12:41] I think one of the greatest things you said is that really, really, really remembering that nostalgia is not the whole story when we are being nostalgic. We truly are reminiscing. And really, our mind is going down a loop and going down a hole. And then on a loop of, wow, why didn't I? Why didn't I do this differently? I remember it being so good. I've been thinking about my mother a lot this past month and she loved this time of year. And you know, I was thinking about, oh, wouldn't it be nice if she were here and all the things and so we can go through that. But it was really it is really important to remember that it's not the whole story. It was a struggle that this time of year in my household was chaotic and a traumatic and a big struggle. Even though she loved this time of year and I love it. It's to remember that it served us well. And here we are today and remember the good things. But also remember that the good things are how we've moved through all the really difficult things all these years that have brought us to have these really beautiful, nostalgic memories. That's what I tell myself, because it wasn't pleasant a lot of the time. It wasn't really great a lot of the time. So, I think it's really important to understand that we're not lacking in this present moment because we're feeling nostalgic about the past. I used I think my thing is not used to, and I still do, but not to the extent that I used to. I used to have a lot of regrets.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:14:10] Oh wow. Why didn't I enjoy it as much as I could have back then? Why didn't I be a better daughter? Or why didn't I be a better wife with this divorce that we just had? You know, all the things. But we have to remember that we're not being fair to ourselves when we think about things this way. It's not the whole story. And when you use this argument against yourself, you're really hurting yourself and you're actually not telling yourself the truth. So, we're believing something that's not real. Yes, it's nostalgic. And yes, it probably had some good moments and good times, but it's not the whole story. So, try to make sure that you're giving yourself the right praise and the right blessings that in this present moment, look how far you've come. And what has helped me the most is to remember; look how far I have come. I can look back on the past with fond memories, without going down a rabbit hole of wanting to be back there. And also remembering that I'm really extraordinary. Look at where I am today. Given all of the turmoil or all of the trauma, all of the chaos or all of the difficulties. So, I think what I'm just saying is make sure you remember the difficult times and honor yourself for

where you are today. What is happening right now and having gratitude for right now and remembering it wasn't all roses and blessings. Probably if you're remembering nostalgia as being regretful or painful. For me, it's been I'm not giving myself the truth of the whole story.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:15:44] I feel like only you would be like and remember the bad times too. So, I'm joking, but I love it. Don't forget about all the hard stuff. Bring something beautiful to your mind. Of the hard stuff that you've been through in the holiday season.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:16:01] Yes. Because I think that's what makes you come back to the....

**Michelle Maros:** [00:16:03] I love it.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:16:04] Reality of what is in the moment, and honoring yourself for how blessed you are, or actually how grateful you are for yourself. Wow, look how look how far I've come. And look at what I've done to get to this place where I can actually look back on the past holidays with fondness, with love, with gratitude. But I also know that that wasn't the whole story. And look at how far I've come. I think just remembering that you don't want to, you can reminisce and look at all of the things, but just remembering the truth and remembering that you don't want to live there because look where you are now. It's so much greater than where you were. Especially if it was difficult, and reminding yourself that you're worthy of all the blessings and all of the beautiful things that you have right now through the difficulties. I think that's what's got me here through all the difficult times. I can come out the other side after a long time. I mean, it doesn't it doesn't happen overnight. And I've started to cultivate gratitude for my mom. Gratitude for my parents that, you know, they did the best that they could. And it wasn't always, you know, fun, happy, beautiful times. But I love remembering that they did the best that they could, and they were pretty extraordinary in what it is that they did do, even though it was very difficult.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:17:24] That's such a good point. And I feel like for me too, with the feelings of nostalgia. A lot of times it would come up in the form of wanting to be a little kid again, or wanting to go back to a period of my life where I was younger, and things felt maybe more carefree or differently. And., I think. You know, obviously the holidays I think are most special for kids and young people. There's like a special magic about it. And I think as we get

