

# Ep #5: Considering Divorce? Understand the Life-Death-Life Cycle First



## Full Episode Transcript

Welcome to the stay or go podcast where we're changing the dialogue around divorce so that no woman ever stays in her marriage out of fear. Get ready to dispel myths, learn life changing tools, and build a solid foundation in yourself from which to make your decision. And now your host, me, Britta, Jo.

Alright, y'all. It is a little bit different for me tonight. I'm recording and it's nighttime. My kids are with their dad. And I'm kind of loving this vibe. It feels super intimate, just lovely, like you all are hanging out with me like it's a girls night.

Some housekeeping stuff to start off this first episode that I've known about for a little while, but I realized I needed to get out to y'all as soon as possible, mainly because a couple friends and a client had mentioned some things lately, and I was like, "yeah, I gotta make sure everybody knows."

So the very first episode I recorded and launched with the podcast, as you guys know, was in the month of February 2021. And surprise, the second, third and fourth episodes were recorded in November of 2022.

I found this last week when I launched with those older episodes, and didn't get a chance yet to really let you guys know where we were in the timeline. It was so cute. I had, you know, a friend reaching out being like, "Oh, my God, I didn't realize that was happening with your dad" and a client who was like, "Who is this guy that you're dating? And why do I not know about him?"

I did that, because, as I was figuring out the launch of the podcast, it felt super important to me to release those third and fourth episodes like I did, without taking the time to bring you all up to speed on my current life, because I just really wanted to balance out the amount that I was catching y'all up with jumping right into and sharing the tools and ideas that I'm just really super passionate about and that'll help you right now.

But I figured now was as good a time as any. And the podcast episodes from here on out will be podcasts that were recorded, beginning in December 2023, and then from there on. So we are all caught up, y'all. This is me in real time. So wild how technology allows us to do that, right? That I can magically bring my voice from a year ago and release it today. It's just really, really neat.

One of the things I was thinking of, that I felt was really important about talking about today is this concept that I learned from, as those of you who know a little bit about me know, my favorite book of all time, *Women Who Run with the Wolves*. Clarissa Pinkola Estes is really the first person to have brought this idea to the forefront for me back when I read her book. She was the first book I kind of dove into that opened up this like deep soul side of me probably back in, I don't know 2017/2018,

But this idea is this life-death-life cycle. And I am truly obsessed with this idea. And I find that it is everywhere in life and I have had a lot of my personal big life lessons center around it.

I want to start by reading a section from the book. And just have to say, if you guys have not read this book, go, go now. Go buy it off Amazon. The paperback I have...I wish you all could see this. It is so just well loved. Let me put it that way. It is completely encased in packing tape. I guess I'm pretty sure at one point the cover fell off. But it's just, it's marked up, it's got so much love and just so many memories that have been poured into it. I'll probably be buried with this book. Seriously, this book is like, like \$8/9 on Amazon. I just love how books can do that for us.

Okay, so I have this quote that I want to read to you guys. And if you have the book, because I'm sure those of you that do have gone and snatched it off your bookshelf, because there's nothing more fun than reading the same time as someone's talking about that book, I want you to turn to page 142. And just kind of let these words sink into your soul as I read them.

“We have been taught that death is always followed by more death. It is simply not so. Death is always in the process of incubating new life, even when one's existence has been cut down to the bones. Rather than seeing the archetypes of death and life as opposites, they must be held together as the left and right side of a single thought. While one side of the heart empties, the other fills. When one breath runs out, another begins.”

Whew, I just love this. And I'm hoping while reading it, some of you will get that same feeling that I get when I read it. It's like this kind of deep knowing in the center of my chest. And I think it's because I really do believe this life-death-life cycle is one of the deepest mysteries at the center of humaneness.

It is this paradox that death is an integral and vital half to life. Without one we can't have the other.

