

Ep #42: How to Know if You're Ready to Date Again



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With Your Host

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[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 42, How to Know if You're Ready to Date Again.

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, beautiful. Welcome back to another episode of the podcast. We're going to talk about dating again in this episode. And in preparation for the episode, I posted inside of *The Widowed Mom Podcast* Community Facebook group, which if you're not a member of, you are absolutely invited to come and join.

But I posted inside of that group and asked members what their burning questions were about dating. And so, this episode will probably become multiple episodes because there are so many questions that you all have and concerns and worries and fears and we're not going to get them all done in one episode.

But whether you are thinking of dating again, whether you are dating again, or whether you can't even contemplate that there will ever come a day when you want to date again, I encourage you to listen to this episode because I get questions all the time about dating and it seems like everyone in our social and in our family circles has a different opinion.

So, in this episode, what I want to tell you is a very straightforward checklist that you can use to help determine whether you're ready to date again. And even if you're already dating again, once you go through this checklist, you may decide to take a break. That's okay too.

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Sometimes, we jump into dating and then we later wonder if we're doing what's right for us. Maybe it is, maybe it isn't. And hopefully this episode is going to help you with that.

Another thing I noticed when I polled Facebook group members was that the things on the checklist that I have created for you, I don't think probably we currently think through commonly. And the reason I know them is because I've coached so many widows who have ended up not having the dating experience that they wanted to have. And I have observed why that has happened.

And then, of course, in my own life personally – and if you're on my email list, you know this because I've been really documenting the journey of my own return to dating here over the last several week – and if you're not on my email list and that sounds interesting to you, if you want to hear what's going on in kind of my daily life and what I'm learning so that you can learn what I'm learning as I learn it, I'm very transparent and I love to share even the most ridiculous and embarrassing stories with people on my email list. So, if you're not already getting emails from me, you can just go to coachingwithkrista.com and opt in over there. It will ask you for an email address. You just pop it in and you'll be on my list and you won't miss anything.

So, since I'm going through my own dating experience now, and my late husband Hugo died three-and-a-half years ago, it took me a long time to get ready to date again, to even want to date again. Now, there's no right or wrong in terms of timelines. There is no such thing as you should be dating or you shouldn't be dating. It's all a decision that we get to make for ourselves.

So, ultimately, the only one who ever knows whether we're ready to date again is us. And we have to be willing to let other people have their own opinions and let them float right on by and make our own decision. So, I'm

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just going to give you a checklist of things I want you to consider before you decide that you're ready to date again. So, let's get into it.

There are five items on this list. So, the first item is that you don't believe dating or a relationship is the answer to a problem. If you're in a space where you don't believe that dating is the answer to a problem, then you might be ready for dating.

Let me tell you what some of us are believing dating will solve for us and why this isn't true. If you are unhappy and you're looking for someone else to make you happy because you think that you can't be happy until you're in a relationship, you are misguided. I understand, and I used to think this way myself, that most of us don't have the information that I teach, the self-coaching thought model. We don't know that other people don't cause our feelings.

We have genuinely been brought up to believe that our happiness comes from outside of us. Our happiness comes from the people around us, the things around us, the circumstances of our life. And it is really easy if you are happy in your marriage to assume that your current unhappiness is caused by the fact that you're not in a relationship anymore and that your husband died.

But, unfortunately, getting into a new relationship won't be what makes you happy. It won't also be what makes you unhappy. What will make you happy or unhappy is how you see the world, how you choose to see the world, the thoughts that float into your mind. Many of them just show up there accidentally, unintentionally. But that's where our happiness comes from.

So, when you have figured that out – and listen, it took me a while. So, listening to a podcast might not be enough to make that happen. But when you have figured out that you are and have always been in charge of your

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happiness, that you can create that with your brain, that happiness is an inside job, as cliché as it sounds, and that you don't need another relationship to be happy, that you've got your own happiness in check, you know how to create it, and you're happy, then you might be ready for dating.

But if you think that the answer to your unhappiness is to be in another relationship, the chances are good that you're going to end up being very disappointed when you find out that whoever he is, as amazing as he might be, it won't be the reason you feel happy. And you might be just as unhappy in a relationship as you are right now if you haven't figured out yet how to manage your mind, which is what I'm always trying to teach you.

So, first of all, happiness, of course, or unhappiness isn't a problem to be solved. It's just an emotion. But it's also not something that's caused anywhere outside of us. Unhappiness is caused by thoughts that we're thinking, and therefore happiness is also caused by thoughts that we're thinking.