older, at least for me, I find myself kind of chasing that specialness of the holidays when you're a kid and, you know, maybe not necessarily feeling it to the same degree as an adult. But it's interesting, too, with nostalgia and you know, wanting to go back. Wanting to like literally go back in time and have things the way that they were and. Really not at all being where your feet are or not being in the present moment. And especially, you know, since we were talking about November is a birthday month for us, and I've had the topic of age and aging on my mind and just.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:18:48] You know, benchmarks of life. But nostalgia can really. Make you want to not be at the stage in your life that you are. And also, like make you miss out on where you are right now. And I was as you were talking; I was thinking of that Eleanor Roosevelt quote. Today is the oldest you've ever been, and the youngest you'll ever be again. And it's so true because like, we're chasing youth, but it's, you know, it's fleeting. And so, for me, just thinking about how so much of my time and my life is spent going backwards, wanting to be younger, wanting to be maybe redo my youth or re-experience something, but missing out on the youthfulness or whatever phase I'm in right now. And to me, that that quote and sitting with it is really the encapsulation of why it's so important to live in the present. Because in this moment, I'm the youngest and the oldest, and it's always changing. And so, I can look back on memories and. You know, feel the feelings of nostalgia in like, a happy way and know that I can maybe bring that into the present moment.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:20:07] I love that I'm glad you said that. Feeling the feelings of nostalgia in a happy way, because I wanted to remind everyone that we're talking about how to deal with difficult feelings during the holidays. So, if nostalgia brings up happiness for you, this some of this may not apply. Because if nostalgia brings up happiness, you can give it a little smile and you can feel good and present, but you're not necessarily comparing if it's bringing up happiness. And I think for people that are having difficult feelings during the holidays about nostalgia, for me it brought up comparisons and that what we said earlier that it feels like we're lacking in some way. And when you start to compare today's present moment with yesterday's present moment, it's not the same because you're not getting the whole story. I have to keep saying that we're not getting the whole story. So, it's been so important for me to have the nostalgic feelings of sadness or whatever it is, but then remembering, wait a minute, this is who I am today, and I really love myself today. I like the person that I am today. So, understanding



that there's nothing lacking in me today because I'm trying to compare today's moment to yesterday's moment and there's no compare. You can't compare today's moment to yesterday's moment. So just reminding ourselves of that and come back to the present moment. Come back to where your feet are. Understanding that what is happening right now is a beautiful moment in this moment, and it's the mind that's trying to take you out of the gratitude or the beautiful moment. It's trying to take you down a path that's not real and that it's not true.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:21:37] Yeah. And I was just going to say with the nostalgia piece that you were just talking about. Thinking back to happy times that you think we're happy in the past, and then feeling sad in the moment because your life isn't like that now. That was how you know, I yeah, I can just picture myself being like, oh, woe is me in my room on the holidays because things were so much more fun as a kid, and now it's. No, no, diss to you.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:22:11] Oh no, no, no. None taken. No, you're exactly right.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:22:13] And yeah, I think we. Yeah, it's just a lot. It's a nostalgia. And I'm not actually saying any thoughts, but nostalgia is such an interesting.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:22:24] It is.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:22:25] concept for me, and I find myself contemplating it and thinking about it so much because it. It's such a tricky. Loop?

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:22:35] Yes. So, I guess if you're stuck in nostalgia, we'll just end with nostalgia. This way, if you're stuck,

**Michelle Maros:** [00:22:41] Maybe we will have an episode on nostalgia.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:22:43] Well if you're stuck in it, just remember that. Remember the honor your feelings. Allow yourself to work through the feelings. Identify. What am I feeling in this moment? Am I feeling regretful, angry, sad? Depressed? Whatever it is. Honor your feelings. Name the feeling. Let yourself feel it. But then immediately take a hold of your mind. Because

this is. We started this episode off with use the power that you have. So, in every feeling that we're going to talk about, you ultimately need to come back to the power that you have. And for me, nostalgia, the power that I have is not allowing my mind to go down a rabbit hole of untruth, of lies, of, oh, it was so much better than or this idea that I'm lacking in this present moment. So remember, if you're in a nostalgic moment, that moment that's causing you to feel these difficult feelings, own the feelings, let them move through you and understand and really believe that what's happening right now, in the moment, you are not lacking in any way and have gratitude for yourself that you have really grown and you are becoming the greatest version of yourself, one moment at a time.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:23:45] Amen. Let's take a quick break. And we're back for the next feeling, which is a big one.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:23:57] It is. I think this is a really big one for everyone in many moments or many times. And you've spoken a lot about this one. You've written a lot about this one.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:24:08] It's funny because when we were starting this episode, in my mind I'm like, maybe this will be a quick little episode. We'll just boom, boom, boom through the feelings and be done. But I don't think that's how it's going to be.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:24:20] No.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:24:21] All right. Next feeling is grief. Long pause.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:24:28] Well, grief is. I mean, holidays tend to bring up the grief even more. It's like on a spectrum of feelings. And certainly, we feel grief all throughout the year. But during the holidays, it feels like it's all the way to the other end of the of the spectrum of how heavy it might feel or how sad it might make us feel. And I think it's hard. We're missing friends. We're missing family. We're missing loved ones. We're really in a place of grief, which is natural.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:25:03] Well, and I think grief and nostalgia kind of tie hand in hand if you're. Missing someone or grieving a loss. I think that's also when the nostalgia can kick into overdrive, because you're thinking about all the times that you used to have. And for whatever

