

Ep #5: Powerful Questions for Widows



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Krista St-Germain

[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

Ep #5: Powerful Questions for Widows

Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode five, Powerful Questions for Widows.

Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, the only podcast that offers a proven process to help you work through your grief to grow, evolve, and create a future you can actually look forward to. Here's your host, certified life coach, grief expert, widow, and mom, Krista St-Germain.

Hey everyone, welcome back to the podcast. I'm so excited today to bring you something that I hope is going to be very useful to you. It's been useful to me. It's been useful to my clients and so I'm excited to teach the idea to you.

I've been preparing for this podcast and sitting here at home in my office. I live in Kansas and I don't know if it's like this where you are, but here, we have all of these cottonwood trees. And right now, it's the time of the year where the cottonwood trees are letting off all of that little fluff. It looks like cotton, but it's just the cottonwood tree seeds. And it's so pretty to look in my back yard because it looks like it's snowing in the middle of summer, which I think is strange and wonderful; perhaps more wonderful because I don't own a pool. I think my parents, who do own a pool, probably strongly disagree with my opinion on the cottonwood trees.

However, that has absolutely nothing to do with what we're going to talk about today. But before we get into that, I love doing listener shout-outs, as you know, and I want to read a couple of reviews that were submitted recently. The first one is from a listener who calls herself A Little Late, and the title of the review is Game On, Mommas.

And it reads, "Just listened to the first podcast and I'm already hooked. I've put myself on the backburner since my husband died because I focused so much on the kids, ages five, 18 months and 18 months. After 18 months, I'm realizing that I need to take care of myself in order to take care of my

Ep #5: Powerful Questions for Widows

three kids. So between therapy, self-care, exercise, and now this podcast, I feel I now have another tool to help me kick the you-know-what out of option-B. Thank you, Krista, for helping so many of us widows out. While I cannot afford to have a life coach, through this podcast, I know I will grow and it will help me move forward in this next chapter. God bless.”

I love this and that’s exactly why I’m doing the podcast. Many of you will never likely work with me one on one, but hopefully the podcast will give you the tools that you need to build that next chapter of your life, the chapter that you can actually look forward to. So thank you for that review.

The next one I want to read is from a listener who calls herself Widowed Mom Brie. And the title of her review is Been Waiting A While for This. “I’ve been a widow for a little over four months. Shortly after becoming a widow, I found Krista’s Facebook group. After coming across the Facebook group, I looked for a podcast, but was disappointed when there wasn’t one. Krista always has amazing advice.” Thank you, Widowed Mom Brie. I appreciate that and I’m glad to have you both as a listener and in the Facebook group.

Okay, let’s get to the topic at hand; powerful questions. I wonder if you’ve given any consideration to the types of questions that you are asking yourself on a regular basis, the types of questions that are floating through your mind. It’s important to give that some consideration because, believe it or not, the types of questions that you’re asking on a regular basis have a lot to do with how you perceive the world.

Your brain has some pretty powerful abilities to filter data. There are so much more data in the world than we can possibly process at one time. Our brain has to have a way to filter what is relevant to us and to our lives and our existence.

So I want you to imagine a nightclub. It’s been a very long time for me, I will tell you, since I have been to a nightclub. But I do recall that in your

Ep #5: Powerful Questions for Widows

average nightclub, outside of the nightclub sits a bouncer. And the bouncer gets to decide who gets in the club and who doesn't.

And much like that bouncer, the filtering system in your brain gets to decide what information gets in and what information doesn't. So, if you've ever been in a crowded room and you've heard the white noise of conversation, you can't really decipher what people are talking about specifically. You can just hear that murmur of conversation. But yet, when someone says your name, your ears perk up and you hear it.

That is your brain filtering information that is relevant to you. This also happens whenever we go to buy something or whenever we start researching something. So, I remember the last time I bought a car, I bought a brand-new minivan, which I swore I would never drive, but that's a story for another day.

I bought a minivan and all of a sudden, it felt like there were more of that particular make and model on the road than before. And I know that's not actually true, but it sure felt like it. And that's because of the way our brain filters information.

Another one of my favorite illustrations of this principle can be found online. If you go to YouTube and search selective attention test, you will find it. Actually, you'll find a number of these types of attention tests. But the one that I'm talking about is the one where there are students passing a basketball. And as the viewer, you are asked to count the number of times that the students wearing white pass the basketball back and forth.

