

## Ep #21: When People Don't Understand



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Krista St-Germain**

[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

## Ep #21: When People Don't Understand

Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 21, When People Don't Understand.

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 back to another episode of the podcast. Holy cow, mid-October, I have no idea what happened and how it went by so fast, but here we are. And today, I want to talk about when people don't understand because part of learning to move through this widowed mom experience is learning how to deal with the people in our lives, because we don't live in a vacuum, right?

There are people around us at every turn and many of them don't understand what we've been through or what we're struggling with. We're surrounded by people who have not walked in our shoes; our friends, our family, our coworkers, even our children.

So, if you've ever felt frustrated or misunderstood, lonely, isolated, if you've wished people could just get what you've been through and understand why it's so hard and cut you some more slack, then you picked a good episode.

Before we jump in though, I want to give you a heads up. As you listen to this episode, you might notice yourself feeling emotions you didn't expect. You might feel a bit defensive, maybe even a little threatened. It's okay. Just be curious.

Many of you won't feel that way, but for those that do, I want to offer that it makes sense. Our minds already perceive that our survival has been

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threatened, right? Your husband died. Your whole foundation was shaken. It's logical that your sensitivity to perceived threats is already on red alert.

Your fight or flight instinct might be understandably on overdrive. So if you notice defensiveness, it's okay. Just let it be there. Have some compassion for yourself. Don't make it mean anything's gone wrong. Try to stay open and curious to what I have to offer. Deal?

You know that one of my big goals is to reach a million women with this podcast. And one of the things that is necessary for me to do that is for listeners like you to review the podcast because that's what helps make it more searchable.

So I want to review and thank a listener who calls herself Evan and Liv's Mom. The title of her review, five-star review, thank you very, very much, I appreciate it – the title of her review is Thank You.

And she wrote, "I'm so happy to have found these podcasts. All of the topics are things I've wondered and struggled with as a new widow. Krista brings clarity into my life and I feel empowered after listening to each episode. I can't thank you enough."

I'm so glad to hear that, Evan and Liv's Mom. That's why I do the podcast. And if you're getting value out of it, I'd be so grateful if you would take a few minutes to review it, actually write a review in Apple Podcasts, or wherever it is that you listen to this podcast.

Okay, let's talk about the topic at hand. I'm guessing that when you saw the title of this episode, When People Don't Understand, that you might have imagined I would teach you how to make them understand, that I might offer you ways you could say it more clearly or teach you how to communicate more calmly and show them exactly what's going on for you

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so that they can get it because you're probably thinking that the solution to this problem of them not understanding is for them to actually understand.

But, surprise, surprise, that is not what this episode is about. In fact, if I were to teach you tactics like that, I wouldn't actually be addressing the root of the issue. I would just be trying to help you put a Band-Aid on it. It would be like me telling you to take some Tylenol when you have a rock in your shoe. Maybe it's useful, but it's temporary at best. That's not how I roll.

So, instead, get ready. I want to offer you that other people understanding is not the solution and that their lack of understanding is not the problem. I will say that again; other people's lack of understanding is not the problem we perceive it to be.

And, stay with me, this is actually good news because imagine if the only answer to this challenge is that other people understand. Imagine if the only way you could stop feeling lonely, isolated, misunderstood, disconnected, discouraged, disheartened, if the only way for those feelings to stop was for other people to get you and what you've been through.

If you couldn't feel the sense of connection or belonging or validation, confirmation, peace, if any of these feelings were dependent upon what's going on in someone else's mind, then you would be in a pretty powerless place because you'd be depending on other people to change, depending on other people to think differently, to behave differently in order for you to feel okay. That's no bueno, ladies.

Maybe it will happen. Maybe I could teach you some tactics that would help other people understand. Maybe other people will change the way they think. But waiting until they do, suspending your wellbeing with hopes that they will is problematic. In order for that to happen, you would have to be a mind-control ninja.

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You would have to be capable of changing what's going on inside the minds of other people, which, as far as I know, is not possible for any of us. Maybe it's possible in Star Wars and Marvel movies, but otherwise, that's about it. It's hard enough to change what's going on in our own mind, let alone trying to change what's going on in other people's minds.

Think of all the behaviors we want to change in ourselves that we struggle to change. How could we ever delegate our happiness to whether or not other people change their behavior?

So if this were the only solution, that people genuinely need to understand, then we would continually expend our energy, waste our energy worrying about whether other people understand us, trying to change their minds, trying to morph into some weird version of ourselves so that they could get us, focusing on things that are totally out of control. And then we would be preventing ourselves from getting to feel the feelings we so badly want to feel because of our belief that they don't understand and they need to.

So, let's back up just a little bit and ask ourselves why we think other people need to understand. And I think it's important to note that, as humans, we want to feel loved and connected. In fact, our primitive brain is wired for this.

Think back to when we lived in caves. It was very important to have a tribe of people in order to stay alive. We needed the clan in order to live. So the idea of getting kicked out of the clan, banned from the tribe, would have been detrimental to our physical survival. And we still have that primitive wiring driving our perceived need to feel connection with other humans.

This is why rejection is so scary and why we go to such great lengths to avoid it. So knowing that this is already how we're wired, and then our husband dies. So now, we are experiencing disconnection on a level we've never known. We have lost our person. It feels threatening, scary, isolating.

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It challenges our identity, our sense of safety, it puts on shaky, very shaky ground.

And this is the part we can't control. So let's just stop there and show ourselves some compassion. It makes sense that based on the way our brain is wired, that we would already be feeling disconnected, lonely, and isolated.