reason, the holidays really propel our minds into that kind of thinking of remember when. Remember this, remember when we did that? And it's interesting because I think. It tends to be the case that holidays are the times where we make memories we have. We create situations that we want to look back on. And so oftentimes we have from our past so many memories of loved ones that we want to remember that our minds don't want to forget. And I find that in grief, and especially since it's been many years that I've been on my own grief journey, it's like each holiday I find myself trying to, like, grasp on to the memories so I don't forget them. And so, I think it's interesting, too, that they're back-to-back like this, because I think that grief goes into nostalgia so, so tightly because. If you're missing someone or feeling like not feeling like. Being sad about a loss. You. Our minds go into overdrive of not wanting to forget, and wanting to hold on to whatever memories our minds can remember of the holidays, because that's when we tend to have those glamorized memories of our loved ones.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:26:49] It's beautifully sad. Michelle, I believe for me in working through the grief. You know, grief is a working through all the time. It's a forever feeling that we will have come up and pop up in our lives from time to time, I believe, until the day that we are no longer on this planet. And you've written about this so often, like I said earlier. But for me, what has happened in dealing with the grief and the loss of my mother. She died, I don't know, 20 - 30 years ago.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:27:16] That's been up for you a lot lately?

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:27:17] Yeah, she's been up for me a lot lately. 30 years ago. And what I can say and what I'd like to share with everyone is, first off, allowing yourself the space and the time to feel the feelings. You know, go find some private time where you can actually just sit and have that, have some of the memories come and some will be sad, and some will be difficult. But have the memories come or have the feelings come? And give yourself the grace of feeling them and allowing yourself without saying to yourself, why is this still happening? My mom's been gone for almost 30 years. Why am I still feeling this way? Or why am I feeling sad? Allowing yourself to feel the feelings and knowing that it's okay to miss someone. Because for me, what has happened over all of these years is that. My mother and I had a very, very, very difficult relationship. I don't want to say that it didn't end well because I ended up taking care of her in the last month or so of her life, and it was the absolute best thing that I could have

ever done. And she felt that way too. But our entire life was fraught with trauma and difficulty and anger and frustration, and it was just really, really, really hard. I actually never felt like she loved me. That was the crux of my thing with her.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:28:35] So when she died, it's been now almost 30 years of working through the feelings of that I do love her. She had a very difficult life. And as I've worked through the therapy and my meditation and my practice all these years. Little by little by little, I've started to reframe that idea that. That she didn't love me. Two. She did the best she could, I believe strongly she did love me. And just because her physical form is no longer here, I feel her even more without the physical form than I did when she was actually present in her physical body. I know that may sound a little bit odd, but I can feel...I have reframed and re looked at having the relationship with my mother that I always wanted when she was still in her physical form, and now I have it. Because I do believe she did love me. She just could not show it in the way that I wanted it. But she also was so. You know, she was an alcoholic. She also had so many demons and so many issues with her, with her own self and her own heart and her own ability not to be able to show it in the way that a little girl would need to have it. So, with all that being said, I'm just saying you can. Actually, just because the person is physically gone doesn't mean they're gone. I have a beautiful relationship with my mother right now.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:29:57] I can sit in some sadness that she's gone, but remember, the relationship that I have with her now is not sad. It's loving and it's fun and it's real. And I think we can carry we can. We have the ability to reshape what we do with our grief. And we can put it in the context of what it is today with the person gone. And we can actually work through the all the feelings that we have and come out the other side feeling that even though she's gone, and I didn't feel the love when she was alive, I feel it so deeply now because I know she loves me deeply. I hope this all makes sense and it's not easy, but I just want everyone to know. Just because the person is gone in their physical form, it doesn't mean the emotions of that person still don't live in your heart, and I mean the emotions of all of them. Of course, the sadness and the grief or the anger or the resentment, but also the emotions of love and care. And we can actually start feeding those emotions that are real and start letting the other ones go little by little by little, because they're no longer here physically. We can actually create whatever life we want to have with people that are no longer in our life, that we really want to feel their love and their presence.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:31:14] Thank you for sharing that. I think for me, with grief at the holidays. One of the biggest triggers when you are grieving a deep loss at the holidays is having to do things differently because someone isn't here anymore. Having, you know, not having that person to, you know, usually brings the pie or wakes up and carves the turkey or, you know, does the thing that you wait for them to do every year and you feel that deep pang of like, oh, no they're not here to do that. And, you know, my mind tends to because it's a tricky customer, like you always say, really loves to take an inventory because I feel like sometimes my mind is a masochist where it likes to take inventory of all the things that won't happen because someone's gone, and I know in. In my journey with grief, especially with my dad. It's been a long, many years of, oh, this is not going to happen anymore because he's not here and this is something that he would be doing or we would be doing, but we're not because he's not here and almost kind of making it worse because...