So, when you know that your happiness is you and you've got that taken care of, and instead you're just ready to love someone because you have love to give and you want to give love, then you might be ready.

There's a couple of other problems too. Maybe you think that a relationship is the answer to loneliness. You believe that your loneliness comes from lack of relationship. Again, it makes sense, especially as women. We're socialized, we're conditioned to believe that romance is where we get our satisfaction.

I want you to think about every chick flick you've ever seen, every romance novel that you've ever been sold, all the Hallmark commercials, everything which probably most of us don't even realize because it's so unconsciously part of the way that we think and see the world. It makes sense that we

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think that relationships are the answer to everything because that's what we're sold. But it's completely inaccurate.

Your loneliness does not come from your lack of being in a relationship. Your loneliness comes from your thoughts. And sometimes, I know some of you might be thinking, "Screw you, Krista. It's not my fault that I'm lonely."

So, don't hear me saying that it's your fault. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with you or that you're doing anything wrong if you feel lonely. All I'm saying is that when humans feel lonely, it's because we have a sentence in our mind that's creating that loneliness, maybe more than one sentence.

When you can actually figure out that you don't need to be in a relationship to not feel lonely when you can be your own company and you can be comfortable in your own skin and living your life and finding satisfaction and fulfillment from your brain and what you choose to do with your time and energy, you don't need someone else outside of you to not feel lonely because you'll realize that loneliness is always an option that any of us have.

Imagine a time where you've been in a group, a group of people around you. Maybe you're out with your girlfriends, and you're out with your girlfriends but yet even though there's all these women around the table, you're lonely. It's not your girlfriends, or lack of girlfriends that have anything to do with your loneliness.

We can be in a group of people and still be thinking thoughts that keep us feeling lonely. It really never comes from anything outside of us. So, again, you're not doing anything wrong. There's nothing wrong with you. But there are some sentences in your mind that are causing loneliness that you might be attributing to your lack of a relationship.

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So, I you believe that happiness or unhappiness is going to be solved by a relationship, or loneliness is going to be solved by a relationship, or you believe that you are incomplete without a relationship and that you need to solve that problem of your incompleteness by finding another person, at which point you will believe you are complete, then you're also mistaken.

You're not incomplete. I promise you that. You're whole and worthy and wonderful just as you are. In a relationship or not in a relationship, it has nothing to do with your value, your worth, your completeness, your lovability. That's all fully established and not debatable.

But if, in your mind, you have decided you are incomplete, because maybe you read *The Giving Tree* or *The Missing Piece* and, like me, you bought into that, that you need someone to complete you, or you watched Jerry Maguire and you think that you're not whole, you're incomplete unless you've got that perfect person, you are barking up the wrong tree because your completeness is not negotiable. It already is and nobody else can make you complete, and the absence of someone can't make you incomplete.

So, these three examples – unhappiness, loneliness, and incompleteness are problems that relationships will not solve because the lack of relationships did not cause them. So, that's the first item on the list. You do not believe that a relationship is the answer to a problem, specifically happiness or unhappiness, loneliness, or incompleteness.

Alright, so first we've got to cover that. And if we don't cover that, guess what, you're always going to be looking outside of you to feel happy, to feel like you belong, to feel complete. And that's never where it comes from. And he may seem amazing in the beginning and you might think, "Well he makes me happy." But later, when the honeymoon wears off, which you know it does because you've been married, you know this; you can just as easily experience happiness around him as you can experience annoyance

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and frustration and irritation and anger and all the other emotions. But it's never really him that causes them. It's always our brain. It's always the way that we're thinking.

You can be in a relationship with a man. You can be married. I know I remember times when I was lonely and married at the same time. So, marriage isn't going to solve or relationships aren't going to solve for any of our emotions because the only thing that can do that is our thinking.

So, you don't believe it's the answer to a problem. It's something that you want to do. It has to be something that you want to do. That's number two on my list of five. Independent of the opinions of those around you, it has to seem like a good idea to you.

If everyone around you is telling you, you should be dating and enough time has gone by and why aren't you dating already, that's not a good enough reason. If it doesn't sound like a good idea to you, it's a no-go. It has to be something you think is what you want to do, no matter what other people are telling you.