And why this is so tough for us is because most of humanity and most of what we're taught as humans is to fear death. I mean, I remember being scared out of my mind by that, some of you are gonna remember this, Disney's Fantasia, there is that scene with the creepy creepy Devil guy and all of the skeletons. And it's terrifying. As a kid, I remember watching that and just, I think I would if I were to still watch it, I would feel really uncomfortable. But as a kid, I just remember being really scared out of my mind. And in fact, now I'm definitely gonna have to include a clip in the show notes so that you guys can also go terrify yourselves by rewatching that. But this is just a theme kind of.

I remember when I first saw the death card in the tarot, my initial impressions are not like, “Oh, we love this card.” You know, there's this feeling of like, “Oh, I wonder what this means.”

And our culture has reacted to this discomfort with death by becoming obsessed with youth, and life and birth. I mean, all you have to do is look at where we put our elderly to realize we are not comfortable with death. We lock them away in old folks homes. When someone dies, what do we do? We immediately call the coroner and they come remove the dead body from the space.

You know, when my mom passed away, I remember thinking after they embalmed her and looking at her like, “wow, we even go so far as to take dead bodies, and try to make them look like they're not dead.” We put makeup on them to make them look less dead. Death has long been this dark, shadowy cavern that most people avoid and many will, you know, not even make peace with even on their deathbeds.

So how do we come back to an integrated and whole perspective on how death is truly a beautiful and important other half of life?

And just like that in breath and out breath. We cannot have one without the other.

I want to speak today about a couple of shifts that I have learned that I think can really help us to do this.

The first one I want to explore with you is this personal truth that “people, things, experiences all come and go, but I remain.”

What I mean by this is, what you are deep deep in your soul, transcends the external things you use to categorize yourself.

So, you know, if I were to ask you to tell me about yourself, you'd probably give me a list and I'm going to use myself as the example. My list would be, “I'm a mother of three boys. I'm a life coach. I enjoy dancing. I consider myself a burner. (I know I've only been to Burning Man one time, but I'm frickin obsessed and will probably go as many times as I can before I die.) So I'm a burner. I really enjoy good food. So I'm a foodie. Right?”

What are all those things? I'm using external things to define who I am. The problem with this, though, is, you know, if we strip away all of those things, who are you?

I paused for a second while I was writing this episode, and I thought, if you take away my ability to dance, am I still a dancer? If I lost my voice, and I was unable to coach, am I still a coach? And as I thought about this more, I realized, this is what makes those individuals (and I know you can probably bring one to mind right now), but those individuals that have been through horrific loss in their lives, and yet still retained their soul, their ability to be them, that's what makes them so amazing to be around, if they didn't allow the removal of something externally to destroy who they are.

I'm thinking specifically, there's this woman on Instagram I love seeing, who went through an accident, or I can't remember, maybe it was an illness, and she lost both of her legs. And now she's a huge advocate. I think she competes in the Paralympics, and I've seen videos of her skiing, and I'm just like, “wow!” I'm talking about something so big, just the thought that like, “I can walk, that's part of who I am,” changed for her. And instead of letting that destroy that sense of self, she was able to adapt and go even deeper into like, “Okay, who I am, is not just who I am with legs.”

It also made me think, I mean, this is why stories that come out of the Holocaust with individuals who were able to, in the face of such extreme suffering, where all external control is stripped away, are still able to find and center themselves. We're inspired by those and why? Because it's a visual example. It's seeing somebody putting into practice this idea that no matter

if all the people, the things, the experiences around me go, I still remain. So at its heart it's making peace with this crucial part of the human experience.

This death piece comes down, I believe, to how much can you drop back into deep connection with your soul self. And through that dropping back, find a place of peace, that allows you to surrender to whatever life is bringing you.

Because really, it's when we get into resistance to what life is placing before us which I mean, obviously, in some instances, we can change that. But if we go back to that example of that woman losing her legs, like there was no I can change this. This is what life's presenting her. It's not an option.

How do you come through that? You find a resource deep inside yourself that allows you to have safety and peace within you, even at the loss of something externally. Whether that's a death of part of your body, a death of relationship, death of dreams, death of a career that you wanted, a place that you wanted to live.

