

TDS S6 E4

[00:00:00] Aurra Intro.

[00:00:06] **Samantha:** I am joined by Steven Petrow, author of stupid things I won't do when I get old and Columnist of the Washington post.

[00:00:15] **Samantha:** Hello. Hello. So nice to be with you today.

[00:00:17] **Samantha:** Thanks for joining us. Welcome to the divorce social

[00:00:21] **Steven Petrow:** please, to be of the divorce social, I am divorced, I guess I qualify.

[00:00:26] **Samantha:** Well, maybe you could give us a judgment of whether you're pleased to be here at the end.

[00:00:29] **Samantha:** Haha okay.

[00:00:30] **Samantha:** You are divorced. How does me saying that make you

[00:00:34] **Steven Petrow:** feel?

[00:00:35] **Steven Petrow:** You know, I've been divorced for about four years now. And I think had we been doing this, then I would have felt a sense of a sense of weight, a sense of failure. I would not have felt good, but I've, I sort of come a long way in my own growth around, around that word, around that concept, you know, as a gay man, I never expected in this lifetime [00:01:00] to get married.

[00:01:02] **Steven Petrow:** And I certainly never expected to be a divorcee, that would be with one e, I guess,

[00:01:07] **Steven Petrow:** Does that

[00:01:08] **Samantha:** prey on your mind? I guess the fact that you never expected to be married and now you're divorced.

[00:01:15] **Samantha:** It

[00:01:15] **Steven Petrow:** did prey on my mind

[00:01:16] **Steven Petrow:** now, I, now I understand it more as sort of the two sides of equality and so LGBTQ people who.

[00:01:25] **Steven Petrow:** Fought for many, many years, decades to have the right to be married part and parcel with that comes the right to become divorced and the obligation to go through the legal process. Just as any other couple would and that's, as it should be, even though it's a painful process, for sure.

[00:01:46] **Steven Petrow:** I read

[00:01:46] **Samantha:** a brilliant article. You wrote about your divorce process and in it, you said, I get to get divorced, um, and talking about that, right. And that equality of yeah, you have the equality of being able to get [00:02:00] married, but you also have the equality of getting divorced and you talk in your article that a divorce is the same, whether you're two men, two women, a man, and a woman, you know, whatever your situation, all the laws are the same.

[00:02:12] **Samantha:** Was that a quite a revelatory process for you and during the divorce? Or is that not something you thought about at the time?

[00:02:19] **Steven Petrow:** It wasn't really something I thought about at the time, because it sort of happened and it happened quickly. And I did not really have. Um, a distance view of, of what was going on.

[00:02:30] **Steven Petrow:** I was sort of suddenly faced with, um, a number of very difficult decisions. Where was I going to live? Um, did I want to move back to California where I came from? How was I going to afford things? Health insurance. All of these really practical matters as well as in this country, trying to come to a legal separation agreement and so on and so forth.

[00:02:53] **Steven Petrow:** So we're really caught up in the details to start off with, and it only was really a year or so [00:03:00] later that I had some perspective and began to understand in a way, the historic nature of. Same-sex couples becoming divorced and how that fits into the equality notion, you know, in facing many of the same challenges that opposite sex couples have for a long time.

[00:03:19] **Steven Petrow:** And then actually I became irritated too, not with my ex, but I became irritated with some of my friends who refer to what was happening as oh, you and Jim, you broke up, you split up. And it's one who

writes it, that language and the meaning of language. Those didn't seem to be the right words too.

[00:03:39] **Steven Petrow:** Describe the dissolution of a marriage. And I don't remember sort of using them with, with my straight friends who were getting divorced. Oh, I'm so sorry. You split up in a way. I think it is the nature of that institution and the relationship. So I thought I was a little irritable

[00:03:54] **Samantha:** too. Let's go back to the beginning of your experience.