And so you begin to focus and you're counting the passes. Most people get the number of passes correct. But that isn't what's so interesting about this selective attention test. And, spoiler alert, I'm going to spoil it for you. So you can still go ahead and watch it and maybe show it to someone else and see if they can see it.

Ep #5: Powerful Questions for Widows

But what's so fascinating is because our brain has been asked the question of how many passes do the students wearing white pass, that's what it focuses on. And it entirely misses the fact that someone in a gorilla costume walks right into the middle of the circle as the students are passing the ball, stops, waves at the camera, and then keeps walking, and we don't even see it. Most people don't see it.

Some people do; most people don't. And this is because the brain wasn't asking how many gorillas are there. It was asking, how many times does the basketball get passed? And this is why it's such a powerful demonstration because what we think is so real is influenced by the types of questions that we're asking. What we see can be limited by what we think.

So, how can you take advantage of the bouncer in your head? First, I want you to start thinking about some of the types of questions that you might be asking yourself throughout the day. And think about it on a particularly, let's say, bad day, when you're noticing a lot of negative emotion. What are the questions you're asking yourself then?

And specifically as it relates to being a widow, can you relate to any of these questions? Why is my life always so hard? Why do terrible things always happen to me? Why am I so alone? Why doesn't anyone understand what I'm going through? Why aren't my family members helping me more? Why does everybody else get to have their husband and I don't? What's wrong with me? Why can't I get it together? Why am I not further along with my grief by now?

These are the types of questions that my clients are asking themselves. And so if they're doing it, and they're the types of questions I know I asked myself, if they're doing it and if I did it, I wonder if you're doing it. Or maybe it's not even so much about issues related to you being a widow. Maybe it's about dating again, if you're at that stage.

Ep #5: Powerful Questions for Widows

Because what I hear a lot of is, “Why are all the good ones taken? Why does dating have to be so horrible?” Does that sound familiar? Or maybe it’s parenting. Why don’t the kids ever listen to me like they did their dad? Why does it all fall on me as the mom? Why do I always have to be the bad guy? Or perhaps it’s questions you ask yourself at work. Why doesn’t my boss trust me? Why don’t I ever get the big projects?

Think about someone that you don’t like, or maybe someone that you absolutely love, and what are the questions that you ask in your mind about them? Why is he such a jerk? Why is she so rude? But the person who you like, you ask questions like, how did I get so lucky to have them as a friend? Or, how thoughtful are they?

And sometimes, if you notice that that one person that you don’t like and that other person that you adore could do the exact same thing and the person that you don’t like, you would chastise them for it. You would be like, “Yep, see, told you, total jerk, so rude.” And the other person, the friend, would be much more likely to get a pass. You’d say, “Oh she’s just having a bad day. Sometimes she gets like that. Two sides to every story. We don’t exactly know what happened. Cut her some slack.”

I remember this happening with my last boss, or I guess second to last boss, before I left the job that I worked at when my husband died. I loved my boss. He had been my boss for a number of years and I connected with him so well and thought so highly of him and appreciated everything about him.

He gave part of the eulogy at Hugo’s service. He just meant a lot to me and I thought he was a wonderful boss. But not everyone did. And there were some people that, even though in my mind he was treating them just like he was treating me, he couldn’t win. There was nothing he could do to win those people over because they had so firmly decided that they didn’t like him.

Ep #5: Powerful Questions for Widows

And this is how the bouncer in our brain works. It lets only evidence of our beliefs into our awareness, into the club. And so because I was asking questions about my boss, like why am I so lucky to have him as a boss, my brain kept showing me all the reasons I was lucky to have him. It showed me all the times he went to battle for me, all the times he defended me, all the times he supported my growth and development.

And when he gave me constructive feedback, I didn't see it as him being mean because my belief about him was that he supported me and that he was a good boss and that he was someone that I loved working for. That wasn't the experience that other people were having because the bouncer in their brain was only letting evidence into the club that backed up what they were thinking about. And that's one of the reasons we can experience the exact same person in such different ways.

Think about, for instance, President Trump. What kinds of questions do you ask yourself about him? Because clearly, he's quite polarizing, people have extremely different opinions. Some people love him, some people hate him, and we all feel very justified in our beliefs.

