

## Ep #43: When Things Around Us Seem Crazy



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Krista St-Germain**

[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 43, When Things Around Us Seem Crazy.

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. I want to do something a little bit different this week. And that's based on what's going on in my life, and I'm pretty certain what's going on in your life, as we deal with the Coronavirus.

My weekend started out a little bit differently than I had expected. I'm pretty sure this echoes stories that are familiar to you and in your life. But we were supposed to head out to a big national qualifying volleyball tournament for my 16-year-old daughter. It was to be held in Denver, kind of the big deal of the season.

And we were all packed and ready to go, and right before we left, they cancelled the tournament, which I 100% think was the right decision. But, of course, my daughter was so, so disappointed that her big tournament got cancelled. It was something she'd really been looking forward to.

And then within, you know, 24, 48 hours, the regional tournament in a few weeks got cancelled, probably the big AAU tournament in Disney will get cancelled. A large event that I was going to do with one of my coaching friends got cancelled. It was in New York in early May. That got cancelled.

And schools are shutting down, all the things. We're all seeing it on the news. I'm getting a lot of requests for coaching based on everybody's thoughts and feelings about the whole thing. And so, I just wanted to do what I hope will be a really useful episode to you, whether it's Coronavirus

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that you're worried about. Or if it's years later that you listen to this episode and things in your world just seem crazy, I want to help you with that.

I also want to offer, before we get going, a little perspective. You are probably listening to this podcast because you're a widow. So, I just want to remind you, because maybe it's a while since your husband died – I don't know, maybe it's been real recent, but maybe it's a while – and maybe you have forgotten what you've already been through given what's currently happening.

And so, I want to remind you that you have already survived something huge on the stress scale. Losing a spouse, it doesn't get much more intense than that in terms of a stress-causing life-changing event. And you've already survived it.

And you might not be giving yourself credit for that because you might be telling yourself that you just did what everybody does or everybody would have done and what choice did you have. I hear that from people all the time, but listen to me; you did have a choice.

You could have thrown in the towel. You did not. You are still here. You did continue to put one foot in front of the other, even when it was the hardest thing you've ever had to do in your life, even if it still is. So, I want you to please own what you have already done for yourself, own that you have already gone face to face, toe to toe with something that a lot of people haven't yet experienced, and hope that they don't, and you're still here.

So, just give yourself some perspective there. You've done something really hard. And it's the hard things in life that make us more resilient. So, just by the sheer fact that you are a widow and you are listening to this podcast, I already know you to be someone who is resilient, someone who can come up against hard things and keep going.

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So, when things around you seem completely crazy, be it because of Coronavirus or something else, remember that you're already a badass. Sorry if there are children listening, but it's so true. You are. So, a little perspective there.

Alright, listen, things happen in the world. They always have. They always will. And what's happening with Coronavirus is no different. Sometimes things seem less out of our control than others. But no matter what, we have a choice to remember that it is not the things outside of us that cause our response to them.

We're always in charge of our response to whatever happens in life, even when it's out of our control. There's no situation under which we don't get to choose how we want to show up. And in situations like this, where it would seem like everything's crazy and there kind of appears to be this, in some places, collective sense of panic, it's really important that we ground ourselves and remember that other people's emotions aren't contagious.

We can't catch other people's emotions like we can catch a virus. We can't catch panic. We can't catch anxiety. We can't catch fear. It seems like we can. But I want to promise you that we can't. The only thing that causes our emotional state is what we're telling ourselves. It's the sentences in our head.

We can be the calm in any storm. Now, if you are not calm, if you are feeling fear, you are feeling panicky, you are feeling anxiety, that doesn't mean you've done anything wrong. I'm not telling you this because I want you to go into a shame spiral or be mean to yourself or be self-critical and tell yourself that you should be thinking differently than you are.

The human brain was wired to be on high alert for fear. It was just designed that way. Nothing has gone wrong if your brain is on high alert and if you're feeling worry or fear. But what can help is watching it with curiosity. I

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always joke with my clients, because I think they ask me in the coaching that I do sometimes, they'll think maybe I never get stressed or I never feel fear because I'm relatively calm. But the way that I'm able to stay so calm isn't because I have bypassed my brain's natural design. It's not because I don't actually have fear or anxiety. It's because I no longer get freaked out when my brain gets freaked out.

If you've ever heard the song by Chic, called Le Freak. It's like a disco song. I just joke about that, but that's what I now play in my brain. When I notice my brain freaking out and I know that it's just the way I was wired for the purposes of my own survival, it is by design, I just laugh about it. Not always immediately, but much faster than I used to.

