

## Be Right Back! Podcast with Julie Naismith

### Episode 068 Transcript – 3 Strategies for Self-Compassion with Christal Allen-Harrahill

<https://julienaismith.com/episode-68/>

Speaker A [00:00:00]:

In this really special episode, I'm thrilled to be chatting to a very dear friend of mine, Crystal Alan Harrihill. Crystal has worked with people in my Separation Anxiety Heroes program and my essay Pro Trainer program. She's a certified life coach, and for both of those program members, she has worked through issues such as overwhelm, as priority management, issues such as handling difficult situations, tension and stress in relationships. And as a certified life coach, I just thought that right now it would be a wonderful time to chat to her about strategies for dealing with what many of us are going through right now, which is kind of the headline being it just doesn't feel right to worry about my own problems with everything that's going on in Ukraine at this moment.

If you have thought that, said that, discussed that feeling with anyone or thought it to yourself in the last few weeks, this episode is for you. Because Crystal is going to talk you through a framework that's going to help you reframe that thinking, help you understand that your problems are still your problems and they are still valid, and it is still okay to be focused and doing something about your own problems. And that doesn't make you a bad person, and it doesn't make you uncaring. So let's dive in and listen to Crystal's framework for helping us navigate this really challenging time.

Speaker B [00:01:34]:

Hello, and welcome to the Be Right Back separation Anxiety Podcast. Hi, I'm Julie Naismith, dog trainer, author, and full on separation anxiety geek. I've helped thousands of dogs overcome separation anxiety with my books, my online programs, my trainer certification, and my separation anxiety training app. And this podcast is all about sharing my tips and tricks to help you teach your dog how to be happy at home alone, too. Yes, crystal, it's so nice to chat to you.

Speaker A [00:02:08]:

It's always great to chat to you. Yes, but what a time. What a time we're all going through right now. And you and I were talking about this before this episode that I'm worried. I'm worried about the people that I work with, because for me, the headline is that I think they've got really, real, really present problems. But a lot of people are right now are using that phrase of, well, my problems are nothing in comparison to what's going on in Ukraine, and I'm worried about the

impact on them and on their daily lives by them suppressing that. So that's kind of what I wanted to chat to you about.

Speaker C [00:02:45]:

Yeah. Julie, I know we were talking about this before we really started our show here, but your heart for wanting to do this is just so important because I hear this also, right? In communities that I'm in, in my inner circles, that type of thing where people feel like they don't have the right to worry about their troubles and what's going on in their life. And I want to remind your listeners that we are all humans and we are allowed to experience our human emotions. I think sometimes just even being reminded of that is so important.

And although we are witnessing a war real time on our television screens and through our radios and through podcast, right. It's really important for us to remember that we are still living our lives and you don't have to feel guilt around that. And so the fact that, unfortunately, that there are people who are having a tough time right now, that does not mean that you're not allowed to have a tough time.

Speaker A [00:04:06]:

Yeah. And just that whole some of the things you just touched on there, the guilt, the shame, it's not right. I shouldn't be feeling like this. And the reality of it is that this current war is very much in our homes. It's on the TVs, it's on the radio, but conflicts go on all the time. It's a very pressing conversation, but it's also relevant to the fact that there is suffering all the time. And there are always people who are dealing with more than you. Although we're talking about it now, I think this episode is timeless.

Speaker C [00:04:44]:

Oh, yeah, I totally agree. And I wanted your listeners to just have a few tips that they can easily remember, right, when they're having a moment where something's going on in their life and they don't want to give it the proper time or give themselves the proper self care because they're thinking that the Ukrainians have it worse right now. And it's a very simple thing to remember. It's an ABC process.

Speaker A [00:05:13]:

Oh, I love it. Yeah, I love a process.

Speaker C [00:05:18]:

So the A is I want you to be aware and I'm I'm gonna talk more about it, but I'm gonna tell you the ABC. So A is for be aware, the B is for take a break. And then the C is for care, right, for self care. So when we're thinking about being aware, that is where it's helpful for you to tap in and check in with yourself and see if you are resisting and avoiding allowing yourself to have emotions around what's going on in your personal life or what's going on in Ukraine right now. So giving yourself, again, like I said at the beginning of the call, giving yourself that permission to tap in and just check in with yourself and see what it is that you're feeling. Okay? And then the second thing is take breaks.

