

Ep #10: Lessons I've Learned Since My Husband Died



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[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 10, Lessons I've Learned Since My Husband Died.

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 there, welcome to the podcast. How are you doing, I wonder? I think about you guys out there, you ladies, I should say, listening to the podcast. I read all of your reviews. I read all of the emails that you send me and I love you. So I just wanted you to know that.

So in my world, it is – and I know you've heard me talk about this so many times, you might be tired of hearing about it, but it is my world. So, in my world I am T-minus three days until Heather's Camp. And I wanted to share this with you because even though I am a life coach and even though I coach people on these things all the time, I am constantly amazed at some of the revelations that I have with my own coaching sometimes.

And earlier in the month, I was thinking, and really even in late June, I was thinking that there's no possible way that I would be ready for Heather's Camp this year, especially no possible way I could do it and actually get the sleep that I prefer to get and the self-care that I prefer to have in my life.

July is always my busiest month, for sure. But this July was way busier, way more going on in my business this month; a trip to Dallas to meet with my coach. And Heather's Camp is earlier in the month than normal, so I kind of rolled into this time frame thinking, "Well, Krista, you made your bed, and now you're going to lie in it and there's really not much I can do about it and I'm definitely not going to be as prepared."

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So I was feeling pretty overwhelmed because of those thoughts and pretty behind and a little bit stressed. And I got coached on the issue and I realized, I could actually choose to believe that I'm more prepared than I've ever been, which sounds like fantasy land, so I hear you if that's your immediate thought; how could you possibly believe that you're more prepared than you've ever been if you're not?

But you would not believe what that did for me. Every time I started feeling overwhelmed or stressed, I reminded my brain that I was going to live into the thought that I'm more prepared than I've ever been. And so I kind of imagined, if I actually believed that I was more prepared than I've ever been, how would I be feeling? And because of how I would be feeling, how would I be behaving?

And it became apparent very quickly to me that that was a thought that could help me; I'm more prepared than I've ever been. So I told myself that I'm more prepared than I've ever been, that made me feel confident and motivated, kind of excited, and then that fueled so much more productive action than the spinning and the second-guessing and the unproductive action that was coming from this sense of overwhelm and stress that I was creating with my thoughts before.

So literally, I am now more prepared for camp than I have ever been. I've actually been almost fully packed for a week. What? I usually don't pack until the night before, and that doesn't even count all of the paperwork and prep-work for this year. That just came together nicely.

So, if you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed somewhere in your life, I want you to stop for a second and look at your thinking. I want you to think about what you're telling yourself that's creating overwhelm and stress. And then, what can you tell yourself that would create something else? Because overwhelm and stress are always optional. They just are.

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So tell yourself something that's useful and do what I did; I'm more prepared than I've ever been. And presto, I actually created that for myself. I probably wouldn't share so much about Heather's Camp with other people, but you ladies, you are special and you know. And it also, of course, has special meaning for me because my husband was killed in an accident on the way home from Heather's Camp. So there's a lot going into the actual event, and then, of course, all the thoughts and feelings that come with the planning, but then also the emotion of it all.

Anyway, before we jump into today's topic, I want to take a second to do another listener shout-out. So, you might remember, I have a competition going, a little fun game to celebrate the podcast launch where I'm giving away five \$100 gift certificates to Amazon. And you can go to coachingwithkrista.com/podcastlaunch. That's where you'll find exactly the instructions of how to review the podcast and enter yourself into that drawing.

But today, I want to read a review from someone who identifies herself as Jeanflying solo. The title of her review is Thank You and it reads, "I have inhaled every episode and cannot wait for the next one. I sit here and shake my head and yell, finally she gets it. I'm a recent widow with an 11-year-old son trying to figure it all out; house stuff, work, yard, et cetera. And it's been so affirming to listen to someone speak to what this new life is really like. Still grieving plan-A hard, but beginning to be open to the possibility of a plan-B."

Jean, I love this. I'm so glad that it's been useful to you, and for sure, we're all grieving plan-A. But plan-B is available to all of us, so thanks for the review.

I wanted to do something a little bit different for this episode. So, by the time you've listened to this, it will have just been the third anniversary of my

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husband Hugo's passing, August 1st 2016. And since then, I have grown so much.

My life has changed so much. I have changed so much. And so I wanted to share with you 25 – although I am sure there are so many more than 25. But I wanted to share with you 25 of the lessons that I have learned since Hugo died, hoping that these lessons will also benefit you in your journey as well.

Some of them are worthy of an entire podcast episode on their own, so I might come back and do that with some of them. But for today, I won't dive too deeply. I'll just share those lessons with you.

So, number one, your past has no power over you unless you decide it does. What's done is done and you can choose how you want to think about it now. And how you think about it now will determine how you experience it now. Things happen. You get to decide what to make them mean, no exceptions.

Number two, you are far stronger than you ever imagined; promise.