I don't make it mean that there's something wrong with me anymore because I feel fear. I just remind myself that my human brain loves to freak out about things. High alert is its job. That's how it tries to keep me safe. And it's okay. It's not a problem.

I don't tell myself a story about the fact that my brain is wired to freak out. And so, whatever story your brain might be offering you about how this is too much or how you can't handle it or you can't handle it without your husband or how he was your rock and now you don't have anyone to keep you calm. We don't have to get sucked into those stories anymore. We don't have to get sucked into that martyred thinking about how it all depends on us and how we have to shoulder the burden of all of it.

And we could, of course. And I think many people would agree that we'd be justified if we did that. But I don't recommend it because it just feels terrible to you. And I don't want you to feel terrible.

So, your brain's going to be offering you fear. It's going to be offering you anxiety. It's going to be offering you a state of high alert. And that, in and of itself, isn't the problem.

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You get to decide what you want to make that mean. So, you can play the Chic, Le Freak song in your mind like I do and try to get a little giggle about – well, it's not really a design flaw, it's just an older design that maybe hasn't caught up with current times, where our brain just wants us to focus on the scary tiger that could be around the corner.

And so, it seems justified and a lot of people think it is. But it's terrible in our own experience to think that way because it just freaks us even more out, and we don't need that. And what the brain focuses on, it finds more of. So, if we let that freak out then turn into a spiral of forecasting doom and gloom and all of the worst-case scenarios, which many people are doing, then that's essentially what we're asking our brain to focus on and find more of.

And that's the optional part. That's the unnecessary part. We can actually do the opposite. We can, instead of focusing on what could happen that's awful we could focus on what could happen that's amazing. We could focus on imagining a future that we want to have.

And I'm not saying find the silver lining or, you know, talk yourself into some fairyland fantasy. I'm just saying that anytime we're ever imagining the future anyway, it's an imagination. It's a guess. We don't know. We never know.

We didn't know our husband was going to die, and then he did. We didn't know. But what is the value of imagining the worst-case scenario? I want to propose that there isn't one. So, if we're going to imagine something, why not just imagine something that we want?

So, other people's emotions aren't contagious. We can't catch panic. We can't catch anxiety. And this is even when, you know, you're watching the news and you hear another cancellation and you hear another extension on your children not being able to go back to school and you go to the grocery store and there's no eggs.

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I know when I went on Friday, the lines, oh my gosh, crazy. No toilet paper, no eggs, no staples, and lines longer than I have ever seen. But even that still cannot cause us stress. It is not so powerful that it can make us feel any emotion. We still always get to be the boss of our brain and the boss of our emotional state.

And knowing that our brain is just wired to be on high alert for fear because it's a survival mechanism that we were designed with can help us. We don't have to get so freaked out about our brain freaking out. I love the Viktor Frankl quote – Viktor Frankl survived the Holocaust. He was a psychiatrist. He was a neurologist.

And one of my favorite quotes from him is this, “Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.” Now, this man survived the Holocaust. So, I take his word for it.

And if you've ever read Man's Search for Meaning, he goes, of course, much deeper into it than just in one quote. But basically what he's saying is there is a power that we will always have, that we have always had, and that is our ability to choose our response to any situation that happens.

When there is craziness around us, that's the stimulus. But there is a space between that stimulus, between the crazy, between the chaos, between other people's panic and other people's anxiety, there is a space between that stimulus and our response. And it may not be a big one, and sometimes we may not notice it until after it's already gone, but I promise you that it's always there.

And in that space is our power. That's where we get to decide who we want to be in the face of whatever it is that's in front of us. That's the space where we get to decide how we choose to respond. We have the ability to respond. We have a responsibility; the ability to respond. And that

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opportunity of choosing consciously how we want to show up, how we want to respond, that is where we get to choose growth and we get to see evidence of our freedom.

There's nothing that we can go through that can ever take that from us because it happens in our minds. And it's something that other people don't have the ability to control. So, when we focus our energy on that space, that's where the magic is. So, when you notice that you're focused on something that you can't control, ask yourself what you can influence.

And the answer will always be the way that you're thinking about whatever stimulus is in front of you. The answer will always be how you're choosing to feel about what's happening around you, how you're choosing to show up as no matter what's going on.

So, I'm going to read that quote one more time, "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom." And that's everything in a situation like this.

I also want to offer a tool that I've talked about before, but I'm not sure I've ever specifically recommended the app. And this is a free app. And so, if you don't have it, I highly recommend that you go and get it.

And this app is called The Tapping Solution. And you can get it for free in any smartphone app store. I use Apple products, so I go to the App Store and that's where I found that app.