**Michelle Maros:** [00:32:37] I'm a Scorpio, I guess. And so, my biggest. A reframe or shift for that. Because that's not necessarily the healthiest place to live. And going back to how we started this episode is to kind of take back your power and make something new for yourself. If you're grieving, maybe. Maybe allow yourself and take control with your family, or even just with yourself, because grief is so personal, and maybe people won't even necessarily understand your grief and your particular shade of grief and how you're grieving. And take it among yourself to be in control and make things different and do things differently so that you're not necessarily comparing your holidays now to the holidays you had with a loved one who's gone. I found that that's been really helpful rather than, you know, going back to nostalgia and leaning into all those things that I necessarily would have done with my dad, I kind of. You know, took it amongst myself to do things differently, if that makes sense.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:33:56] I think, yes, it makes sense. And I think what I hear you saying, and I was just it brought something up for me, is doing things differently for me means honoring who you are and the things that you would like to do. And I think this kind of carries into setting boundaries, like really honoring who you are. I became a vegetarian. My mother died a year after that, and then my dad was around for a while. But becoming a vegetarian was really back in...

**Michelle Maros:** [00:34:24] I wasn't expecting you to be going into the vegetarian thing...

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:34:25] Because here what you're talking about doing something different. I know it just came up for me. I became a vegetarian in 1998 and 97, 98. And my family, I mean, they just went wild over that. They did not like it. They did not understand me.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:34:38] You're a midwest girl.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:34:40] Exactly. So, they did not understand it. And so, it was difficult. I had to listen to that all the time. Why are you doing this? Are you doing that to lose weight? All the things that came up way back 30 years ago about being a vegetarian. And so, what you were talking about, this one brings the turkey or this one brings the pie. I think what happens is we can't go down that road. We cannot allow the mind. It is a tricky customer. And once you get into the loop of it, it loves to keep you in the loop of it. And so, we cannot get into the loop of it. And so, one of the things that I am incredibly grateful for is that I can just be exactly who I am. And no one's saying a word about it. You know, no one cares that I'm a vegetarian. It's like everything is kind of shifted. Obviously, life has shifted, I have shifted. So that's where you can use your power, use your sense of honoring yourself and allowing yourself to grieve. But really take your power back and don't allow your mind to take you down this place. That's not real. We're going to say this all the time. We have to feel the emotions to get them through our bodies, but we don't have to allow the mind to keep us stuck in them.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:35:45] Yeah.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:35:46] We have to feel them. But reminding yourself that you there is love there. And if you want to continue to have a relationship with the person who is no longer have the relationship with them, start to look at really creative ways that you can cultivate the love and feel the love. I know that you feel the love for your dad, and I know he's incredibly happy and proud of you. And it was not always, you know, sugar plum and fairies and all the great merriment. So, I feel like with wrapping up this feelings of grief is it's personal. We all know that. And allowing yourself to feel it, allowing yourself to move through it. But don't allow yourself to live there. Use your power and bring your mind back to the present moment. And

name like 1 or 2 things that you love about the person, or 1 or 2 things that are true and one. And name several things that you love about yourself.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:36:35] Yeah.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:36:36] I mean, I love the person that I am today. I love who I am, I love what I'm doing and. I love that I can feel comfortable in my own skin.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:36:46] Yeah. Thank you for that. And I just wanted to finish my thought about that. So, if it would make sense. But I think let yourself change your traditions too, if they're so painful. Um, so often I think we like to keep traditions because of that nostalgia and doing things as we've always done them, because that's how we do it. And sometimes when you're grieving, participating in traditions are really painful. And just give yourself the permission to do something differently. You don't have to do the thing just because it's what you did. And for me, I found my dad was he wanted to be a priest and was very into church, and he was a chanter at church and at the Greek church. And that's when I think about my relationship with him. So much of it is being at church. I loved going to church with him, and when he died, I felt like I had to keep doing that because that's what we would do. And I found that the times that I would go back to church, and it would bring so many feelings, because obviously that's where I would be with him. But I noticed as time went on, being there. It didn't necessarily tick that box of how I wanted to be with him. I was going to church because I felt like that's what we would do, but it wasn't serving me emotionally. And so now I, you know, we're I was raised Greek Orthodox. My dad is Greek. And, you know, you have name days and my dad's name day is Christmas. And so instead of kind of falling into the old. Things that I thought that I had to do to connect with him around the holidays. Now I do it in my own way with, you know, we always say happy Name Day, Mickey, and it's something different. And giving myself permission, like, I don't need to do the things just to do them if they don't feel right.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:39:00] And it brings you a lot of joy. And I think that this is really a good place to use your power and setting boundaries with family members that don't honor what you're doing or don't like what you're doing. I think it's really important when we have something that we love about ourselves or we love about how we're living our lives, and we