I mean if there's anything we see in the human experience, it's that all of us will face deaths of one kind or another. That piece is guaranteed. The real gift we get in our own human experience is, what do we choose to make the deaths mean? And how do we choose to think of ourselves? And what stories do we tell ourselves as we go through the deaths?

So an analogy I really love to use to help solidify these ideas in a more tangible context is thinking of a garden.

I grew up in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and my grandparents had an acre of land. And we often when I was younger, would go and help my grandparents in their big garden in the back where they grew a lot of okra and corn. It was a beautiful opportunity to realize, as so many of those of us who actually worked in gardens know, our fruit and vegetables don't just come off the shelves, they come out of the earth. And to do that there is a lot of resources that go into the production of creating something like a vegetable or a fruit.

So I want you to imagine in your mind, your life being this garden, and taking a second to kind of get the lay of the land, noticing all these different areas of the garden. You've got this area, maybe this area over here is your marriage, and maybe this area here is your children, maybe this is your work, your career, maybe there's your personal interests, maybe there's your passions, all of these beautiful sections of your garden.

And one of the most important things to remember when we're making decisions about our garden is that we are limited in the amount of resources we have. The resources you have are your time, your energy, your focus, your desire. You don't have unlimited resources to pour into this garden. Ergo, you want to choose wisely. And especially with time. If we only have whatever amount of time we're allotted for our life, it's really important.

And this is the first question you need to think to ask yourself when you're looking at this garden is, what is the goal of this garden? Which phrased in a different way is, what is the goal of my life?

For me, I definitely right around the time I was considering divorce, I could feel something bigger calling to me. And as much as I tried to make it work with the plants that I already had in my garden...

Because I did, trust me guys. I knew about a year before I actually filed for divorce that I intuitively knew that was probably what was going to happen, but I just kept resisting that death. I was really trying to, without having to get rid of any plants or clear anything out, to make do with what was and it just was not enough.

It became very clear that with the amount of resources I was having to put into my marriage, there was not going to be enough to do whatever my soul was calling me to. And ultimately, I remember the moment where I was like, "If I do not move forward with this death, I will not experience the things that I am meant to, that my soul is calling for in this life." And I know without a doubt I would not be who I am today.

I really don't think I would have become a coach. I don't believe I would have started my business. It was just way too difficult with the patterns that I had at the time in my marriage. You know, as much as I love to think like, "Oh, I could have gotten a babysitter and I would have done these things." It just, I look at what I've needed in the last three, four years in my life to accomplish these things, and that was really only possible with the resources that became available to me once I cleared out that part of my garden.

And I'm not going to sugarcoat for you guys that that wasn't a really difficult death. Death is, is hard in a lot of ways when we're going in, and we're ripping out all of this work that we've put in to this story and this idea. Which is what a marriage is - we're building something together and you have all these plans and there's this feeling of like, "okay, well, it may not be what I wanted it to be, but at least I have something to show, you know, at least, there's like, something that I've accomplished over the last 12 years." It can feel really scary to all of a sudden, just, "No, we're starting over."

But I want to give you guys a little bit of a peek into a different perspective on that starting over which is that, here's where the magic is. Because if you want it to, starting over can feel like this brand new lease on life, if you'll let it.

And I love thinking back to that moment when I chose to get divorced and I was going through the divorce process, which took about seven months for me. That was some of the hardest work I've ever done of clearing out the garden and yanking out all the plants and letting all the things die. But at the end of that, I just can see myself standing in front of all these freshly cleared out planter beds enjoying the smell of that fresh dirt and the beautiful space waiting to be created

in, waiting to receive whatever the hell I want to plant in it. And for me, personally, that was one of the biggest, most exciting moments of my life.

Because truly, until that moment, I had never had the freedom to get to do that in my own garden in my own life because I was raised in such a strict religious ideology that basically conscripted my garden from the very beginning. I had never really experienced a moment of “this is truly your life. These are your planter beds, you can plant whatever you want.” And being able to feel that with some true sense of like, “yeah, I really do get to pick what I want, what excites me, what feels amazing, what feels compelling, what calls to my soul.”