[00:03:57] **Samantha:** So when was that moment [00:04:00] for you that you decided. To break up and get divorced. What was that catalyst moment?

[00:04:07] **Steven Petrow:** Well, how tell you, I'm going to be a little vague about this because my family would prefer that, but about a year before a relative of ours acknowledged that he had been having a long-term affair and had been married all that time.

[00:04:25] **Steven Petrow:** And I remember when I asked him, well, how come you never got divorced? He said, I never found the right time. And. I sort of pack that away and said, I do not want to get to my eighties and to have perhaps had a clandestine affair for a long time and to say I never found the right time. So I kind of made a promise to myself.

[00:04:49] **Steven Petrow:** It was around the time of my 59th birthday. To either the moving ahead with the divorce or to be recommitted into the relationship. [00:05:00] And then it was about six or seven months later that we separated

[00:05:06] **Samantha:** interesting that I never had the right time to get divorced. Is there a right time to get?

[00:05:13] **Steven Petrow:** I don't think there's a right time.

[00:05:15] **Steven Petrow:** I think every time is a very hard time. And. You can always find a reason to postpone it. And you know, to be perfectly Frank, I had made a plan to talk to my ex about leaving early January of 2017. And I had consulted a lawyer and I had not emotionally, but I understood otherwise what's the road ahead wise.

[00:05:39] **Steven Petrow:** And I had a plan and that very afternoon. I got a call from the hospice nurse who was taking care of my mom in New York. And she

said, your mother is now unresponsive. You know, she will pass in 24 to 48 hours. You should come up here, which I did. So I left yet another reason not to postpone, but [00:06:00] that, that was, um, a very immediate one.

[00:06:02] **Steven Petrow:** And then my mom died the next day and I was with her. And that was, that was, as it should have been. And then I actually said to myself, well, I need to take a little breather from all of this. This is, this is one huge loss. And I don't know that I'm ready now. Proceed with the separation, but sometimes things are not in our control.

[00:06:23] **Steven Petrow:** And then about a month later, he came to me and said he was leaving. And so that, that then precipitated things and we were then sort of off to those races.

[00:06:33] **Samantha:** my father actually died. While we were engaged, but before we were married, so I had my wedding day without my dad there and cried when I put my wedding dress on.

[00:06:46] **Samantha:** And I think for me, that death of a parent made me suddenly reevaluate who I was, where I was, what I wanted, and also that life is short. [00:07:00] And maybe that comes into that time to get divorced is that I suddenly realized that. Time was finite. Do you think that losing your mother had an effect on the process?

[00:07:14] **Samantha:** It sounds like it would have happened anyway, but what effect do you think it had going through grief at the same time? Such a big breakup of a marriage.

[00:07:26] **Steven Petrow:** So I'll just, I'll just add in one other event on the timeline, which is then a month after we separated, my father died. So I have these three losses in the first hundred days of 2017.

[00:07:38] **Steven Petrow:** And they will say Samantha, that what was, what was challenging for me was separating the different threads of grief. Basically I was overwhelmed. They all got mixed together. I had a very difficult time processing them and I think each one probably would have been a significant enough loss to me. Some [00:08:00] focus, some therapy and so on, but the three of them Richard woven, um, yeah, I'll just say it, it really knocked me off my feet.

[00:08:09] **Samantha:** Wow. I can't imagine going through those three things at once and, and particularly I've spoken to people who've lost both parents and

they talk about that feeling of then being a normal. And the loneliness that comes with that. And of course, with the breakup of a marriage there's loneliness that comes with that, did you feel that particularly strongly and how did you deal with those feelings?

[00:08:36] **Steven Petrow:** But I did. And actually I remember writing a column for the Washington post about becoming what I call an adult orphan at the age of 59 or 60. And you know, how, how aren't that felt and. I get, you know, it wasn't like I had anywhere near like a perfect relationship with my parents, but without them, the way I [00:09:00] have thought about it was in a sense they were the north star in my, in my constellation and things just sort of gravitated in that direction.

