

## Ep #22: The Thought-Feeling-Action Connection



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Krista St-Germain**

[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

## Ep #22: The Thought-Feeling-Action Connection

Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 22, The Thought-Feeling-Action connection.

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.

Hello there, my Widowed Mom friend – friends, plural. Sometimes I feel like I'm talking to a bunch of you at one time, and sometimes I feel like I'm talking to just one of you. I like the idea of both, by the way.

So how are you doing? I hope you're doing well. It is so beautiful outside here. I cannot tell you, I almost wanted to take my microphone outside and just record out there. But I figured you might not appreciate the sound of my dog, Sadie, in the background or the squirrels, so here I am in my home office recording this episode of the podcast for you today.

So, before we jump into it, I want to take a chance to read a listener review. I appreciate all the listener reviews. I know you all know this, if you've been listening to me. It really is the way that this podcast becomes discoverable by other widows.

So this review is from Cheralyn. And Cheralyn wrote, "Thank you so much for doing this podcast. My husband has been gone for two and a half years after a long time battling multiple sclerosis and dementia. I love your attitude about it and you know how much we can judge ourselves. I feel like I'm finally processing and moving through my grief." The pleasure, Cheralyn, truly is all mine.

I also, I'm not going to lie, I love reading comments just because this is why I do this, to know that it makes a difference in your life, that it helps you sometimes just get through the day or that you learn something from the

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podcast that maybe you felt less alone just makes it all worthwhile for me because it is a labor of love and your feedback just really helps keep me motivated and going.

Alright, let's go ahead and jump into today's topic; the thought-feeling-action connection. Did you know that there is a connection between the thoughts you think, the feelings you feel, and the actions you do or don't take?

I didn't know this for a really long time. I think maybe I understood conceptually that there were connections, but I didn't really understand the true nature of those connections. I didn't understand the causal connection between my thoughts, my feelings, and my actions. In other words, until my coach broke it down for me, which is why I'm going to break it down for you, I did not understand how powerful I was.

I did not understand why sometime I felt motivated and other times I didn't. I didn't understand why sometimes I felt insecure and sometimes I felt confident, and why sometimes I would take the kinds of actions that I wanted to take, and sometimes I just couldn't seem to figure out how to get myself to do the things that I wanted to do.

And I think this is really information we should all have, especially as widows because now things feel probably more confusing than ever, more overwhelming than ever. You probably find yourself feeling more frustrated than ever, more doubtful than ever. And there are probably all sorts of things that you either want to do that you haven't figured out how to get yourself to do, or you wish you could do but maybe you don't think you're capable of doing.

And so I want to break this down for you step by step. Later, I will probably teach you the rest of the story, which is a full tool that I teach all of my Widowed Mom clients. I believe it's the secret to the universe. It really is a

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tool that we can use to solve any problem, or at least understand how anything in the world has been created and figure out what we want to do about that.

But today, I'm just going to teach you a portion of that, and that is the thought-feeling-action connection. So here's the basics. Then I'm going to give you some examples. Then I'm going to give you some homework.

The basics are that thoughts cause feelings, not things that happen to us in the world, but our thoughts about them. Our thoughts are what cause our emotions. And emotions, feelings, are what fuel us to do things, or to not do things. They are all connected. One causes the other.

So it's a connection we want to understand so that we can start looking for how it's playing out in our lives. So your thoughts cause your feelings. Your feelings drive your actions, or your inactions. What you think creates how you feel and how you feel determines what you do. It really is that simple.

So let me give you some examples specifically that I have talked through with my clients or that you might relate to as a widow. So, maybe you have your husband's stuff and you've been wanting to deal with it but you haven't yet. You're not exactly sure why.

Dealing with your husband's stuff would be an action, making all the decisions about your husband's stuff, going through it, deciding what to do, that's an action. The reason you haven't done it yet is simply because of a feeling.

So I'm going to give you an example here; maybe you're feeling weak. That's an emotion, right, a feeling. And maybe, because thoughts create our feelings, maybe the reason you're feeling weak is because you're thinking the thought, "I can't handle it." So the thought, "I can't handle it,"

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creates the feeling of weak, which fuels inaction and has you not making decisions about your husband's stuff.