And this is where that soul connection really comes in. Because the second question I want you to think of so,,,

Remember the first is, what is the goal of my garden?

The second question is, what does my soul feel called to? And I also like to say when I'm, you know, doing this for myself, when I'm trying to figure out where is the next step for me, I'll sometimes ask “Where do I feel the light, where's the light calling me?”

And I will tell you this is where your intuition comes in big time. When I say intuition, I am talking about this knowing inside of you. This like Soul guide, or like at times, I will often call it an inner compass for my clients, because I love that image of, if you will follow it, if you'll listen to it, it will always show you the way.

This is the magic that lets you know what the next steps are to take after the depth. This is the inner knowing that when you're looking at those empty flower beds tells you “oh my god, I really want to plant peonies, and I want to try butternut squash, and I want heirloom tomatoes,” and the magic of getting to play with yourself in that way.

It's like taking a blank canvas and finally getting to put colors on based off of what brings me joy, what opens my soul, what calls me into more of myself.

Many of you are afraid and stay in this space of considering divorce for so long, because you're really afraid about what will happen after and you really want this step by step plan. I want to advocate for how much a step-by-step plan... Yes, paint by numbers has its place, but no! That is not what we're going to do with your life! Don't do that to yourselves.

You are sacrificing the incredible magic that flows into your life when you choose to develop this relationship with your intuition, for the guarantee of, “robin's egg blue goes on all of the number two squares,” which sounds very safe and horribly unromantic. And most of you are (just knowing the clients, the people who've been drawn to me), most of you are deeply romantic. You want to live live that you will look back on and be like, “Holy fuck, that was such an amazing ride. I cannot believe that was my life.”

Living a life painting by numbers, not gonna be that y'all. You live a life painted by numbers, you're gonna look back and be like, "Yeah, I knew what that was gonna look like, because it came with a picture. And all the lines were already drawn, and all the paint was already picked and the specific places to put it."

Which, by the way, no judgment towards those that choose that life. I know, for myself. Having been a coach, I have so much respect for everybody getting to pick their path, their journey. What I am strongly advocating for is, if you are currently living a paint by numbers life, which is what I was when I was, you know, stuck in Mormonism telling me exactly what I had to do, how I had to feel, what a good life looked like. And your soul longs for freedom... trust it, it knows way better than a bunch of other humans who are just sharing a bunch of their thoughts.

This is the magic of trusting yourself. Because really, the only reason you want that paint by numbers path is because you have a lack of trust in yourself.

Because I'll tell you what, when you trust yourself, you know that you can handle whatever comes your way and find a way through. And the reality was, I had no idea when I got divorced all that was going to be in store for me over the next four years. And yet, here I am.

And I'll tell you all, I didn't have a roadmap, all I did was just keep following the light the best I could. I just kept trusting my intuition. And that is literally all that the universe asks of you.

And I will promise you, I know for myself, that when you trust where the light calls you, you will absolutely get to live a life bigger than you could have ever dreamed.

The memories I have made over the last four years, the experiences that have expanded my soul mean more to me than all of those experiences from the paint by numbers life I was living up until that point. That's how big these last four years of living a life in trust with myself have been. Have I advocated for this enough?!

Okay, so another piece that is really important as well is remembering that this whole thing is a cyclical process. You are going to go in and out of the excitement for the new things that are growing, for the new life that you're creating at the same time as still grieving over the death and the loss of the things that are gone.

And you will experience this over and over and over again. And especially in the first days and months and even years following the death.

I think it's so important to realize it's not just black and white like "Oh, once the beds are ripped out, you're just going to skip off and feel happy the rest of your life." Grief and death, weave in and out with life and the more I've found that we can let them weave in and out, the easier it becomes to really flow with life.



I'm gonna share a personal story. I have learned for myself, that I feel a lot with deaths and especially in romantic partnerships. Even if this is someone that I have only been in love with for maybe a couple of months, I still experience a lot of sadness when it ends.

I want to give an example to give some clarity on how this works and what it looks like in the real world application of experiencing that grief and moving into a new life at the same time.