[00:09:09] **Steven Petrow:** And then when they were no longer there. I felt like my compass was spinning around a lot. And then, you know, with my, with my marriage unfolding, I think the compass was speeding, speeding up and, and it's, um, twirl. And, um, you know, I did, I did some healthy things. I did some unhealthy things. I pressed ahead with the therapy that I was in.

[00:09:32] **Steven Petrow:** I focused on self care. I really doubled down on a meditation practice and a gratitude practice. Actually tried the gratitude practice that gave me the greatest amount of solace. And so every, every day when I woke up, I wrote three things that I was grateful for and a little book. And then when I went to bed, he wrote three things that I was grateful for and they could be, you know, it could be like, it was a beautiful day too.

[00:09:57] **Steven Petrow:** I had a piece of dark chocolate. I mean it [00:10:00] big and small, but in a cumulative way, this notation of gratitude started to listen. But it was a very gradual way, you know, and, and, and I relied on, I relied on friends. I

[00:10:14] **Samantha:** love that idea of noting gratitude at the beginning of the day and the end of the day.

[00:10:19] **Samantha:** Cause I have anxiety, so I take medication for anxiety. So I try and meditate as well, but sometimes I don't know about you, but for me when something bad happens, it spirals in my head because of my anxiety, um, to be like the worst thing in the world. So like, everything is awful. Going to be okay again.

[00:10:40] **Samantha:** And actually, yeah, just like I really enjoyed a piece of chocolate today. Like can really make a difference. So I love the idea of writing

that down as a kind of way of, of recovery. But you said you did some good things. We talk about therapy a lot in this podcast and the. You know, a therapy. Yeah. I've had therapy for [00:11:00] everything.

[00:11:00] **Samantha:** That's happened to me at this point, and we're still peeling the layers of the onion with my therapist. But you said you did some bad things. I don't know if you want to go into that, but I always took a lot about my sexual explosion and obviously it wasn't all bad, but I basically, I got divorced, went out and had a lot of sex and good times and partying.

[00:11:19] **Samantha:** And a lot of that was great, but obviously I finally realized that maybe I was covering. For some underlying feelings with that situation. Is there anything that you feel that you could talk about that you kind of did that maybe wasn't meditating and grateful practices?

Sure.

[00:11:36] **Steven Petrow:** I didn't, I did not do that one.

[00:11:38] **Steven Petrow:** I felt very damaged. I was very emotional. I did not think I would be a. Sexual or intimate partner. And I, I basically just postpone all of that for a year until I felt that I'd become more whole and, um, and then kind of stepped in, stepped in very gradually. But what I, when I did that was not so [00:12:00] healthy, it's not nearly as interesting Smith.

[00:12:02] **Steven Petrow:** I'm sorry.

[00:12:04] **Samantha:** Yeah, my, the sex. Wasn't always interesting either to be honest.

[00:12:11] **Steven Petrow:** I withdrew. And that's a natural tendency of mine. I do suffer from depression and anxiety as well. And so I withdrew because that was kind of a place that I knew and a place that I felt was. I felt that it was safe and I wouldn't be, I wouldn't be further hurt.

[00:12:29] **Steven Petrow:** I would not recommend withdrawing to myself again. And it's a tendency that I fight as, as I sort of deal with successive waves of depression as, as, as I often do. And, um, and just recently I have been in one of those sort of low periods and I have made a point of telling. Certain friends, this is where I am now.

[00:12:54] **Steven Petrow:** Uh, and not trying to camouflage that. There've been some times when I haven't [00:13:00] been able to haven't felt well enough to go to an event or to dinner. And instead of just making up a lie, I've said my depression is getting the better of me and I need to hang back in a way that has made me feel more connected to those people.

