

Ep #52: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Jenny Lisk



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Krista St-Germain

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 52, Widows Like Us: An Interview with Jenny Lisk.

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 to another episode of the podcast. I'm recording this intro on my birthday. And I have to tell you, 44 years around the sun, four years – almost four years – without my beloved Hugo. And I'm loving life. So, if you're not loving life yet, that's okay. I just want you to know that it's possible.

I'm so excited for the year to come for me. I'm so grateful for the past year. I'm so grateful for all of you that listen, especially when you send me emails and tell me what's helped you with the podcast. And hey, if you want to give me a birthday present, you can leave me a review of the podcast. That would be amazing because that helps other widows find it.

Alright, anyway, this week, I am bringing to you an interview that I did with Jenny Lisk. And if you haven't met Jenny yet, you're going to love her. She is a widow and she's a mom. And she also created a podcast called *The Widowed Parent Podcast*.

Jenny just basically decided, after her husband died, that there weren't enough resources out there for widowed parents. And she just set about figuring out how to create something valuable, and thus, the *Widowed Parent Podcast*.

So, I can't wait for you to hear Jenny's story. She's going to share with you so many nuggets of information, things that she wishes she would have known before her husband died, things she's learned from so many people

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that she's interviewed on her podcast, things that have surprised her. Lots of goodness in this interview. So, I hope you will enjoy. Alright, here we go.

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Krista: Welcome, Jenny, to the podcast. I'm really excited to have you.

Jenny: Thank you. Thank you. It's so good to be here. It was so fun to have you on my show way back in episode eight, I think. So yeah...

Krista: It feels like forever ago.

Jenny: Well, I think it was forever ago.

Krista: Yeah, so much has changed.

Jenny: I know, right? Now you have a show.

Krista: And now I have a podcast. I know, when you interviewed me for your podcast, which is aptly named The Widowed Parent Podcast, *The Widowed Mom Podcast* was just a, "Someday I'd like to have my own podcast." And I think it took me a whole 'nother six or seven months after that. Because I'm coming up on about a year now with this podcast.

Jenny: Okay, well congratulations.

Krista: Thank you. It's been fun. So, I'm really excited to have you on the podcast because I think you have such a unique story. Not only are you a widow, and so you can speak to the widowed mom journey. You're still parenting a child that's at home. But I'm so fascinated for the listeners of my podcast to hear about what you've done, not only before your husband died, but what you've done since, how you came to your own podcast.

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You've got a couple of books in the works and I'd just love for them to hear that story. So, I'd love to have you just start by talking about your own journey as a widowed mom. Walk us through what happened, how you got where you are.

Jenny: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. You know, it's kind of funny. Today, as we record, it's five years ago today that my husband had his first surgery, first brain surgery. Which is really strange to think that this whole saga started five years ago. And at the same time, it feels like only yesterday and like a gazillion years ago, you know.

And I can't reconcile that and I don't let myself get frustrated. I don't need to reconcile that. It just feels both, you know. So, we had two kids. They were eight and 10 at the time. We were living here in Seattle, both had jobs, a dog, a normal life, right. And I came home after dropping my son off at a Boy Scout event my husband was sitting on the couch and he had this kind of funny look on his face.

And I was like, "Hey, are you okay? What's the matter?" And he said, "Oh, I've been feeling a little dizzy the last few days, and I was just feeling a little dizzy now." So, we had this whole conversation, like what have you been noticing? How long has it been going on and what's the deal? It was a Friday night, so it was like, "Well, why don't you call the doctor Monday?" Because it didn't seem like we should rush to the ER. He wasn't falling over. He wasn't having a seizure.

You know, there was nothing, just a, "Hey, I'm a little dizzy," you know? So, I went and I – it was Friday, so we were going to crash. I got some takeout. I came back and then I'm like, "Okay, how you doing?" Because I'd been gone 20 minutes, you know, I want to know how he's doing now.

And he looks at me and he says, "Oh, I'm doing fine. But I've been feeling a little dizzy the last few days." And I looked at him and I was like, "Whoa,"

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you know? And I said, “You know, you just told me that.” And he said, “I did?” And I was like, “Okay, what is going on here?”

So yeah, “We were just sitting on the couch. We were here. We had this discussion. You’re calling your doctor Monday.” And he said, “Really?” So, then I’m like, this is really strange. But then, he was mostly normal. So, it wasn’t like he was just kind of 100% like this. So, then I’m second guessing myself, you know. Am I imagining things? Am I overreading this situation?

Because he’s going to work. He’s dropping off the kids at school. He’s doing stuff. But then, every so often, these little things like this would pop up and I’m like, “Wait, what’s going on?” So, I watch the situation for about 10 days or so and trying to think of when do I need to step in here. Because he called his doctor and they were like, “Oh yeah, come in in three weeks,” or whatever.

And I thought, “Well, that sounds too far.” But I didn’t have any reason really necessarily to pull it in. So, anyway, we ended up going for a hike on Mother’s Day, about 10 days later. And we stopped at the waterfall to take a break. And he says to me, “Where are we staying tonight?” And we were just 30 minutes from our house, you know.

So, we had this conversation. And I said, “Where do you think we stayed last night?” And he said, “I don’t know. Maybe some cabin in Oregon.” And that’s when I was like, okay, this is, you know. And I explained, “Well, we drove to my sister’s house and then we drove up to the pass and here we are.” And he’s like, “Really?”

So, I called the doctor the next day, and they said bring him in. Meanwhile, I’m thinking – he was on this other medication, just random. I’m Googling side effects and there’s common side effects. There’s less common side effects. And then there’s the rare side effects. And on that list was cognitive confusion.