I know I have the urge sometimes to turn on the TV and get the updates from the news and from a visual news outlet. And I have actually decided that I am going to listen to updates from a podcast instead, right. Because some of the images are heavy, right. And so taking a break from being glued to the news, a TV screen, if you feel that it is consuming you and you're hooked on it, I want you to be sensitive to that, because we have to remember the news outlets. Their job is to get our attention, right? And how do they get our attention is to have highly charged images as well as using highly charged words. So these are things that, although they're delivering updates to us, they're meant to get our attention. And sometimes that can be in a way that takes our emotions one way or the other based on what we start thinking about what we're seeing.

Okay, so don't be afraid to take a break from the news. And then the third item for our C is care, right? First, let's take care of you and whatever that looks like when you are dealing with your personal struggles in your life. And then also thinking about the war in Ukraine right now, how can we just take a few minutes in the day to care for you? Maybe that's going for a walk with your dog. Maybe it's meditation or prayer or going and just getting a cup of tea or cup of coffee. What is that? Because you can't pour from an empty cup. So you can't worry about the Ukrainians. You can't worry about your personal problems if you have nothing to pour from.

Okay, so remember that we have to take care of you first, and then you can also begin to look to your local community, right? So now that we've taken care of ourselves, maybe there's some Ukrainians in our neighborhood, right, that maybe we can help or reach out to, and then we can think beyond our local community and think about perhaps global efforts or organizations that we want to stay up to date with or volunteer with or donate to that type of thing. But give yourself the permission to start with you.

Speaker A [00:09:00]:

Oh, Crystal, that framework is amazing. I love it. I put together some kind of headlines from the things I've been hearing people say, and I think what would be really useful is we could go through some of those and let's see if we can apply some of the ABC principles to learn.

Speaker C [00:09:19]:

Yeah, let's do it.

Speaker A [00:09:19]:

And concerns. Yeah, wonderful. Let's try that. I think you've sort of touched on the first thing that I'm hearing a lot of, and it's is it right? Is it okay? Is it legitimate to worry about my troubles with all this going on and then linked to that? People I work with are very worried and get a lot of judgment from people in their lives, like, just leave your dog. It's just a dog. That kind of stuff. So we've got people saying, am I feeling still legitimate right now? Am I worried? Still legitimate. And actually, won't people just think I'm really self indulgent and self absorbed if I'm worrying about my dog and my life when there's all this going on? So how can we apply the framework to that?

Speaker C [00:10:01]:

Yeah, so I think, first off, let's tap in with ourselves, right? Like, take a breather. So maybe you get a comment from someone, right, either verbal or a text message, and they say, Just leave your dog, or Why are you worried about it? Or whatever. And I think it's important in that moment to just take a breath before you respond to that text, even before you respond verbally, take a moment to try to censor yourself, right? And your answers are within. I always want everyone to be reminded of that. That what we feel is right for us in our gut and in our hearts. And we always know what is our true alignment. And fair enough, sometimes the noise, right, from others, friends, family members, can make us get into a position where we're questioning that.

But I want you to know that they don't know your situation the way that you do it, right? So we can have some compassion for why they think they're trying to help you, right? Because it's probably someone who they care about you and they think that maybe they're helping you reduce stress by saying, well, don't worry about it, but you know differently. And so I just say, don't forget that. So I would say, just be aware, right. Take a break and care for yourself. Yeah.

Speaker A [00:11:40]:

And it is okay. Your problem hasn't disappeared. You care for a sentient being. It happens to be a dog, but you're worried about its welfare. That's why you don't go out. That's why you don't leave it just to panic. And that hasn't stopped. That is still there. And it's okay for you to be aware of that and acknowledge it because it is still there.

Speaker C [00:12:04]:

Yes, absolutely.

Speaker A [00:12:06]:

Oh, that's so helpful. Again, you sort of touched on this, but let's unpack it a bit more. I think I'm certainly falling into both of these two. So when I hear people say this, I think, oh, yeah, this is me. I'm so worried about what's going on that sometimes I can't focus. So even though I've got stuff myself, I'm just consumed. I'm just consumed with it. I'm so worried about what's going on there, what could happen here. I can't focus on what I need to do.

Speaker C [00:12:35]:

Yeah. I think that it's really important, again, to be aware when you find yourself maybe getting to that point, right, where you are, maybe not getting things that need to get done in your personal life or professional life or goals that you are trying to achieve, right? And so being aware that that's going on and then definitely taking a break and allowing your emotions. So sometimes when we lose focus, sometimes it can be because there's an emotion coming up for us, right, and we are trying to resist that emotion. And instead, I would like to offer you to allow that emotion to have space.