Now, there could be many emotions that you're feeling that would keep you from taking this particular action. And there could be lots of thoughts that you're thinking responsible for that emotion. I'm just giving you examples.

Now, conversely, if you believed that you were strong enough to handle this and more, then that thought would create a different feeling, perhaps strong. And because feelings are what drive us as humans to do things, they're what fuel our behavior, if you're feeling strong, you would be much more likely to go about the work of making decisions about your husband's belongings.

Let me give you another example. Let's say that you are believing that you're a horrible mom. Now, many of us had that thought well before our husbands died, that we weren't cutting the mustard as moms. But regardless, right, let's say that you think you're a horrible mom.

When you think that, it's going to create a feeling, an emotion. The chances are, it's something like self-doubt. And when you're feeling the emotion of self-doubt, if that's fueling your behavior, you're probably going to, let's say, avoid difficult issues as a parent, right? You're going to maybe be more likely to stick your head in the sand or put off implanting a consequence or avoid having a conversation with your child about something.

So we have a thought, that thought creates a feeling, and the feeling is what makes us do or not do what we do or don't do. Conversely, if your belief was, "I'm the perfect mom for my child," that might create an emotion like calm. And if you felt calm, you would be much more likely to have the conversation with your child, right? To not avoid parenting, to not stick your head in the sand.

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Or maybe that thought would make you feel confident. Different thoughts cause different feelings for all people, but it's important to understand the connection, that the thoughts in our brain cause the emotions we feel, which fuel our behavior. So simple and incredibly useful to understand.

Here's another one; let's say you want to apply for a promotion or ask for a raise. Maybe that's something you've been thinking about doing. That's an action you would like to take, but you haven't been able to make yourself do it yet. Maybe you've been nervous, hesitant. That's a feeling. If you're nervous or hesitant, you're probably not going to take the action that you want to take.

Why would you be nervous or hesitant? Well, thoughts cause feelings, so maybe you're thinking something like, I'm not qualified, or they might not give it to me, or they might tell me no. So those thoughts would cause, you, any human, most likely, to feel nervous or hesitant and then the action that we take is actually inaction.

We don't put ourselves out there. We don't ask for the raise. We don't apply for the promotion or the new job. But what if you believed instead the thought that you were qualified or that you're capable of learning. Then those thoughts would create different feelings. Maybe you would be feeling determined, or maybe qualified. And from those emotions, you would take different actions. You would ask for the raise. You'd apply for the promotion, the new job.

So what is it in your life? What is the action that you're taking that you don't understand why you're doing it? What is the action that you want to take that you haven't taken? Pick something. What is some action that you would like to change?

Here's one that I'm working on. So I want to learn to swim for exercise. Now, I grew up in a pool. Well, not in a pool. I actually lived in a house, but

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my parents had a pool and so I spent a lot of time in a pool. I'm arguably a strong swimmer. I have no fear of drowning. But I do have this thought about swimming for exercise – actually, I have a lot of them.

I have thoughts like it will be hard, I might not be good at it, it will be embarrassing, I'll look dumb. Can you imagine the feelings that those thoughts are creating for me? When I think the thought, I might not be good at it or I might look dumb, I feel worried. And worry does not fuel productive action.

When I'm feeling the feeling of worried, then the action that I take is inaction. I do not reach out for swim lessons. I do not commit to my goal. I kind of like to think that maybe it's just not that important to me to learn to swim, to learn actually how to do the strokes so that I can swim for exercise.

So as long as I keep choosing these thoughts, it will be hard, it's embarrassing, I might look dumb, I might not be good at it, I'm not going to create the emotion that would fuel the action that I want to take. I'm going to have to change the story that I'm telling myself if I want to generate a different emotion.

Now, I used to think that if I didn't feel motivated to do something that there was nothing I could do about it. If I wasn't feeling creative, which is a feeling, that there was nothing I could do about it, that I would have to just wait for emotions to float down the river, like just appear magically in my body, and until they did, well, I guess today is not the day. I'm just worried about it so I guess there's really nothing I can do. I'm feeling unmotivated, so I guess I'll just start tomorrow.

