

## Ep #39: Changing Your Painful Past



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

## Ep #39: Changing Your Painful Past

Do you have pain that keeps affecting you because of things that happened in your past? If so, this will be a life-changing episode for you. I'm going to challenge some fundamental beliefs that probably aren't serving you and hopefully, by the end, you'll feel more optimistic than you have in quite some time. And that's good news, right? So, let's get started, shall we?

Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 39, Changing Your Painful Past.

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. So, just to give you a little bit of an update, I told you in the last episode that I started online dating and created an online profile and actually started conversations. And my husband Hugo died three and a half years ago. So, this is the first time that I have tried it.

I really, honestly, just wasn't into it until recently. I didn't really feel like I was ready. And now I do. So, of course, what's right for you might be different than what is right for me, and that's okay. maybe you're already dating. Maybe you don't want to date ever again. Either way, that's fine.

But I actually have my first date tonight. It's kind of tripping me out a little bit, to be honest. I have lots of thoughts and feelings about it. But someone that I've connected with on Bumble, which currently is my app of choice – Hinge I don't love as much. There just doesn't seem to be as many people in my area maybe that use it.

But it's someone that I met on Bumble, and while my daughter is at Volleyball practice tonight, I am going to meet him at a local restaurant and

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see if there's a connection. And I've kind of learned, really, my big takeaway from online dating so far is that you can do a lot of eliminating with online dating, but you can't do a lot of selecting just using apps.

I mean, I can tell what I definitely don't want, but until I meet people in person, I don't think I'm going to be able to actually conclude that anybody potentially is what I want. So, that's what's going on. All the nerves, primitive brain is fearing rejection and telling me that we're going to die and we should stay safe in the cave, as it does every time I take any new risk.

But now, I know that that's just what primitive brain does, and it's okay. and I can handle nervousness. I can handle all the hard feelings. I can even handle rejection. Watch me, right? So, I'll keep you posted.

Okay, let's jump into the topic because I was thinking about podcast episodes that I want to do for you and I was looking through the list of podcast episodes that I've already done. And I really couldn't believe that I hadn't done this episode yet, to be honest because this concept, when I learned it, changed my life so much that I'm surprised I didn't do it in one of the earlier episodes, so I'm really excited to share this with you.

And it's not complicated in principle. Most of what I teach isn't. But it's a little mind-bendy and it can be a little complex in application. That's okay though.

So, here's the deal. Most of us have things that have happened in our past, especially those of us who are widows, and in particular the loss of our husbands, things that may have happened leading up to his passing. Some of us dealt with long-term illnesses. Some of us, like me, dealt with accidents and, you know, a variety of causes and reasons that we experienced pain related to that loss.

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Also though, many of us have things in our past unrelated to our husband's death, maybe things from our childhood or things from our adolescence that we experienced pain around and that we still believe have the ability to cause us pain now. And that can be really frustrating because we all know we can't go back in the past and change the past. We don't have the ability to time-travel.

And so it can be really frustrating if you think that you have old pain or past pain because, if pain has been caused by events in our past and those events are over, then how do we ever experience anything that isn't pain when we think of those things? It would feel like if we didn't know what I'm going to teach you today in this episode, that the only solution is time-travel and that otherwise we're just destined to experience pain from things that have happened in our past.

So, this is what I want to teach you; there is no such thing as old pain or past pain. Please don't turn off the podcast. This might be a little bit challenging for your brain. And it's okay. it was challenging for my brain too. But I really want you to stay with me because I know it's not what you're probably used to thinking and it might be a little bit mind-bendy, but that's okay.

So, there are things that happen in our past. They've happened. They're done. They're over with. Life happened. Death happened. And when those things happened, we experienced pain. The reason we experienced pain is because of what we thought about what was happening. It's because of our response to what was happening.

Now, that doesn't mean that we did anything wrong; not at all. But what happens in our brain, the thoughts in our brain, the responses in our brain are what create pain for us as humans. So, it's just the way of it.

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So, it would seem like what happened in the past, because you experienced pain when it happened, that what happened is actually the cause of the pain. But it isn't. What happened is just the math; the math of life. The pain, on the other hand, is caused, and was caused, by our response to what happened, by our interpretation of what happened.

And we know this to be true because not everyone responds to the same situation in the same way. So, when my husband died, I was very sad. I experienced that as a very painful event. But you didn't. You didn't experience any pain when my husband died because your thoughts about his death were different than mine, you probably didn't even have any thoughts about mine, and that's okay.

And I didn't experience any pain when your husband died because I didn't have the same thoughts that you did. And that doesn't mean that your husband's death wasn't incredibly painful for you and it doesn't mean that my husband's death wasn't incredibly painful for me. But the reason that we experience that pain is because of what our individual brain made that loss mean.

So, there are things that happen in the world, and then we interpret them. We have a thought about them. And it's our interpretation, or our thought, that creates our emotional experience of whatever it is that happens. And this is happening all the time.

It's happening right now. I'm saying words and you're hearing me. And you're having thoughts about what it is that I'm saying. And that's what's creating your emotional experience right now. So, some of you might be thinking, "Oh, that's interesting." And you might be feeling curious.