[00:13:15] **Steven Petrow:** Um, my trust and who understands. Yeah,

[00:13:19] **Samantha:** I think honesty is always the answer. Isn't it? Although sometimes it's very hard to be honest with the people around you about how you're feeling. Um, I can definitely relate to that. Sort of just put a brave face on it. Everything's fine. You're just not seeing me cause I'm busy, but actually

[00:13:34] **Steven Petrow:** right.

[00:13:34] **Steven Petrow:** And I'm often very busy and I used to be traveling a lot, so I had sort of convenient excuses, but I am trying. In, in these years to be more authentic, more honest with myself and with others. And I do find that overall that brings me greater intimacy either in a friendship way or, um, you know, in another way.[00:14:00]

[00:14:00] **Samantha:** During that whole time, because a lot of people I find listened to this podcast during maybe one of those low moments. And it's hard to imagine that everyone has them and that everyone comes out of them again. And I talk a lot about crying face down on my kitchen floor and, um, having dislocated my knee, just staring out the window, feeling like life was crashing down around me.

[00:14:24] **Steven Petrow:** You know, I think the lowest point. Moving out of the house that we had bought together and that we had lived in. And then, so, so physically it was exhausting and emotionally it was exhausting. And then right about that same time, my ex announced on Facebook that he was in a new relationship. So that was about two months, two months after we had separated.

[00:14:46] **Steven Petrow:** And that, that was hard. That was hard.

[00:14:50] **Samantha:** And I think a lot of people would be able to relate to that kind of their other half getting a partner first at announcing it to the world. How did that [00:15:00] feel? And how did that moment hit you physically? Did you say you saw it on Facebook?

[00:15:05] **Steven Petrow:** Some friends of mine sign on Facebook and then they said, oh, go look on his Facebook page.

[00:15:11] **Steven Petrow:** We were, I guess we were still Facebook friends with that. Than just because of the shortness of time, I saw people who were mutual friends of are saying, oh, did you and Steven get back together? And I was like, oh yeah, does that happen? It was kind of this, I was, I was incredulous. And then, then of course it was real.

[00:15:29] **Steven Petrow:** And then I believe I defended her. It was time. Very empowering. Did you feel

[00:15:36] **Samantha:** angry? Cause I remember when my ex I mean, he went straight into a new relationship, like weeks later and then that one didn't work out. And then I believe I don't still talk to him about sheep, but I believe now he's in a longer term relationship.

[00:15:53] **Samantha:** But he, when he started on this longer term relationship and we were still talking and he was sort of like telling me about it [00:16:00] and I didn't like it. And it actually made me really angry. I went through an angry stage, but that specific thing of him like telling me about the relationship and him just being able to like move on so quickly when I was like trying to deal with all my layers made me really angry.

[00:16:16] **Samantha:** I actually bought boxing gloves. And an inflatable boxing thing. It started boxing and the garden. Um, but did you have an angry

[00:16:26] **Steven Petrow:** face? I had an angry face. I didn't have the angry phase at that moment because I was really just, that was probably still within weeks after my dad died. So I was just sort of emotionally drained and wasn't able to access being angry.

[00:16:41] **Steven Petrow:** I was surprised. And. I remember we had, we had talked not that long before when his brother had divorced and then quickly repartnered, you know, how that wouldn't allow for healing or learning. And so I did have, you know, those [00:17:00] thoughts, she, that was fast. Um, I'm not sure how quickly one can learn what there is to learn.

[00:17:07] **Steven Petrow:** And, um, you know, and honestly what I have preferred to have been the first one to be repeated. Absolutely. Absolutely. But, um, that hadn't happened and that still hasn't happened and, and that's fine. It's okay.

[00:17:22] **Samantha:** Yeah. I CA I agree with you. I would've preferred to be the one kind of re-potting and fast, but then why is that?