It's probably been a little over a couple months now. I met this just incredible guy, super unexpectedly while I was in San Francisco. And I mean, I did not see this one coming y'all. He was totally out of left field. But he was just so resonant with my vibration at the time. And he just felt really magical and warm. And I could just tell there is something here and it felt so wonderful to be with him.

So I really just opened to what life was presenting me. And really, magically, he did as well. And over the next couple of months, we just spent time getting to know each other, and we were long distance, so a lot of that was through phone calls. And we made the space to take a couple of different trips and to get to be in person and I just had so much fun, and really like beautiful conversations. And I learned some really powerful lessons about myself through the lens of that relationship. '

And then ultimately, it ended because we're just not a match in these very important certain ways for each of us. And a part of me definitely thought that because it had ended so well and very like consciously between the two of us that I would be fine and able to just, let go more quickly.

And so I found myself surprised over the last month as sadness and longing and missing of him would come up. And it was a good reminder to me to just slow down and let myself be with that process. Yes, a part of me knew this was the best thing for both of us, and a part of me also was really sad to have to let go of that story that we had, you know, inevitably as you do when you're falling in love with someone, that story that we'd started creating together and allowing the loss of that feeling of connection and that energetic sharing.

And without fail, I find the more compassionate we can be with ourselves as we go through that, the easier it is because we're not adding resistance in to the initial feelings.

And this process has been so consistent for me. This lesson, like I have learned it over and over and over again in my four years of dating. And it's this deep acknowledgement that sometimes the dreams we were building just don't work out and change happens.

This is where the second shift that I wanted to talk with you guys about on this episode really comes in. And it is this idea, this belief really, that there is always more ahead, that life is ever unfolding, and if we will just allow the death, there will always be new life emerging in the future.

Here's a little thing I want you to think about because here's the thing, when we always want life to be happy or joyful or in love, or when we really kind of push away the darker emotions and all we want is spring and summer or when we're too afraid to let the things die in our lives that need to die, what happens is we atrophy. We collapse down and we start to get very tight and controlling.

So notice this in your life when something needs to die, and you do not want it to die. Oof. Right? We start to get really, really controlling. We narrow our focus, we think we know what's best, we want to control the people around us, we can get really manipulative, we get really anxious.

It's because we are not allowing death to clear out what is no longer working and to release and let those things die. I often think of leaves on a tree falling off. If the leaves never fell, where would the new leaves be able to come into? There's no space, right? And also, those new leaves fall to the ground, and they decompose, and they give back their energy to the earth that then puts it into new life.

We have to allow death to provide nourishment in our life for new creation. And when we don't, it makes life really uncomfortable, because we're trying to fight against the very nature that is at the center of life. You cannot escape it, death is the one guarantee.

So that's one way of living, where we're trying to control death versus this belief and this remembering that there is always more ahead. You will not exhale, forever. Inevitably, you will find yourself taking an inhale again. And often it's in some of the most beautiful and unexpected ways.

And I have another personal example that's going to tie in to that experience I was just telling you about to illustrate this.

So this guy that I met in San Francisco that I've been really sad about things ending with? Well, if you just take a second and you backtrack with me, a month before I met him, I had fallen like head over heels for this incredible guy during my week at Burning Man. And in that moment of that experience, I was just like, all in on how mind-blowingly special that connection was. And it is one of the highlights of my falling in love part of life. But as we got back from Burning Man, it became really clear that a connection in that way just was not a fit with our everyday lives.

Once again, I found myself working through the death of the excitement that I experienced around what could be, and really relaxing down and allowing acceptance of what reality was.

And it was while I was in all of that process, that boom, this guy showed up in San Francisco and came in out of the blue.

And I cannot tell you enough how this happens in life consistently for me. And the more that I have surrendered into this flow of deeply loving and enjoying and being present with what comes in, and then releasing without attachment...

And I will say as much as I can, I'm getting better at it each time. It's not that it's easy.

But being able to release without attachment, when it's time for it to go, I am always presented with this truth over and over, which is that there is always more and often, there is always better.