love about a tradition maybe we've set up for ourselves, is to really set that boundary with family members. And if someone says something to you, trying to be the kindest person that you can and just say, you know what this is making my life so much joyful and then move on. I think it's what happens is, if you're trying to convince your family that this is what is best for you, it usually goes down a terrible hole because they're not going to understand. And you get in this whole, you know, discussion about why is this good for you, why is this not good for you? And there's no point. And I think if you can just be who you are in the kindest way possible and allow your family members to be who they are, but you honor yourself, you honor yourself, and you know this is what works for me. And then change the subject. Who wants more mashed potatoes?

**Michelle Maros:** [00:40:05] Yeah, well, so there's obviously so much to talk about with grief, but just. Yeah, remember that you know, feel the feelings. It's okay to miss someone and just have gratitude for the relationship that you had, for the love that you had, and that knowing that just because someone isn't in their original form doesn't mean that the love is lost. You can maintain that love in just in different ways.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:40:37] Beautiful.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:40:39] Let's take another quick break. And we're back. So, we've got two more feelings and they're big ones. I feel like going through this list is like.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:40:50] Making you even more tired.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:40:52] No, I just am feeling them as we talk about them,

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:40:55] Yes, I agree.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:40:57] Um, so this is another big one. I actually wrote this list. This is a blog that I wrote years ago and I'm like, yeah, yeah, these are all the things that I feel at the holiday time. And I think many of us can relate.



**Barb Schmidt:** [00:41:11] I think it's universal. You and I talked about this a lot over the past 30 years, 20 years, whatever it's been. And I think these are universal, difficult feelings that come up for most of us, especially during the holiday season.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:41:24] So the next one is disappointment, which is huge. We have so many expectations for a holiday season and for our lives and for the years, you know, holidays are at the end of the year. It's a natural time to start to reflect and take inventory on the year that is passed. You know, we start the year with resolutions and intentions and goals and wishes and dreams, and we have such high expectations of what's to come. And. Sometimes that doesn't. The things that we want don't happen, and sometimes we get to the end of the year and maybe we didn't achieve the goal that we wanted, or maybe we didn't cultivate the relationship that we wanted. Or maybe things aren't how we want them to be, and the end of the year is a natural time to feel those pangs of disappointment, and then add on the expectations of all of the happy feelings that we think that we're supposed to feel during the holidays. It's like a whole equation of really heavy disappointment and sadness.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:42:37] Well I think it's interesting, as you were talking Michelle, no wonder we are emotionally spent during the holidays. If you think about, we come off of the summer, which is usually kind of a downtime for everyone for whatever reason summer just represents relaxation kind of or we're not really needing to be running around. We might be traveling or whatever, but we come off of the summer, we get into the fall and all the hustle bustle of the new, the new fall season and all the things and all the sports and all the schooling and all the things that are happening in the fall. And then all of a sudden, then we hit the holiday season and it's like all these feelings start coming up. Really like polarizing feelings that make sometimes can make us feel stuck or sometimes can make us feel. But we're meant to be happy because we're in this season of happiness and joy and cheer. So, we're feeling disconnected sometimes, and at odds with the happiness. But we're pushing ourselves through it. And then we get through the holiday season, and then we're at the end of the year, and now we're like, okay, now I need to think about what I didn't do or what I should have done or what I could have done. I mean, I feel like we're this whole time of year is a set up for me. I feel like it's a set up for showing us.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:43:51] Melancholy.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:43:52] Showing us all the ways. Here's what it's a set up in a good way, and it's a set up in a difficult way. But for me, I look at it as a set up in a good way for all the ways that I'm not treating myself with the kindness and love that I deserve. So, this episode for me is turning into I want all of you to really love, accept, and trust and believe that you are extraordinary human beings. Worthy, worthy, just. Just because you're a human being, you're worthy but just worthy of the love and the care and just really treat yourself with kindness and care. Coming out of the holidays now, we have to take an inventory of what all we did right and wrong for the 2023 year, and then we got to move into the new year with all these resolutions or intentions. So, it's just a lot. And so, for me, disappointment naturally starts to move in. Oh gosh, I said I was going to start writing my book this year and look where I am. Oh gosh. You know, just got done with a horrific divorce. And now what? You know, now I'm trying to, you know, I'm looking at what to do or just all the things that might be going on in your heads a lot, really not allowing the mind to focus on what's wrong with you, to focus on what's lacking in your life, to focus on the things that you did so terrible during this year, to focus on the things that you didn't accomplish that you thought you would.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:45:11] To focus on the pieces of your life that aren't quite right, and everybody else looks like they have their life together, especially if you go to social media, you know, rather than allowing these feelings to own you because they're not true. Yes. You're disappointed. I'm disappointed that I didn't get a chance to get further along in the book that I'm trying to write, but that doesn't mean 2024 can't be a year of even more progress, or even more reflection, or even better content than I would have written this year, because it was just too hard this year. So, I think really looking at truth, what is the truth? It was too hard for me to write my book this year. I needed to work through all the feelings I would have given all of you not a great masterpiece. It wouldn't have been my best work because I was too much in the feelings. Now I've moved through the feelings, and I can really look at what did I learn here, how did I grow and what can I share that's really going to be helpful and meaningful.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:46:08] And we all are the same in that regard. So, if you're disappointed about something in your life. I'm looking at it as, yes, I'm disappointed I didn't get it done, but I'm also looking at it as, wow, this is this is for the best. I'm going to have a better version of me in 2024 because that's what I'm constantly doing. Becoming a better version of me. And new