[00:17:29] **Samantha:** It's like, I wasn't ready. I didn't want a partner at that stage, but we still want to be like, like when, in some way,

[00:17:37] **Steven Petrow:** No, I certainly wasn't ready. And that was when I was taking my very defined hiatus of a year before even dating. So it would've been hard to get partnered or married again without even going on a date.

[00:17:47] **Steven Petrow:** So, uh, you know, I think it's just part of the emotional response. You know, now it's, uh, four years later and they are married and I am, I am happy for them because I understand. [00:18:00] They are happier. He is happier and I am happier and that's a much, that's a good place to have wound up. Yeah,

[00:18:07] **Samantha:** definitely. I think I'm the same looking back now I'm a few years on.

[00:18:13] **Samantha:** I'm like, you know, well good on them. If they can find happiness, then I'm much happier out of that relationship. So great. So you said you left everything kind of dating wise for a year when you went into that world. How did that fail? Cause I hadn't done dating apps before. And then all of a sudden that was swiped central.

[00:18:38] **Steven Petrow:** Right? So it had been 14 years. And so I con I got back into the swing of it 2017 or 2018. So there were no apps when I had last been single. I had been on match.com just about it. So yes, an entirely new world to, to understand, to navigate. [00:19:00] Emojis, um, acronyms. It was, it was, it was foreign. He and I also found it like this whole new to rank.

[00:19:08] **Steven Petrow:** And I'll say initially, I thought, oh, I'm, I'm looking to replicate the kind of relationship I have. With the kind of person that I have. But as I went a little bit further, I then said to myself, oh, I don't know if I should be so quick about trying to replicate what I had that didn't work out. And I'm a different person now than I was 14 years ago.

[00:19:29] **Steven Petrow:** And so perhaps I'm looking for different things and that led to a period of. They just really experimenting, meaning all kinds of different people going out of my comfort zone, having some great experiences, some wacky experiences to, and that was when I was turning 60, 61. And that

was, that was not something I would have said, oh, that's going to be happening when.

[00:19:53] **Steven Petrow:** Uh, sexy sexagenarian, which is one of my favorite words, which has nothing to do with sex, but it's still one of my favorite words.

[00:19:59] **Samantha:** [00:20:00] It's interesting. Cause I, we spoke to Paul Roseby, um, over in the UK about, um, his divorce from his partner and then coming back into the gay dating scene. And he said that people started calling him a dad.

[00:20:13] **Samantha:** And he was like, whoa, I don't want to be anyone's daddy. And about all the acronyms that he wasn't aware of in the LGBT, uh, QA plus community, you know, how do you discover what an acronym means? Do you ask the person? Was there lots of Googling?

[00:20:31] **Steven Petrow:** Well, I have a very good friend who was my post divorce counselor and he, he had been divorced also.

[00:20:38] **Steven Petrow:** So he was my guide to this, to this new terrain and he would explain. Just about everything to me. So I was like, oh, that's what that means. Oh. And he said, you know, yes, you are a daddy. And then there are different kinds of daddy's their generous dad, dad, those are the daddies who pay for everything. Then there's the daddies who say they're not generous.[00:21:00]

[00:21:00] **Steven Petrow:** Which sounds so, so cheap, but you know, you know, it is what it

[00:21:04] **Samantha:** is. Is that the terminology you say, I am not a generous daddy on your profile. I don't

[00:21:10] **Steven Petrow:** actually say that, but I see many people will say, you know, who are of a certain age, my age who have gray hair or whatever, they will say notch.

[00:21:17] **Samantha:** See, if you didn't know what that meant, you'd just be like, why are you telling me one of your faults?

[00:21:25] **Samantha:** That

[00:21:25] **Steven Petrow:** was one of my initial questions. Why, why are they asking me that I, you know, I am by nature. I'd be

[00:21:33] **Samantha:** so confused in that scenario. I'd be like, why is no one generous on this app? What's going.

[00:21:40] **Steven Petrow:** But one thing I do, you know, I did write about in my book is how I lied about my age at the beginning. I was on the cusp of 60, or I was 60 and I remained.