And remember, when you have the bouncer in your brain, that powerful filtering system that we all have, then our brain finds what we're looking for; not only with our thoughts, but with the questions that we ask. So when we ask, how did we get to have such an awful president, our brain finds evidence to validate that belief that he's an awful president. And when we ask, what's wrong with all these tax and spend liberals, we find those answers too because whatever we're looking for, our brain will show us evidence of and it will block out evidence to the contrary.

That's why we can read the same article, we can hear the same news story, and depending on our political stand, our beliefs, what we read will just affirm what we believe. And this isn't a sign that anything has gone

Ep #5: Powerful Questions for Widows

wrong. Actually, it's just a sign that the filtering system in our brain is doing its job.

But what that also means is that it continues to bias how we see the world. And so we want to know this so we can be careful in choosing, on purpose, the types of questions that we ask because when we choose questions with a negative belief built in, we have to understand that that is what our brain is going to show us more evidence of. And therefore, that is what we're going to believe even more strongly. And we won't even see evidence that doesn't line up with the negative belief that's built into that question.

So you want to ask yourself, where am I asking questions with beliefs built in that I really don't want in my life? And so before I lose some of you, because I can hear you and you're saying, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, Krista, but it is hard to be a widow, I do think I should be further along with my grief. People don't understand what I'm going through. My family members aren't helping me." And I'm not arguing with you there.

Whether or not you believe a thought, whether or not a thought feels true should not be the litmus test used to determine whether you want to keep thinking that thought. Just because it feels true, doesn't mean it's useful. Of course, a thought feels true because we've been thinking it for a while. Any thought we think for a while will feel true simply because our brain is doing what brains do.

It's going out and it's gathering evidence to support what we believe. And when we're asking ourselves these questions with negative beliefs baked in, things that we don't want more evidence of in our lives, then what we're doing is training our brain to focus on bringing us more of what we don't want.

Ep #5: Powerful Questions for Widows

Now, we're also not going to go to the land of fairies and unicorns. That's not what I'm suggesting. So I'm not suggesting that instead of asking yourself, why does it have to be so hard to be a widow, that you would ask yourself, why does it have to be so easy to be a widow or why is it so easy to be a widow?

No, no, no, that would never work. You would never believe it. It would never serve you. But, how about, how is it true that I'll get through this and be okay? How is it true that even though it is hard, I'm up for the challenge? How is it possible that I can rise to the occasion on the worst of days? How will I support myself in my healing today? How will I take good care of myself today? How will I enjoy the memory of my husband today? What small step will I take today to take care of me? What is good about today? What could I give myself credit for that I haven't been? What would someone who loves me tell me right now? What is likable about that person? What do we have in common? How am I amazing at my job? How am I amazing as a parent? How am I doing such a good job? Why are my kids so fantastic? How did they get to be so resilient? How am I so lucky to be their mom? What is going well?

Change the question until it feels believable and good to you. Change the question until it assumes the positive so that your brain starts looking for evidence of what you want to see and stops focusing on what you don't want to see, not because what you don't want to see couldn't be found, but because you want less of it, because you want to create on purpose and you want to use this most powerful instrument that you have at your disposal, your brain, to do that work for you instead of just defaulting to the same old questions you've never really give thought to.

So, that's what I have for you today. I hope you'll give some thought to the questions that you're asking yourself. What are those questions that you're asking without intention? And what are the questions you would like to ask

Ep #5: Powerful Questions for Widows

with intention so that you can start finding more evidence for the parts of life that you want to create more of?

Thanks so much for listening to today's podcast, everyone. If you haven't yet, I would love it if you would take just a couple of minutes to rate, review the podcast. Reviews are the way that the podcast becomes more searchable, more discoverable for other widowed moms who might like to find it as well. So take a few minutes, rate and review, and of course, subscribe. That way you won't ever have to worry about missing an episode.

And remember, for the first few weeks of the podcast, to celebrate our launch, I am giving away five \$100 Amazon gift cards. And for rules on how you can win, just go to coachingwithkrista.com/podcastlaunch.

Alright, I love you, everyone. I hope you have an amazing day. Remember, you've got this, and I'll see you on the next episode. Take care.

Thank you for listening to this week's episode of *The Widowed Mom Podcast*. If you like what you've heard and want to learn more, head over to coachingwithkrista.com.