Number three, post-traumatic growth is real. Your life can be better because of your loss if you choose to make it so. You don't have to. There's no right or wrong, but post-traumatic growth is an option for all of us.

Number four, decisions are only right or wrong if you think they are. Stop worrying that you'll make the wrong decision.

Number five, you have full authority over your thoughts, feelings, actions, and results. No one else can make you think, feel, or do anything, no one.

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Number six, you are 100% worthy of love. If someone doesn't love you, it is a reflection of their ability to love, not your worth. And I don't care what you've done, what you haven't done. I don't care what you've thought, what you haven't thought. Your worth is nonnegotiable, 100%, nothing you can do about it, so stop doubting your worth.

Number seven, creating something different in your future means living into a new belief because what you believe now only creates more of the same. And you don't even need to know how you're going to create something different. You just need to start working on the belief that it is possible.

Number eight – and this one is big for me – it is not your job to shelter your children from pain. Your job is to love them. Pain is a part of life. Our children are going to go through the experiences that they're going to go through. And that will make them resilient. So it is never our job to shelter them from the human experience. Our job is to love them fiercely.

Number nine, Negative emotion is necessary and valuable. Without despair, we have no context for joy. The presence of negative emotion doesn't mean that something has gone wrong. It's a part of being a human. It's going to happen and we may as well lean into it.

Number 10, when you are willing to allow any emotion without acting on it, without trying to avoid it or numb it or without stopping yourself because it's there, the doors of possibility open wide. Emotions can't hurt us. Learn to allow them to be there.

Number 11, you can feel love whenever you want. You can love anyone, no matter who they are, no matter what they did, no matter what other people say, and no one can take that away from you. Feeling love is always your choice and it always feels good. You don't need anyone to change before you can feel love for them.

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Number 12, you only worry about getting approval from others when you haven't given it fully to yourself. This is why we worry so much about trying to get other people to approve of us, because on some level, we agree with them that the faults they find are true, and we're not okay with it. So get right with yourself and you won't worry so much about what other people think of you.

Number 13, no one can make you happy or hurt your feelings. I feel like the record should just scratch and stop right here. No one can make you happy. No one can hurt your feelings. Only you can do that and you do it with your thoughts. Thoughts cause feelings; not people, not words, not actions. No one is so powerful that they can create your emotions for you. I'll definitely do lots of podcasts diving into this subject because it's so, so transformative when you fully get it.

Number 14, forgiving is not equivalent to condoning. You can forgive when you are ready to stop feeling angry or resentful. Forgiveness is always your choice. You never have to forgive, but when you do, it's because you're ready to stop feeling the hurt and the anger and the resentment and forgiving has nothing to do with condoning someone's behavior. Again, another episode entirely on this is definitely in the future.

Number 15, your only limits in life are caused by your mind. They are all optional. And I know, if you're looking at your life and you're feeling limited and you're saying, "But Krista, my finances. But Krista, my responsibilities. But Krista, my kids. But Krista, my husband died." I hear you, but I promise you, those are the circumstances of your life. Those are the facts of your life. But the way that you limit yourself is by the way that you choose to interpret those facts. And we all do it. I've done it so much. But if you want to remove limits from your life, you have to know that they come only from your mind.

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Number 16 – and this is right on the heels of number 15 – question your thoughts, even and especially the ones that feel like facts. Some of the most limiting thoughts we have are the ones that we don't know are thoughts. We just think we're making observations about the way the world is, about the way we are, about the way our life is.

And we have no idea that we're telling a story that's optional, that we're thinking about something in a way that creates it. So question everything, all those beliefs, all those thoughts, even the ones that feel like facts. Find those thoughts that serve you and replace the ones that don't; not because it's right or wrong, not because it's good or bad, not because there is some sort of moral value to thinking, but because some thoughts serve you and some thoughts don't and we need to question all of them.

Number 17, accept responsibility for 100% of the results in your life. Notice I did not say accept blame. Notice I did not say feel guilty about or shame yourself over. Accept responsibility for 100% of the results in your life. I remember learning this from Jack Canfield. He said, "E plus R equals O." E stood for event. Event plus R, response, equals outcome. We can't control the events, but we can always choose our response, and those two things together are what determine the outcome.

So when you accept 100% responsibility for the results in your life, the outcomes, then you stay in such an empowered place that you're never a victim and you can always make change. So accept responsibility. Don't do it from a blaming shaming space. Do it from an empowering space because when you accept the results you've created, you can create different results if you want to.

Number 18, growth equals discomfort. Embrace both. I think we're on this planet to grow, to evolve, to become the next best version of ourselves. And in order to do that, we have to be uncomfortable. It's how we're wired. Our primitive brain just wants us to stay safe in the cave, not take risks. So,

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of course, every time we go to grow, it's going to feel uncomfortable. And the sooner we get good at feeling discomfort, the more we'll be able to grow.