[00:21:50] **Steven Petrow:** 58 or I made 59 because I really didn't want the stigma or the perceived stigma of pink 60. Then I kind of [00:22:00] felt uncomfortable telling a white lie. It wasn't that many years. And I met up online with a friend. I had gone to college with who? So we went to college where we're the same age. He was now 10 years younger.

[00:22:13] **Steven Petrow:** He was just turning 50. And I was like, Wow. That's so big. That's such a big stretch. And I said, well, how does that work out for you? You know, how do you, you know, when do you tell the truth? And he said, well, I use it to get in the door. And then, then I will tell them on the first date and half the time they just walk in the other half of the time, you know, we proceed.

[00:22:32] **Steven Petrow:** And he said, well, those, those are good odds for me. So, but at that point I decided I was going to. To move towards being my real age. And I've done that and really found that it does not make a difference because the younger guys who are looking for a debt. I'm a daddy at 58, or whether I'm 64 for someone who wants an individualist age appropriate I'm age appropriate at either age.

[00:22:58] **Steven Petrow:** And if I was deemed too old, [00:23:00] it didn't matter. You know, I'm not, I'm not too, too old at either edge. I'm just, you know, I'm 64 on, on the apps. And I'm

[00:23:07] **Samantha:** good with that. 'cause I think a lot of people have this fair when they come out of a divorce or, or even a long-term relationship and go back into dating.

[00:23:17] **Samantha:** But then now so much older than they were the last time they were single. So want to do the fair being about the age when you were lying about your age, did you feel like you had to act a certain, were you like

super? Cause I feel like I'd be like. What, what clothes were the 25 year old were, uh, cause I'm thirsty for.

[00:23:39] **Samantha:** Um, so I'd be like so worried about it the whole time and like, seem like I have to have more energy when I get there. So they don't think I'm older than they are

[00:23:47] **Steven Petrow:** the number of years that I stretched. It was three. So it really did not impact my behavior or anything like that. I did think a little bit. Oh, when does that mean?

[00:23:57] **Steven Petrow:** I graduated from college and some of, some of those [00:24:00] details. Um, but I did have, I did also have a practice of when I met someone. The first time I did, I did say, you know, this is, this is my real age. Or if I was going to meet them, I would, I would be upfront about that. And that was just sort of a needless complication.

[00:24:15] **Steven Petrow:** And I remember somebody called me out for lying. It's like, okay, I'm just going to be straightforward about. It's too complicated.

[00:24:22] **Samantha:** I love that. That shows the difference in us. I'm the actress in me is like, how am I going to act younger? Whereas the wordsmith and the kind of researcher and colorist in you is like, I need to work out the facts in case anyone questions me about my history.

[00:24:37] **Steven Petrow:** But also it sounds like you were making, you know, you had a span of nine years, you were stuff like 25. That would, if I had, if I had blocked off a third, I would have been in my forties and that would have taken a lot of I'm thinking about clothes and so on and so forth. Well,

[00:24:55] **Samantha:** I like, I like that. You're back to your truth.

[00:24:59] **Samantha:** It's the [00:25:00] ad break. So it's a perfect time to remind you to hit subscribe, to be notified about more episodes. You can also leave us a lovely review because honestly it makes a difference to the chart positions. And one time I was in the charts next to Michelle Obama and I was really thrilled about it.

[00:25:19] **Samantha:** So it'd be nice to do that again. You could also join in the conversation. Social media. We're on Twitter and Instagram at divorce pod. We have a website, the divorce, social.com. And you can also join us for our

like nineties style divorced chat room experience over on Patrion. So just go to patrion.com/samantha Baines, B a I N E S.

[00:25:45] **Samantha:** And it starts at two pounds a month and we all have lovely and awful and amazing chats. See it. 'cause I write children's books. I wanted to ask you how you think you reacted to well, not [00:26:00] just the divorce, a period of real hardship and lots of grief in your life as a writer. Do you think, because obviously you have a few books to your name and, um, your most recent books.