And this is so important for so many of you because it's probably one of the things I hear the most from clients and from women that I speak to on mini-sessions is this deep fear that there will be nothing better in the future. It is this scarcity mindset of "I should be grateful for what I have. This is good enough. The grass is not greener on the other side. Better to have one bird in the hand than two in the bush idea." And on top of that, y'all keep listening to this really shitty dating thoughts from your single girlfriends or people on the internet. Like no!

I want to present this reality to you instead, which is that over the last four years, I have watched as nearly every guy that I have dated, has progressively, with each one, been more and more aligned with what I desire most in a partner.

And that is absolutely happening, because I am choosing to believe that there is always more. That when a relationship ends, there will always be someone who is a better fit, more connected, more able to grow with me in the future.

And because I believe that, I don't settle when a relationship isn't truly aligned, and I don't live my life with a relationship at the center of it. I view myself as the center of my life, my journey, my path.

Yes it's lovely when I get to share it with a romantic partner, when their path converges with mine and we get to enjoy this journey together, I fucking love that. But I am no longer willing to sacrifice my journey or even theirs. I've had partners who are willing to change themselves to fit my journey, and I'm talking like on a deep soul level here. We're not talking you know, small surface stuff. We're talking, these are core things that they would have to change. And I'm not willing to sacrifice that just to stay together.

I've learned that it is okay to allow our paths to diverge. And to trust that if one of us is feeling a death, that there will always be more love ahead in the future.

This is abundance. This is sufficiency. This is the opposite of that scarcity that so many of us find ourselves in when we're considering divorce thinking, "They'll never be anybody that wants to date me. Life will never get better. I'll always struggle."

So much of this shift in belief is what allows you to go for what you truly want, and not try to make yourself small enough to be content with what is.

Coming back full circle to where we started to this beautiful question of how do we make peace with death so that new life can continuously be born into our lives?

I want you to first recognize the truth that, "People, things, and experiences all come and go. But I remain."

You are the consciousness that takes it all in. Your existence is the one constant in your life that you can always come back to and if you want, you can find shelter and peace in that space.

And secondly, there is always more ahead. I promise you. Life is ever unfolding. If you will allow it, it will take you to places you've never even dreamed of. And it is through allowing those depths that you will be brought into that new life.

So I want to leave you guys at the end here with this beautiful quote. Again, from Clarissa in *Women Who Run With the Wolves*.

I love this part because I feel like it's kind of a rallying cry to you here at the end. I was reading this before and I was like "yeah, this is how we're gonna finish this episode for sure."

So she says, "Another way to strengthen connection to intuition is to refuse to allow anyone to repress your vivid energies. That means your opinions, your thoughts, your ideas, your values, your morals, your ideals. There is very little right/ wrong or good / bad in this world. There is however useful and not useful. There are also things that are sometimes destructive, as well as things which are engendering. There are actions that are properly integrated and intentioned, and those that are not. But as you well know, a garden has to be turned in the fall in order to prepare it for the spring. It cannot bloom all the time. Let your own innate cycles dictate the upsurges and the downward cycle of your life, not other forces or persons outside yourself, nor negative complexes from within."

I hope you all take this last piece to heart. Going back to, you are the one that remains.

There may be people or things that are useful and not useful. Things that are sometimes destructive, as well as things that are engendering. Often we can't tell with the people outside of us, which one of those they are and that's why it's so important to come back to the real source of truth in your life, which is YOU. You trusting your intuition. You trusting that inner knowing, because we know that is the part of you that is most deeply connected to your soul. And that will always call you back home.

All right, y'all. This is a really fun episode. It looks like when I record them at night, they're going to be a bit longer. But I kind of am totally into that. It just felt very cozy and inviting tonight to just sit and talk about something that's so important to me.

The life death cycle is a huge part of my journey. And I think the more we all understand it, the closer we'll be to living lives we want.

Please remember to like and subscribe to the podcast. Every time you do it helps me be able to reach even more women. So, and that's what I'm really passionate about with this. So also if you have any friends that would benefit share this as well. And I will see you all next week.