I've been using this for a couple of years since it came out. It was created by Nick and Jessica Ortner. And maybe Alex Ortner too. They're siblings. But they are, I think, providing one of the most life-changing free resources that exists. So, if you don't have this app, I highly, highly recommend it.

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And the reason I love this app, not only because there's so much free goodness in it, but because it's just a great beginner place to start with what's called EFT, emotional freedom technique, or tapping. And I have used emotional freedom technique, or tapping, for years and years, since well before Hugo died, for a variety of reasons.

I've used it with my kids. I've used it for myself. I've used it for, gosh, just lots of things. Especially though, I had a lot of good success with my children when they were little in terms of helping them release whatever emotions had kind of pent up at the end of the day.

We would just go through a tapping process and I would help them tap and we would tap and let it go, whatever it was that was stressing them out or holding them back or upsetting them, as a way for them to release emotion.

So, The Tapping Solution app is perfect for beginners. It will walk you right through how to tap with videos. So, if you've never done it before, the app will show you how. And they've recently come out with a Coronavirus-specific exercise. And the first exercise in every category on the app is automatically included in the free download of the app.

But what I love about tapping is that it can help you calm the part of your brain that governs the fight, flight, or freeze response. In just literally minutes, doing one of these exercises can take you from anxious, overwhelmed, or kind of panicky or on high alert to a much calmer place, which is so much of what we all need right now, is a way to calm ourselves down.

Because when we don't have it, we often turn to things that aren't adding value to our lives. A lot of us turn to food. We start drinking more. We start doing things that maybe aren't in alignment with what we want to create in life because we don't have a coping mechanism to calm ourselves down.

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And so, I really want to recommend that if you've never tried this before, now is the time to go and investigate tapping. There's also a ton of free videos on YouTube from this particular group, but I really think that the app, it would be great for you and it would also be great for your kids.

I've also used tapping as a way to help me through some of my PTSD symptoms from Hugo's accident. So, hearing the sound of metal was very troubling for me for quite a while. I used tapping to help with that. I also used tapping to help with seeing Durangos around town, because that's the car that Hugo drove and I had a lot of associations with that car from the accident.

And there were some other things too. But just anytime I'm feeling overly anxious or overly emotional – and of course, that's very subjective, but it's how I define it for myself – I often turn to tapping. So I want to offer that to you as a resource.

And then the last thing I want to leave you with is an idea and some thoughts. And the idea is something that I learned from my teacher, Brooke Castillo. And it changed my life. And it was so simple.

It was the idea that worry pretends to be necessary, but it never really is. And I know sometimes as moms, we think that if we don't worry, somehow that will have a negative impact on our ability to take care of our children. But it's a total lie because what happens really when we worry is that we spin around, we second-guess ourselves.

Worry never helps us as a mom take effective action. Worry actually keeps us stuck. Worry encourages inaction. So, while it might seem useful to you to think that you should be worried, I want to offer to you that the opposite is true.

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Worry pretends to be useful, but it really isn't. It's actually un-useful. You've done nothing wrong if you're worrying. But you don't have to stay there. You can decide if worry isn't useful, how do you want to feel? What do you want to do? Instead of feeling something in the fear family, let's create something that feels more like calm, something that feels more like steadfast or grounded. Because that would serve us so much more.

So, some thoughts that I want to offer you that you can use to kind of ground yourself, keep yourself calm, are the following. No matter how stressed others seem about this virus, I can stay calm. Just because people around me are panicking, doesn't mean I have to follow their lead. Emotions aren't contagious and I'm always in charge of mine. I can be the calm in any storm. And my favorite, I'm a widowed mom, this virus has nothing on me.

I so believe that. You may have lost perspective of that, but listen; I know what you've already gone through. And I know everyone's story is different, but I know the collective pain, the collective struggle, the collective experience, and this ain't nothing compared to what you've already survived, so let's not give it any more power than we need to. Let's not give it any more focus than we need to. And if when you're listening, Coronavirus has already been dealt with and you've got other crazy in the world happening, it doesn't matter. The same thing is true.

Nobody gets to be the boss of our feeling, except us. We get to choose if we want to stay in fear or if we want to live in love. We get to choose how to manage our own mind and what we want our brain to focus on. We don't have to see other people's emotions as something that we can catch or something that we have to avoid. We can create calm for ourselves because we're just that powerful. We can choose our response no matter the stimulus because that's where our growth and our freedom is.

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Alright, ladies. I love you. You've got this. And as always, love to offer the opportunity to get one of just a couple of free coaching sessions that I do every week. You can go to [coachingwithkrista.com](http://coachingwithkrista.com) and click on request a consultation and take it from there.

Alright, I love you. You. You've got this. I'll see you next week. 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](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.