opportunities are going to come to create more new things are going to come on the horizon. So, looking at this year, even though it's almost over, looking at it as a way to recognize that we are not perfect, we are human beings doing the best that we can in every single moment. And I think the more that I've given myself grace, the more that I've allowed myself to open up, to bring back my mother. I've been able to now show her more grace. And it's why my love for her is deepened. Where it wasn't that way when we were. When? When I was younger. It's like the more love I can show for myself, and the more grace and care that I can show for myself. I actually then can open myself up for others and showing them more care and grace. I hope this makes sense.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:47:13] Yeah it does.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:47:14] It's been a huge revelation for me to understand that I'm not less than, and that there is nothing wrong with me, that I didn't accomplish the things that I thought I might accomplish. And yes, I might be disappointed, but so what? Yeah, move through that disappointment in a way that's going to help me focus on what I do have, who I am and what I'm becoming and who I'm becoming.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:47:36] Thank you for that. That was really good. And I think that I've been contemplating a lot and trying to implement into my mind more about enjoying the journey of life, rather than being so tied to the outcomes and the big goals of life, because I've really felt. And a lot recently of there's so much good in my life. You know, we all have good in our lives all the time. And I was thinking about recently about how often I can miss out on the good things that are happening in my life because I'm yearning for something else, or for a goal or a relationship, or. Something that I want in the future. And it's just life really isn't about the goals or the destination. Not to sound cliché, but it is that that journey along the way, and it's the in-between moments of. Finding happiness in the tiny joys that we talk about all the time and really. Empowering yourself to feel some sort of contentment in the present moment of what your life is right now. Because like we talked about earlier, we're as young as we're going to be and we're the oldest we've ever been. Life is always changing and moving forward, and I find that the more I can start to embrace the journey and not the destination, I can ease those feelings of disappointment a little bit during the holidays.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:49:21] But I think too, for some reason. The holiday time tends to stoke the feelings of melancholy. You know, I always there's two songs that I always like play on loop in my brain during the holidays and the specific lines, and it's like, because I'm, I don't know, emotional. Scorpio. But the have yourself a merry little Christmas when they say, let your heart be light. Next year all our troubles will be out of sight. I think in my mind I'm always like, oh, next year, next year things will be so much better. And then Counting Crows along December where they're like, there's reason to believe maybe this year will be better than the last. So, I think those are just feelings that I've often felt during this time, and I've let myself marinate in those feelings for so many years. And as I look back, and I guess as I've gotten older, I realize that I don't need to be in that melancholy of life just because there are certain things that I haven't achieved or cultivated and. It's more empowering for me to kind of. Be content with what I have now.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:50:39] Well and I also think Michelle.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:50:40] And honor what I have now because it's always going to change. Even if this time next year you and I are still sitting across from this same table having a similar conversation things have changed and I'll never have what I have right now in this moment again. And so rather than wishing away the time or wishing away for something else. How can I trick my mind into being? So, honoring of this moment, because I know that it's not going to happen again.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:51:12] And I think honoring yourself because it's been a hard year. We lost, I mean, you lost a whole section of your family. And so, it's been a very hard year. And many of you out there may be feeling similar things when you lose a whole section. It's been a very difficult year, so it's easy to fall into the melancholy. But I think for me and what I want to share with you, and I know that you do this as well. Michelle it's just understanding that you have to thank yourself for showing up fully. You gave it if you had if you had 30% to give one day and you gave all that 30%, that's enough. Not only is it enough, it's more than enough. If you have 80% to give that day and you gave 40%. That's more than enough. Like understanding that at the end of every day, thanking yourself for showing up fully in the way that you could. And understanding that it's more than enough and you are more than enough. Because the more that we keep reminiscing, and the more that we keep ruminating on we're lacking, or we didn't