But here's where we add insult to injury. Here's where we give ourselves the old double whammy; when we create our own suffering and we don't even know we're doing it. Because we think that in order for us to feel connected and understood and validated and safe and loved and normal, that other people need to understand.

And we tell ourselves, "They should cut me some slack. I wish they would understand. Nobody gets me. It wouldn't be so hard if people just understood how hard it is. Or maybe since they don't understand me, maybe there's something wrong with me."

And then, because we think that they don't understand, we feel misunderstood and we feel alone. And because what we do is fueled by how we feel, when we feel misunderstood or alone, guess what we're more likely to do. We're more likely to isolate ourselves. We're less likely to open up.

So then, we give people even less information. We actually decrease the likelihood that they could understand us. So now we're losing, they're losing, everyone's losing because of what our brain is making their thoughts and behaviors mean because we don't know that they don't need to understand us. And maybe we're wrong in assuming that they don't.

And sometimes, we think they should get us or we feel judged when we think they don't. and then when we feel judged, we turn right back around,

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as humans do, and we judge them right back and we defend ourselves, and then we create even less connection and less understanding and more isolation and less validation, all on accident.

One of my coaching clients, Michelle, her husband died and eventually she decided she wanted to date again. And big surprise, her teenagers did not understand at all. She was very concerned – well, that's not true. Some of her children understood. Some of them didn't. And some of them voiced it rather loudly.

She was also very concerned that people in the community wouldn't understand. And that caused her to second guess herself, to not enjoy her relationship with this new wonderful person, to hide it from her children, to not give them the opportunity to get used to him being around, not give them the opportunity to get used to him and get to know him.

She hid it from her community, and that created actually less connection for her with her children and in this relationship because she was thinking that her kids didn't understand and they should, or that the community didn't understand and they should.

Another one of my clients, Valarie, had the same thoughts about her parents and when she would make choices about how to spend time with her kids and how to spend the holidays, what vacations to go on, what after-school activities they should do, how much time they would spend with her parents. She thought that they didn't understand and were judging her for her choices, which made her feel naturally defensive.

And then, when she felt defensive, she judged them right back and she looked for all the ways that they were misunderstanding her, which just created more misunderstanding and less connection, and then they were less and less involved in her life.

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So here's the truth; even I don't understand what it's like to be you. I'm a widow. I'm a mom. I relate. I empathize, but even I don't truly understand what it's like to walk your walk. I have not lived your life. I don't know what you think and what you feel.

It's never really possible for someone, even someone with the best of intentions, to see life from our perspective. No one will have the experience we've had because it's uniquely ours. And that's okay. Other people won't understand. They totally won't get it.

They don't need to get it. It is not their job to get it. We don't have to lose connections with other people in our lives by marrying ourselves to the thought that they should understand us, that we need them to know what it's like, that they need to modify their expectations appropriately to understand where we're coming from and why we're thinking and feeling and doing things this way. And we're doing this to our self.

We're causing our own suffering accidentally. We're creating this sense of disconnection with our own brain because we're so insistent that other people need to understand.

So I want to offer you that you consider what it would be like to allow people to not understand, to understand that they don't understand. What would it be like to stop telling yourself that you can't feel better until they get you? They don't get you. How could they? Half the time, you don't even get you, right? I know that's true for me.

I don't understand what's going on in my brain half the time, how could I possibly expect someone else to understand. Other people don't get us and that's okay. And you can still love them and be open with them and live your truth, even if they don't understand.

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You can still believe that you're doing a great job, that you're doing the best job you can, that you're handling it well, that you're not alone, even if they don't understand, you can like the way you are showing up in the world. You can feel connected. You can feel validated. You can feel normal because of how you choose to think about the people in your life and the way that you're living and the choices you're making.

So your best bet is to stop worrying about whether or not they understand and to work on showing love and compassion or yourself, and love and compassion for them, and let other people not get you. Other people don't have to understand. It is not a problem that needs to be fixed.

Alright, beautiful woman, that is what is on my mind today. I hope it is helpful to you. And hey, if you've liked this, did you know that you can work with me? Sometimes, I don't think I do a good enough job of actually telling you that you can coach with me.

In fact, I am now accepting applications for a new group coaching program that I've created, which I'm super excited about because it's going to allow me to help so many more of you than I can help in a one on one coaching setting. But it is limited, starting with eight women. That's it. We're starting November 1<sup>st</sup>.

I record this podcast a little bit in advance, so I'm not sure at the time of this recording how many spots are open, but all you need to do is go to [coachingwithkrista.com](http://coachingwithkrista.com), check out the Work With Me tab, and click on request a consultation. You will see an application. You just fill it out, be honest. It's not going to be a good fit for everyone, but just be honest, I'll review it, I'll get back with you if I think that what I have to offer you is what you need, and then we'll take it from there and I'll give you all the details.

So, first come first served. The first eight are going to get the best price I ever offer for this new group. If you're interested, go apply, nothing to lose.

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Alright, remember, I love you and you've got this. I'll see you next week. Take care.

Ready to start building a future you can actually look forward to? Get a free copy of Krista's Love Your Life Again Game Plan, and learn her three-step process so you can stop feeling stuck and start creating your next great chapter. No matter what you've been through, your past does not have to define what's possible in your future.

Text the word PLAN to 1-858-widows-1, or visit [coachingwithkrista.com/plan](http://coachingwithkrista.com/plan) and get Krista's Love Your Life Again Game Plan delivered straight to your inbox. A future you love is still possible and you are worth it. Text the word PLAN to 1-858-widows-1, or visit [coachingwithkrista.com/plan](http://coachingwithkrista.com/plan) and get your free game plan today.