Now, you might be telling me, "Listen, sister, I have plenty of discomfort." I don't mean the pain discomfort. I don't mean the loss associated with discomfort. I mean when you decide there is something in life that you want, when you decide there is a way you want to live that you aren't currently living or there's something that you want to create that you haven't yet created, I just want you to remember that it's going to feel uncomfortable.

And when you notice that it feels uncomfortable, I don't want you to make that mean something's gone wrong because then you'll always stop yourself from growing. So if you go into growth expecting that it's going to feel uncomfortable and embracing that, then you'll be able to create what you want in your life.

Number 19, you can make friends with grief, or you can let it be a big scary monster that frightens you when you notice it. You get to decide. Imagine if every time you felt the emotions of grief – and I know that's a really broad term. But if every time grieving caught you off-guard, if every time you thought you were doing okay and then, wham, all of a sudden you've got anger or loneliness or sadness or any of it, if every time you noticed grief you made grief out to be a big monster, that won't serve you at all.

So if you want to, you can just decide that grief is here because you lost someone you deeply loved and that grief is supposed to be a part of that experience. You can just bring it along for the ride. It doesn't have to be as big of a deal. You can just make friends with it instead of making it out to be this big scary monster that attacks you when you're least expecting it. you choose.

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Number 20, we do things because of how we feel or how we think we'll feel without realizing that we are the ones creating our feelings. This is big. Feelings are a product of the way that we think. And when you hold yourself back from doing something because you're worried that you're going to be disappointed, you have to remind yourself, the only reason you would feel disappointed is because of a thought you had about what you did.

So it's always your option to be your own cheerleader and decide that you can be proud of yourself even if you fall short of the goal. You don't have to make yourself feel guilty or ashamed for not getting it quite right. We want these things because of how we think we're going to feel and we shy away from them because of how we think we're going to feel. But guess what – our thoughts are causing our feelings, which means we don't have to be so scared. We don't have to be so worried about a negative emotion. We just have to own that we're the ones creating them and that they aren't that big of a deal in the first place.

Number 21, humans don't wake up in the morning deciding to suck at life. I firmly believe this. I believe we are all doing the best we can with what we know and compassion for others, compassion for self is always what feels best, even when you fall terribly short of your expectations, even when other people around you fall terribly short of your expectations, we're all waking up in the morning deciding and trying to do the best we can with where we are. None of us ever wake up in the morning purposefully trying to get it wrong. So offer yourself and offer those around you compassion, knowing that we're all just humans doing the best job that we know how to do.

Number 22, if you want something different in life, you have to start thinking differently. Because when you think differently, that will make you feel differently. And that will fuel different actions. All of it is connected; the way you think, the way you feel, and the way you act. And none of it is outside

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of you. All of it is within your control. We always get to choose how we want to think about things. And that will determine how we feel and then that will determine how we show up. So it's all connected and it's all within your ability to control.

Number 23, friends are precious. Cherish them. I learned this, my goodness, so blessed to have so many friends rally around me after Hugo died. And what interested me was how many people rallied and how many people I became friends with that I never would have expected would have supported me in the way that they did. And then sometimes the opposite, where people I thought would be more supportive than I perceived them to be didn't end up showing up for me in the way that I expected.

They had their own thoughts and own hang-ups and own worries and concerns about grief. As a culture, we just don't always get it right. But the friends I have, I now appreciate so much more than I ever have before. So, friends are definitely precious. Cherish them.

24, now, you may not know this yet but life coaching is the secret sauce. I am so grateful that I stumbled onto life coaching and that I gave myself the opportunity to actually have a coach and do the work. I will always have a coach. If you don't have a coach, I highly recommend you get one.

Last but not least, number 25, this is your life; decide to be in love with it. And I know, you may look at your life and you may say, "But Krista, this is not the one I asked for. This is not how I imagined it would be." And I hear you. I did not imagine Hugo would die when he did. I had a brain full of hopes and dreams, future possibilities and a very large bucket list in all of the ways that I imagined our life together would be.

But yet, this is your one precious life. And if you wait until things go according to plan to decide to love your precious life, you will miss it. So you get to decide right now, just as your life is, exactly as it is when you

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wake up in the morning and you look around you, you get to be the one to decide to be in love with who you are, with the choices you're making, with what you are capable of creating, and with how you choose to spend your time.

And by deciding to be in love with all of those things, you will create even more of what you want. You won't waste the time that you've been given lamenting what could have been. Look around at what you have and decide on purpose to love it.

Alright, that's what I have for you in episode 10. It's a little bit of an emotional time for me, as I'm sure you can relate when we approach these anniversaries. And it's a good time for me to reflect on how my life has changed, on what I've learned, and hoping that what I've learned will also benefit you wherever you are in your journey. So, I love you, I hope you have an amazing week and I'll see you next time on the podcast. Alright, you've got this. 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.