do this or we didn't do that, we didn't take advantage of the things that were available to us, all the things that the mind wants to say.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:52:21] The more we're going to be stuck, and the more we're not going to be able to move forward. So, using disappointment as a key to okay, I am enough, I'm disappointed, but it's okay. And taking the power to not allow your mind to take you down a path that is not true. And so, the last one, as we wrap up all these difficult feelings, you know, the last one is a huge one too, is loneliness. And I think that plays a role in all of the other three in front of these, of this last one. Loneliness. We especially if we're alone, you know, I'm divorced. I am alone in my house. You are alone in your house. So, if you're if you're feeling if it's true that we are alone and we are alone, how do we deal with the feelings of loneliness that bombard us? Because that is all that's talked about during this time of year is being with family and friends. So, it's the idea of looking at loneliness for me has been I'm alone, but I don't feel the feelings of loneliness. Yes, they come and go sometimes, especially this time of year.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:53:32] But just because my life doesn't look like what television or social media or what the holidays represent, doesn't mean that I have to own that I'm lonely. I am alone, but I am not lonely. And so, I think it's really, really important that there's nothing wrong with you if you are alone during this holiday season. I just want to share this one thing about loneliness. Feel the feelings of your loneliness, but also make sure that you're not owning that you're lonely. Maybe just owning that you are alone. I am alone and my relationship doesn't look like what I see on television or see in the in the cards that are in the, in the racks in the stores. And there's nothing wrong with me and I own that, that I am alone. And it's a real big fat lie to say that just because we are alone and we don't look like what the holidays and the advertisements and the images are trying to show us, it doesn't mean that we have to own that we are lonely. So, I just want to say that make sure that you're not falling into a trap of what everyone in the world says is, is supposed to look like, and I don't match that.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:54:39] And I think on the flip side, too, you can feel incredibly lonely even when you're not alone. You can be, you know, surrounded by friends and family and all sorts of people and be in big parties and have, you know, a full schedule and still feel incredibly lonely. And I think both are possible and both are painful. But you can. Empower yourself to rewrite those feelings of loneliness. And I think that I having all of these feelings during the holidays and

at the end of the year. I love to use this time as a. As a way to restrengthen the relationship that I have with myself and like, fortify my relationship with myself and really double down on all of the practices and habits that I know connect me with me and the truth and what is important to me. Because I find that that's in setting an intention to do that really helps me to get through all of these feelings and come out the other side, like, okay, whatever that was, it was what it was, and I'm good to move forward.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:55:58] I love that, Michelle. And I think the as we close up and as I finish some of the things that I want to share with all of you is that, you know, this idea of boundaries. I'm going to go back to that one more time. Boundaries are not for you to announce boundaries to all your family members and friends. Really. They're just they're personal, and I believe they're internal, especially during the holidays. I would not start announcing boundaries during the holidays. This is what I'm doing. This is what I'm doing. But I do advocate strongly for having the boundaries inside yourself of what you will and won't do, and just doing your very, very best not to let other people's ruffled feathers about what it is you're saying that you need bother you. I know that that's a tall order. I know that that's really hard, but really doing your best to know that you're doing this for yourself and you love everyone that you're going to be with or you love, you know, whatever it is that you're doing for the holidays and really allow yourself to stand firm in what it is that you need and what it is that you want, without expecting other people to understand it or be okay with it, and you being okay with their not being okay with it.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:57:08] And the other thing I want to say, Michelle, you said that so beautifully that we are the author of our own stories. We are the creator of our lives. We are the author of the story. So, we actually can choose to define how this holiday season is going to play out. And it's so important to remember this that you're the I say this all the time. You're the boss of your life, and so you can always choose how much significance and importance we want to place on the holiday season and where we want to place it, and that there's nothing wrong with you. There's nothing odd about you. There's just nothing that. I want any of you to feel that you have to fix about yourself to make the holiday season so much better. Like it's really just about honoring who you are and knowing you know, what it is that you need in the moment, and doing what feels comfortable in the kindest way possible, and not expecting other people to understand it.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:58:09] It's you know, being just finishing up with being alone, being alone at this time. There's nothing wrong. There's nothing wrong anywhere, really. In this present moment. Everything is exactly meant to be the way that it is. And the more that I can be where my feet are and accept this present moment. Each moment at a time, one moment at a time, one minute at a time, one day at a time. The more I can start to feel my own power and my own gratitude for where I am in this present moment and where I am in my life.