Not true. We can create feelings at will. We can use our brain, the most powerful instrument I'm aware of, to generate the emotions we want to feel to fuel the action we want to take. So I can change what's going on in my

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brain by consciously choosing to think, I learn by doing. I'm willing for it to be embarrassing. I'm willing for it to be awkward. I'm willing for it to be hard.

And then the emotions I feel are so different than worried. Now I'm feeling willing and open and inspired. And from that place, I can take the action of committing to this goal that I have of learning to swim for exercise. I can take the action of getting on the internet and looking for lessons, putting it on my calendar, getting myself to the lesson.

None of that is outside of me. And when I know how to make my brain work for me in that way, to create any emotion that I want to feel, then I can do it whenever I want, and that's what I want for you. So what is it that you want to change? How do you need to feel to do that thing? And what do you need to believe to create that feeling for yourself?

You can absolutely do that. Now, it's a little more nuanced than that sometimes. Sometimes we can't go to the thought that generates the emotion right in the moment because maybe we just don't believe it yet, and that's okay. That's one of the reasons I coach all the time, because I help people do that, help them figure out how to believe new things.

But before you can ever believe new things, first you need to understand why you would even want to do that. Because nobody is teaching that we can create emotions at will. Nobody's teaching how powerful our brain is. Nobody's teaching that it is unnecessary for us to feel powerless or frustrated or for us to be confused about why we aren't taking the actions that we want to take.

It's actually quite simple. We think a thought, it creates a feeling, and the feeling fuels an action or an inaction. I'll give you one more, because a lot of widows are asking me about dating. But here's what I hear a lot. I hear this thought, "Well all the good ones are taken."

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Okay, if that's your thought, think it now, all the good ones are taken. What's the emotion that thought, the feeling that thought creates in your body? Probably hopeless, resigned, certain. All the good ones are taken, now I feel hopeless.

Well, what do I do as it relates to dating because I'm feeling the feeling of hopeless? I certainly don't approach it with much gusto, do I? I'm probably not looking for opportunities to date. When I'm seeing people that might be opportunities, I'm probably looking for how they aren't the right ones, I'm finding faults with them.

So when we tell ourselves things like this, we need to understand the feeling that it's creating, the emotional impact of the thought that we're choosing so that we can see how it's fueling our action, why we end up doing the things we want to do. What if, instead of all the good ones are taken, you actually believed that someone amazing is looking for you right now? How would that feel?

I bet you wouldn't feel so hopeless. I bet you might feel excited. And then you'd probably start looking back. You'd go on lots of dates.

Now, I give you that as an example so that you can see the thought-feeling-action connection. But I also don't want to tell you that dating is the answer. I'm sure I will also do plenty of episodes on this. You can be completely happy. I encourage you to meet your own emotional needs before you go out looking for someone else. A lot of us end up in trouble here and really frustrated later because nobody taught us that we don't need another partner to feel loved or to not feel lonely or to feel happy.

Again, all of our thoughts create all of our feelings, so we don't need someone else to think our thoughts. But just consider, what is it that you want to accomplish, what is the action you want to take or what is that action you're taking, you don't really understand it, why are you doing it?

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And then just reverse-engineer. What am I feeling that has me doing or not doing this action and what am I thinking that's creating that feeling for me? And if I wanted it to be different, I probably have to be thinking and feeling something different than what I'm thinking and feeling now. And since they're all connected and since it's something you can control, play with it a little bit.

Alright, good fun. We're going to use this a lot so get used to this whole thought-feeling-action connection. You are so much more powerful than you think you are, I promise you that.

Alright, hey, you probably already know this, but just in case, my six-month group coaching program is about to start. Now, I record the podcast a little bit before it actually airs, so at the time this is airing, I have no idea how many spots are available. We started with eight, and who knows where it is right now, but don't fear.

If November's group is already filled up, it's okay. We're going to start another group in December. It will be fine. And all you have to do is just go to [coachingwithkrista.com](http://coachingwithkrista.com) and hit that request a consultation button, and fill out the application. If it's a good fit, I'll let you know and then we'll take the next steps. If it's not, no big deal, I'll send you some resources that will still be helpful to you.

Alright, I love you, I hope you're having an amazing day, and go out and generate some feelings on purpose won't you? Alright, you've got this. Take care, see you next week.

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.

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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.