[00:26:12] **Samantha:** Do you put things I won't do when I get old? Do you think. Books where reactional writing was a way to help you get out of things, or did you not write for a period of time?

[00:26:23] **Steven Petrow:** I did not write for a period of time. Let's say it was probably three to five months. I was just completely shut down. And I remember one of my editors called me and said, it's okay.

[00:26:38] **Steven Petrow:** I understand that. Where you are and we'll be here, you know, when you're ready. Again, a lot of the writing that I've done, whether this book or the columns, I write first person narrative, and I often talk about issues in my life. So I've then wound up writing a fair amount of. My mother's death. Um, and then my [00:27:00] father's and, um, and the grief that came after that, as a way in, in a sense, there it's a therapy for me to try to understand better my feelings and then bring in other, other sources, other people's stories, because I certainly don't have, um, any kind of stranglehold on, on those themes.

[00:27:19] **Steven Petrow:** And, um, so for instance, it's not actually that long ago I wrote a column in the Washington post about. Yeah. And talked about how terrified I had been before these losses of that pain and of what I'd seen in the world. When, when people died, this Bundance of emotion and pain. But one thing I had come to experience with my own grief around those losses was in the way that that feeling stays inside of you.

[00:27:50] **Steven Petrow:** That's a way that individual stays inside of you to a way that you can feel connected to. Someone you loved and it's not the same, but I found it [00:28:00] sort of by changing my perspective on it, comforting rather than disruptive in some way. And, um, and that was really an insight. I only came to, I think, three or four months ago, um, sort of continued to engage with, with grief.

[00:28:17] **Samantha:** What's it like now, because I know having written books myself, and as I said, minor children's books are they're shorter, but I know writing a book is a big endeavor and takes up a lot of your life and time and emotion. How does it feel having a book out now? And not having all of those emotional structures in place, like your marriage and your other half to support you and your parents to support you.

[00:28:47] **Samantha:** Is there a freedom in there of, you know, you were terrified you couldn't dirt, but now you've done it and you're fine. Or do you miss those people being able to share the experience with you? [00:29:00]

[00:29:00] **Steven Petrow:** Because two thoughts come to mind. I remember when I got this box of books, it was the first time I was actually seeing the book.

[00:29:09] **Steven Petrow:** And I don't know if this is true in the UK, but it's become a thing among authors here that you'd kind of do the reveal. You get your box cutter and you open the box and you hold up the book like this. Oh my gosh, I have a book. And I'm like, like, this is my baby. Um, but I remember thinking in that moment, That I had come quite a distance to be able to be holding the book beyond what I would normally, when, what I felt when other books had been published.

[00:29:41] **Steven Petrow:** But did I had traversed this land of pitfalls and emotional minefields to be able to, to get to that point. And that was very affirming. And then I felt a sadness that, um, my parents were not here. Enjoy that success, um, [00:30:00] because they had always been supportive and they would have loved that. And I often feel like when I've.

[00:30:08] **Steven Petrow:** When I was on tour for a while or doing events that, um, especially my mother was present and I I've loved reading stories that, that incorporate my mother. Cause my parents are actually very big players in this book. So, um, they would have had a lot to say about it too. So I guess in, in some ways it's, it's just as well that they're not looking over my shoulder, but I really have missed them in, in, in this.

[00:30:31] **Samantha:** It's funny because I remember my book launch for my first children's book was after my dad had died and just after I'd got divorced. So I'd been writing the book when I was still married. And so I remember that book launch, you know, newly. I don't think I was even officially divorced then, but newly kind of single without a husband, that, to kind of calm me down before everyone arrived to tell me that people were going to arrive.