**Michelle Maros:** [00:58:41] I love that, thank you. And I think lastly, as we close up, just remember you can give yourself permission to not do anything for you know you can choose how you want to engage with the holidays. You can say no. You can take a year off from your normal stuff for the holidays. You can. You even said the other day to me that you didn't want to put up a tree, and I gasped, but maybe that's what's right for you this year. You can choose the degrees to which you participate in the holidays and all this stuff and the festivities. You could have no holiday stuff in your house, in your lives and any of it. And I just encourage you all to remember that you have a choice. I know sometimes with family obligations it gets hard. But. You have small choices, and just remember that those small choices matter as well as the big ones.

**Barb Schmidt:** [00:59:47] Well, I just will share this last thing. When you and I were talking about Thanksgiving, I decided that you have a lot to do because you're finishing your book. Tease that a little bit. You're finishing your book. And I just wanted to be by myself. I just wanted to be in contemplation, be in meditation. So, we didn't spend Thanksgiving together. I went and did my thing, and you went and did your thing. And I think it was a beautiful...There was so much freedom in that, that you didn't feel badly that I was going to be by myself. And I didn't feel badly that you were going to be by yourself. And we felt really good about what was happening. And I think that's what you're trying to say. Be who you are and be okay with what's happening. And sometimes it works out fantastic. It's not. Maybe not. You don't have to think about, oh my gosh, we didn't do this. So now we have to do this for the rest of our lives. No. And so the only other thing that I would want to share is that I know Michelle our deepest desire for everyone. Every week that we do this podcast and every week that we have this conversation is that wherever you are, especially during these holidays or however you are feeling, that you find your comfort and strength from the inside out, knowing that you're

enough. You're complete, you're worthy, and you are loved exactly the way that you are. And the more that you can honor that for yourself, the more that you will feel comfortable showing up in the way that serves you and ultimately will serve everyone around you.

**Michelle Maros:** [01:01:17] Yeah, that was a good example. That's exactly what I, I meant. We have been traveling so much and we both kind of just needed some space and a break. I have stuff to do. You wanted to have a little mini self-retreat. And we both looked at each other and said.

**Barb Schmidt:** [01:01:36] Let's do it.

**Michelle Maros:** [01:01:37] Is this important to you that we do something together or that will you be upset? And we both looked at each other and said no. And. We gave ourselves the permission to do that, even though it's so untraditional and probably against the grain and, you know. Is this okay? It's great. So, give yourself permission if you feel called to do that. And echoing what you just said, that.

**Barb Schmidt:** [01:02:06] In whatever way you're being called to show up. I love you all. Thank you, Michelle for this.

**Michelle Maros:** [01:02:11] Thanks Mom.

**Barb Schmidt:** [01:02:12] Go take a nap, sweetie.

**Michelle Maros:** [01:02:13] I'm good. This. This has energized me. I'm ready to take on the day. But we hope that this episode helps you all manage some of these feelings. We know it's a lot, but just take care of yourself and honor yourself and know that you're doing the best that you can with life and all of the craziness that is around us. So be gentle and thank you so much for listening and being a part of the Barb Knows Best community for joining us week after week throughout the year. We're so grateful for all of you. We absolutely love chatting with you all each and every week and hearing what you want to hear about. Talking about topics that we hope help you. It's just such a fun, tiny, big joy in our lives to be with you every week, and we're so grateful that you allow us into your lives in such a way. We do not take your time, your



energy, your attention, your presence for granted. So, thank you so, so much for that. Of course, if you are loving the show, make sure that you're liked and subscribed to the podcast wherever you listen to podcasts. Apple, Google, Spotify so that you're always up to date on each and every new episode. And if you are loving the show, giving us a five-star rating on iTunes and Spotify is super helpful.

**Michelle Maros:** [01:03:33] And of course, leaving a review on Apple iTunes is really, really helpful for the show and we really, really appreciate it if you have a podcast topic requests. My mom mentioned it at the beginning of this episode. We read them. We have a whole list of every single request. We tried our best to get to all of them in a timely manner. So, make sure you're following us on social media so that you can let us know what you want to hear about at Peaceful\_Barb, at Michelle Maros, at Barb knows best pod. That's the best way to stay in touch. And lastly, we do have some fun offers for the holiday season. You can click the link in the show notes. We have a journaling journey with a really cute journal that we've designed for you all. I know we talked about journaling a few episodes ago and I might be biased, but I think it's a great gift for yourself and for others this holiday season. So, click the link to learn more. Thank you so much again for listening. Thank you mom and we will chat with you next week because as we know, Barb Knows Best. Bye.