Let's say you're feeling worried, right? You saw something or heard an update or something's going on with your pup or whatever it is, and you're feeling worried, sometimes it's helpful to neutralize the situation. And a way that we can do that is we can use kind of like we create a saying or a statement. An example of this is like, right now, I am worried about this situation. You fill in the blank, whatever the situation is, right. And then I want you to end it with, and that's okay. Right. I'm learning how to navigate this situation, and sometimes I feel worried. And that's okay. Nothing has gone wrong, right, that you're feeling worried or you're feeling guilty or whatever the emotion is. If you allow space for it, then it won't loop as much. Because when we ignore our emotions, trust me, they just come back and they knock even harder.

Speaker A [00:14:38]:

Oh, that's so interesting, because right now you think that the thing that we should be doing is ignoring our emotions. Like, who am I to worry about whatever? Who am I to worry about that? And therefore, I'm not going to worry about it. In fact, what I'll do instead? I'll go and watch some news because that's what I need to do. And I said this was kind of linked. I feel like a lot of us are doing this. I'm really worried about what's going on, so therefore, I need to get more information about it. But then I feel overwhelmed and burnt out, so then I switch off, but then I feel guilty because people in Ukraine can't switch off or Syria or wherever it is. They can't switch off, but I can. So it's this loop of guilt and obsession and worry that just seems to go on and on.

Speaker C [00:15:23]:

Yes. And it's so interesting the way that you just described it. I just saw a visual pile on, because that's what we're doing when that happens. And let me also say that when we do that, like you so

beautifully described, that many of us find ourselves in that situation, it really is, like, misappropriated worry.

Speaker A [00:15:53]:

Okay?

Speaker C [00:15:53]:

Right. It's thinking that our worry is going to make something better. Right. And I offer that you consider allowing yourself to look at that differently. Like, you worrying, you being mad at yourself and feeling guilty and feeling shame for still living your life right. With the 50 50 of life. Right. You worrying isn't going to make anything better.

Speaker A [00:16:33]:

It's not fixing anybody else's problem.

Speaker C [00:16:35]:

It's not fixing anyone else's problem. No.

Speaker A [00:16:40]:

It is funny. I'm chatting to so many people, as I know we all are, and I do think a lot of us are caught in that same loop. And from a personal perspective, I haven't got the problems that many of my clients have with a dog. They can't leave. And so I feel even more privileged. And that's why I wanted to chat to you, because I'm thinking, as I said earlier, I don't want people to ignore where they are right now. I don't need them. You know that in the program that I work with owners and pet parents, I don't need them to be obsessed with their training right now. If that's not how they feel, take a break from the separation anxiety training, that's okay. But I also don't want them to think I shouldn't be doing this because it seems so trivial in the scheme of things. That's another thing people are saying all the time, isn't it? In the scheme of things. In the scheme of things, yeah, we all seem to be saying that.

Speaker C [00:17:34]:

Yeah.

Speaker A [00:17:35]:

And so when we get hooked on the news you mentioned it earlier we've got to take a break.

Speaker C [00:17:39]:

Right.

Speaker A [00:17:39]:

That isn't helping anything.

Speaker C [00:17:42]:

Yeah, it really isn't. I think everyone needs to find that balance that works for them. Right. Like basically somewhere between sticking your head in the sand and overindulging. Right. You got to find that medium that allows, if you choose to, that it allows you to stay informed, however, that it doesn't emotionally charge you in a way that derails you and gets you stuck and stagnant in moving forward and taking care of the things that you need to in your life. And so I think we just have to really like I said, like I mentioned, turning on the news and seeing images that you just can't unsee. And so I've decided to listen to a podcast now for updates. So maybe consider how you want to get your updates in a way that works for you and don't feel any kind of guilt around it.

Speaker A [00:18:46]:

Yeah, it is okay to that break and that's caring for yourself. And that's important. This is so helpful. I just know that people are going to really find benefit from this.

Speaker C [00:18:59]:

Yeah.

Speaker A [00:19:00]:

And so let's just run through that process again just as a reminder. The key takeaways. So we've got the be aware. I'm just recounting it just to make sure that I've got this in my head. And that's just that taking that moment right. To just reflect and be aware of our own state. Is that right? Ever got that right?

Speaker C [00:19:21]:

Yes, you got it. Right.