And some of you might be thinking, "This is complete hogwash." And you might be feeling annoyed. Some of you might be thinking, "Maybe this can help me. And then you might be feeling hopeful. But you're all having a

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different experience of the words that I'm saying even though I'm saying the same words to everyone listening because you're thinking different things about the words that I'm saying. And that's what's creating your emotional experience of it.

None of it is right or wrong. None of it is good or bad. It's not a moral issue. It's just that, as humans, we create our experience of the facts around us through interpretation with thought. This is how it works.

So, we have things that happen, thoughts about them, and those thoughts about them create feelings. Are you with me? And this is still what's happening about our past. The past has happened. We're still having thoughts about it. And the thoughts that we have right now about what has happened in our past are what create our emotional experience of it, our pain, in the present moment.

So, pain isn't caused by what has happened in the past. Pain is caused by the story we tell ourselves, by what we think about the facts of what has happened in the past. We cause our own pain in the present moment with our brain based on the thoughts that we're thinking, many of which we are not choosing on purpose.

You might be saying, "Okay, yeah, but what if post-traumatic stress disorder?" It really is the same thing. What happened in the past isn't what causes someone with post-traumatic stress disorder to suffer. What's causing them to suffer is the loop that their brain is in, in the present moment.

And this is really good news for all of us, whether you have PTSD or not. This is really good news because what it means is that we can choose how we want to think about our past. We can change our experience of our past by changing what we think about it in the current moment. We can experience it differently depending on what we do with our mind.

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Now, some of us may be able to do that by listening to a podcast and implementing what I'm telling you. Others might need the help of a therapist, depending on what's going on. They might need EMDR or some other intervention that helps them deal with aspects of their brain that require specialized treatment.

So, for instance, with me in Hugo's accident, I was sending a text message to my daughter when the actual impact happened and the sound of the metal crashing, the one car crashing into another, for quite a while, was a big trigger for me.

Now, that wasn't something I was choosing in my brain in that moment. If I would hear the sound of metal crashing, I wasn't choosing to be upset about it. It was just happening. I didn't have a choice in the matter. But it was happening in my brain in the current moment, which meant that I didn't have to go back to the scene of the accident and prevent that noise from ever happening or prevent myself from hearing it to no longer be triggered by it.

I could deal with that trigger in the present moment, by gradually disassociating myself with that metal noise. And for me, I didn't do EMDR. I didn't work with a therapist on that particular issue. I actually used tapping, emotional freedom technique, which I should probably do an episode on that. But that's what helped me stop going straight back to the scene of the accident every time I heard a noise similar to that crashing sound.

So, the truth is that whatever has happened, the facts of the past, it's over. None of us can go back in time and change any of it. And if we don't know better, we would think, especially as widows that that's a curse. We would think that's a problem. We would want to go back and change the way things went down because we might be inclined to think that it's the only way that we can feel better.

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And this is why it's so important to understand not that it's easy, and not that you've done anything wrong because you're in pain, but that your past has no power over you in the present moment. Once you know some techniques and strategies of how to manage your mind and how to change the way that you think about what has happened to you and do it in a way that is not fake and not phony but in a way that is strengthening and empowering and serves you, then you can have a different experience of the past without changing the facts of the past.

You can decide to tell yourself a story, which we're all doing every day all day, you can decide to tell yourself a story about what has happened. You can decide to interpret what has happened in a way that helps you create more of what you want in your life instead of less in a way that serves you instead of as a weapon or something that holds you back.

I always like to think about it that we can't control the cards that we're dealt. We can't. They're just, there they are. And we've all been dealt particular cards. But that doesn't mean anything about our ability to play them. And that's how I want you to think about your past.

You can't control it. It is what it is. But if it's still causing you pain when you think about it, we can control that because that's happening in your brain now in the present moment. And that's one of my favorite things to do. In fact, it's what we're going to be working on in my Mom Goes On coaching program next month; working on our relationship with the past, our relationship with the present, our relationship with the future. Because oftentimes, I find that we don't really give consideration to this and we don't understand how powerful our brains are and we don't understand how to use them in order to create what we want and stop living in the past and stop being limited by that suffering. It's just so unnecessary.

So, that's what I have for you today. You also might, if you haven't listened to it, go back and listen to an episode I did on the stories that we tell. And it

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is episode number seven. And it kind of goes along with what we talked about today, which is how to really think about the story that you're telling about your past, how to separate the facts of what happened, the math of what happened from the interpretation or the story, and then how to retell that in a way that doesn't limit you or hold you back. So, episode seven, check that out.

And if you want to do this work along with us inside the Mom Goes On group, then at the time this airs, I'm guessing there might be some space left, I don't know, in the March group. But we will repeat that subject again at some point.

So, if you're interested in checking that out, you can go to [coachingwithkrista.com](http://coachingwithkrista.com) and click on the request a consultation button. And then you can request a call with me, a free call with me. And if it makes sense, you and I will hop on the phone and we'll see what's going on for you, what you need, whether coaching is a good fit, and take it from there.

So, I love you, you've got this. And I'll see you next week. Take care, everybody. Bye-bye.

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.