Because listen, everybody's got an opinion. Some people are going to tell you, you should be dating almost immediately. Some people are going to chastise you for ever dating again. Everybody thinks they know the answer to what's best for your life. And you have to be able to decide for yourself what's best for you.

So, number one, you don't believe dating is the answer to a problem. Number two, dating is something you want to do independent of the opinions of those around you. Number three, you're okay, genuinely, with your friends, your family, and your children not agreeing with your decision.

You've decided that you want to date and you're willing to let other people have their own thoughts and feelings about your decision. And they may

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not agree with you. They may not like it. They may have some judgments. Your mother-in-law may make it mean that you didn't really love her son. Your children make it mean that you didn't really love their dad.

Lots of people will have different thoughts than you. And when you go into dating, not being okay with letting other people have their own thoughts and feelings without taking ownership for them, without trying to change them without being bothered by them or taking any sort of responsibility for them, you're just genuinely okay with people seeing your choices differently than you see them, that's when you know you're ready.

So, so far you don't believe dating is the answer to a problem; unhappiness, loneliness, incompleteness, or, I might add, finances. You don't believe dating is the answer to a money struggle. Because – and I'll do more episodes on money. I think it's definitely something we need to talk about and we haven't talked about it yet. But our relationship with money is also about our thoughts about money. The amount of money that we have is about the way that we think about money and our ability to create it. And so, if you're looking for someone outside you to solve a money problem, that's another topic. It's definitely not going to serve you to do that.

So, you don't believe dating is the answer to a problem. Dating sounds like something you want to do. You're okay with your friends and family including your children, not agreeing with your decision. And the number four reason is you trust yourself. You trust that if it isn't what you want, you'll walk away.

You trust that if you see some things that you think are red flags, you won't ignore them. You trust that if you mean no, you won't say yes. You have the strength and the trust in yourself to navigate dating in a way that serves what you want to create instead of in a way that's about people-pleasing the other person. We have to be able to trust ourselves.

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And the fifth thing that I want you to consider is that in general you've thought about your reasons for dating, you know what they are, and you like them. You really have considered items one through four, all the reasons that you want to date, and you're happy with those reasons. You're not trying to solve a problem that won't be solved with a relationship. You're not doing it for reasons outside of you. You're not worried or obsessing about getting the approval of others in this decision.

You know you can trust yourself. And maybe your reasons are that you just have love to give and you want someone that you can love on, you want someone who can be the recipient of that love that you have to give. You want to feel love because love feels good.

Maybe you want a partner to do life with. Maybe you have a long list of adventures you want to take and you want to have a partner to do them with because it sounds like fun. Your reasons aren't about filling a hole because you know that there is no hole. You are complete. You are whole already. And yet, you want to date because it is your preference. It's not a need. It's a preference.

Okay, so that's what I want you to think about. Now, you might already be dating and you might listen to this list and go, "Uh-oh, maybe I'm not ready to date." That's okay. You can stop dating if you don't really feel like you're ready. Don't beat yourself up about it. Figure out what you can learn from what you've already done. And then let's do the work to make sure that you understand that you're the source of your emotional state, that you aren't incomplete without someone, that you can be okay if other people don't agree with you.

Let's do all of that self-belief work, which is exactly the work that I teach all my clients all the time, and get you in a position that by the time you do start dating, you feel really solid. And if this is miles away for you, or maybe you never want to date again, that's fine too. There's no rush. There's no

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hurry. There's no right timeline. You're not doing it wrong because you're not dating. You're not doing it wrong if you are.

So, that's our first crack into dating again. I have a feeling this is going to be a lot of different episodes on different facets of dating. I would love to hear from you before I do more of the episodes and hear what it is that you want help with. If you are dating, where are you struggling? If you haven't started dating yet, what are you worried about? Tell me all the things and that will help me really address what it is that's important to you in future episodes.

And, of course, I always want to invite you, if you want the transformation, if you want to experience post-traumatic growth, if you genuinely want to love your life again – and I don't mean like your life, I mean blow your own mind because you love your life, even though your husband died, then I want to invite you to request a consultation and go to the website coachingwithkrista.com, click request a consultation. It will take you to a brief questionnaire.

And if it makes sense, you and I will get on the phone and we will talk and I will help you sort through what's going on in your life. We'll talk about what's possible for you and see if coaching is a good fit and where you should go from there. Alright, remember, I love you, you've got this, I hope you have a great week and I'll see you next time. Take care, 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 and get Krista's Love Your Life Again Game

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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 and get your free game plan today.