Speaker A [00:19:23]:

And the break is that okay, take a break from the worry, take a break from the stress we're piling on ourselves or take a break from the information or whatever break we need, I guess.

Speaker C [00:19:33]:

Yeah, it really is. Take a break to maybe sit with the emotion right, that you've been trying to avoid and maybe take a break from listening or watching the news as much as you are. Yes, all of the above.

Speaker A [00:19:49]:

Oh, and that's really interesting as well because taking a break right, so taking a break can actually be being with the emotion, not trying to run away from it, not trying to go into some avoidance of it. Right, okay.

Speaker C [00:20:02]:

Yes, absolutely.

Speaker A [00:20:04]:

That's a good one. And then some self care.

Speaker C [00:20:07]:

Yeah, you got it. And remember that also in that self care. Find your allies. And what I mean by that is find, if you can, just one person who maybe you can reach out to when you have moments where you are feeling whatever right. You're feeling a certain way about maybe something that's going on that's stressing you in your personal life or thinking about what's going on in Ukraine right now. Look for and know who your allies are just in case you need them.

Speaker A [00:20:43]:

Right, okay. And that can be anyone, can it? Family members, friends?

Speaker C [00:20:48]:

Yes.

Speaker A [00:20:49]:

Okay.



Speaker C [00:20:50]:

Absolutely.

Speaker A [00:20:51]:

And you actually had some suggestions for an organization that people can lean on or they can look up if they want to go beyond their, I guess, their circle.

Speaker C [00:21:02]:

Absolutely. Yeah. There's an organization called Befrienders Worldwide and so hence the name. Obviously, no matter where you're listening to this podcast from, if you go to their website and we'll have a link in the show notes, I'm sure. Right. But it's help Befrienders.org, and they'll be able to connect you with a counselor if you just need someone to talk to. Sometimes it is nice just to have a neutral party, just to listen. Yeah.

Speaker A [00:21:34]:

And obviously that's not what you're trying to do here. If somebody really thinks that their mental health is suffering either because of their problems with their dog, and that can happen. If you're isolated and shut off from the world, that can happen. Or if the situation in Ukraine or wherever in the world is getting too much for you and you think that your mental health has been affected, we do really want you to reach out to somebody.

Speaker C [00:21:57]:

Yes, absolutely.

Speaker A [00:21:59]:

Don't deny yourself. Don't bury that it is okay to accept that that might be going on.

Speaker C [00:22:05]:

Yes, absolutely. There is nothing that you need to be ashamed of when it comes to taking care of your mental health. I think it's an honorable thing to take care of your mental health, so don't ever feel any shame around that.

Speaker A [00:22:21]:

We talk a lot because with my trainers as well, it can be a really demanding profession because often we're dealing with people who are at a really low Ebb and they're drained. We get drained. And we talk about putting your oxygen mask on first, that if you don't have the oxygen, you can't be there to help everybody else. And what was the phrase you used that was similar to that you can't.

Speaker C [00:22:46]:

Pour from an empty cup?

Speaker A [00:22:47]:

Yes, same thing. So you have to be looking after yourself before you can help anybody else.

Speaker C [00:22:54]:

Absolutely.

Speaker A [00:22:57]:

I've got the tingles. I've got, like, a feeling about this because I feel better just talking through this with you. And I don't think I'm I'm having look, you see there? There you go. I don't think I'm having this bad at all. But no, I have been worried about people who are faced with their everyday struggles, who have been in denial about that. And I just think this episode is just going to be so amazingly helpful for them.

Speaker C [00:23:25]:

Yes. I am so happy to be a part of this with you, Julie, because, yeah, this is a beautiful way to take care of your community. And I'm sure you have plenty of listeners who aren't even directly in your community who are still going to really just benefit from having someone talk about right, like we're doing now. What's going on? And just kind of knowing that, look, we understand and you are being seen. You are being heard. And just know that you're not alone.

Speaker A [00:23:56]:

That's amazing. I always feel better when I talk to you. I always feel uplifted when I talk to you, and I know that my listeners are going to feel just the same. I so appreciate your time today.

Speaker C [00:24:07]:

Oh, it's my honor.

Speaker A [00:24:09]:

Thank you so much, Crystal.

Speaker C [00:24:11]:

You're so welcome, Julie. Thank you.

Speaker B [00:24:15]:

Thank you so much for listening to this episode of the Be Right Back Separation Anxiety podcast. If you want to find out more.

Speaker A [00:24:22]:

About how I can help you further.

Speaker B [00:24:24]:

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