[00:30:59] **Samantha:** And then my [00:31:00] family being there and my dad had always been. You know, the life and soul of the party and host with the most. And that's why I think maybe I take a little bit of that from him, but I remember my mum sort of like buying everyone around a Prosecco to, um, to kind of bring my dad into things.

[00:31:19] **Samantha:** Cause that's what he would have, even though they were, you know, The wine and the beer complementary, but you know, like as a kind of celebrate every thing. And it's funny, those moments where they're kind of not there, but I did mention my ex in my speech and, um, cause he did encourage me to write that book and it didn't come out until the divorce proceedings were going through.

[00:31:42] **Samantha:** So it meant I didn't have to share any of. Revenue from the book with them. So when,

[00:31:49] **Steven Petrow:** when congratulations,

[00:31:53] **Samantha:** you looking back now, um, you are a few years on, have you had a [00:32:00] moment and maybe it's unboxing your new book, but have you had a moment where you've thought everything's going to be okay now

[00:32:09] **Steven Petrow:** I'm mostly live.

[00:32:12] **Steven Petrow:** Has with all wounds that heal to heal from the inside and they take time. But I feel, I feel healed at this point. I feel whole, you know, and I feel that's in large part because of the work that I've done in the people who've loved me and that I've been able to love back. So, um, I am, I am in a good place these days.

[00:32:34] **Steven Petrow:** It doesn't mean I don't have bumps. I definitely have bumps and I get frustrated with. With dating. And, um, with guys that flake or guys who would misrepresent themselves. But, uh, I, I have come to sort of understand all of that is that is this chapter's adventure. And so when I approach it as an adventure, I'm not disappointed when I have a specific expectation.

[00:32:59] **Steven Petrow:** That's [00:33:00] when there could be troubles. And

[00:33:01] **Samantha:** for anyone listening, who is a gay man in a marriage with a man, and is feeling that sense of shame that you mentioned at the beginning about divorce. Would you have any words of comfort or advice for them?

[00:33:18] **Steven Petrow:** I think people who get divorced or separated regardless of their orientation or identity feel some sense of that.

[00:33:25] **Steven Petrow:** It's part of. Normal. So don't, um, you know, don't medicalize. It don't make, you don't think that there's something wrong with you. It's part of the bundle of feelings that come along with it. And, um, he'd, won't last you'll, you'll, you'll work through it at whatever time and pace that you need, but none of these things are forever.

[00:33:49] **Steven Petrow:** That's certainly the optimist in me. I can't guarantee that everyone will become repartnered. I can't guarantee that for myself, but I think that this process of healing does, does go forward [00:34:00] and, um, you know, around the same time that I got divorced, I. I slipped and I, I. Deep deep wound in my foot. And I remember it took so long to heal.

[00:34:11] **Steven Petrow:** And for the longest time it seemed like it wasn't healing. And I would go to the doctor and she said, be patient it's healing from the inside. And at the very end, you will see that it is healed. And that is exactly what happened, but it was, it was a app metaphor and I was in punished.

[00:34:25] **Samantha:** That was a very apt metaphor.

[00:34:27] **Samantha:** I like that. Thank you so much. It's been so great to char, um, can you remind us about your new book and where people can find it? Yes,

[00:34:36] **Steven Petrow:** it is called stupid things I won't do when I get old and it's both memoir and manifesto about aging. And I tell lots of stories about myself and my parents as we were sort of traversing this terrain.

[00:34:49] **Steven Petrow:** And it is available online at Amazon and other fine book retailers everywhere. And hopefully in London.

[00:34:58] **Samantha:** And, um, where can we find you [00:35:00] on social media and follow your writing exploit? Um,

[00:35:03] **Steven Petrow:** I have a website and it is Steven petro.com. And I'm going to spell that because it's always misspelled. So that's Steven with a V and then P E T R O w.com and all my social, um, is, is link from.

[00:35:17] **Samantha:** Perfect. Well, thank you so much. It's been great to chat.