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So, I'm thinking that's the problem. We're going to go into this doctor and we're going to say, "Ha-ha look at these crazy things he's been saying. Let's switch the medicine and everything's fine," right? And the doctor says, "Well, let's get an MRI of your brain."

So, we go down to the MRI and they say, "Okay, we're going to do that, we'll call you in 48 hours." But at the end of the MRI, they said, "Actually, why don't you go back upstairs. The doctor wants to talk to you now." And so, I'm thinking I don't know what this is, but this is not how they normally do these things. This is not a good deal.

So, we go upstairs. The doctor says, "Well, I don't want to scare you." Keep in mind, this is internal medicine, like regular – this is our first doctor visit for this, "I don't want to scare you. I think you should know what you might be dealing with. It might be glioblastoma." I'm like, what's glioblastoma, right? "You need to go see the neurosurgeon tomorrow."

Yeah, so we go home that night, we Google glioblastoma, and we're reading and we're like, "This is terrible." It's a super-aggressive form of brain cancer which listeners might have heard of more recently in the news as what John McCain died of a year or so ago and Beau Biden died of it actually right around the time my husband was diagnosed.

So, I was reading news accounts of Beau Biden and then sitting there in the hospital in the surgery waiting room. Anyway, so we read this and its super, super-low odds of surviving and super-aggressive. Which explains why he was totally normal and then this kind of tumor can grow from nothing to big and impactful in a matter of weeks, just like boom.

So, that's why all of a sudden, he had these symptoms and it hits people differently. In his case, it was cognitive issues. Depending on where it is in your brain, it can show up differently. But it's a very aggressive tumor. So that's kind of how the whole thing got started.

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Krista: Yeah, and so how long was it from the time he was diagnosed to the time he passed?

Jenny: It was about eight months. So, it was May of 2015, and then he died in January of 2016. And it was a long eight months. I mean, there were multiple brain surgeries, so many inpatient stays at the hospital, so many emergency room visits, so many regular doctor visits to different specialists and radiation and yada, yada, yada, yada. Ultimately ended up at home on hospice for the last several months, probably three, three and a half months on hospice at home.

Krista: So, what was your journey then like after he died. So, walk me through the time he died. And then, all of a sudden, now you have a podcast and you're a bereavement expert.

Jenny: Well, yeah, there's a lot of steps between point A and point B there.

Krista: Yeah, like when did it even come to you that that's what you wanted to do?

Jenny: Well, I wish I wrote that down or something. But I do know – because I was looking back at some notes recently. And early on, I was trying to figure out, "I should do something in this space. I don't know what it is, but I'm struggling to find what I need. So, I'm guessing other people are struggling to find what they need. So, what should I do?"

And early on, I was thinking, you know, should I go back to school and switch into being a counsellor or something like that? Or should I take a different tact and get, like, a parenting Master's degree, something or other, you know, parenting expert type? Is there something I should do to go back to school?

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Because that's kind of your first thought when you think about switching gears. And none of those seemed quite right and I was still kind of casting about, "I've got to do something." And the gap that I was seeing, I feel like there's a lot of really good work being done for adults and their grief. And I'm not saying it's easy by any means.

I'm just saying, there are a lot of people doing really good work that people can access if they're needing help, whether it's books, whether it's individual therapists, whether it's something like Camp Widow, Soaring Spirits and the programs they're running, whether it's what you're doing. You're helping through your coaching and your podcast; adults, moms specifically, figure out their next steps and getting their lives.

So, I think there's a lot of people doing good work there. And then, in the children's grief space, there are a lot of really excellent programs in various communities, you know, children's grief center, family grief center type programs that often have peer grief groups for different ages. They often have activities. They maybe meet once or twice a month, they bring kids together. There are camps in the summer like Camp Erin.

There's a lot of really good programs for children. I still felt lost. And the other day, I was thinking about this. Let's say your kid went to a therapist every single week and went to a peer grief group once or twice a month, and went to Camp Erin in the summer for three or four days. And that's a lot of grief work, by the way. There's still like 300 other days in the year where it's all on me, the parent. So, what do I do?

Is this a grief issue? Is this not a grief issue? Is it a normal teenage issue? A normal kid issue? How do I do this? And who can even tell me or point me in the right direction or help me figure out? And I just felt lost. And so, I started thinking about, how could I go looking for some of these answers?

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And I don't know exactly how the podcast part popped into my mind, but somehow I realized, a podcast is a really accessible format and approach and that I could go out and interview various people. And I can tell you about the different categories of people I interview, and bring their expertise or their story or their journey or whatever it is they have to share with us, record those conversations, bring it to people in the form of a podcast.

Because I realized, if I was struggling with these things, that other people were too. And I could be helpful that way. And having spent 20 years in IT before this, I guess the idea of doing something like this didn't scare me off. It's not like I did anything practical before that helped me. It's not like I did podcast or social media or audio or anything really. I was doing internal corporate IT work. But I was tech-friendly, maybe you would say and willing to learn and to see the possibilities of this medium as an option.

But I've got to tell you, I still, even once I was like, "I feel like I should do this," but I was still struggling with, "Why am I the right person to host this podcast? Why me? Why will listeners want to listen to me, as the host of this particular podcast?" Because you might look at it and say, "Okay, I'm not a therapist. I don't have some letters after my name that say that I have a masters or a PhD in something that's in this field that's relevant or whatever."

And people would tell me, "Well, you have your story and that's important and there's value in that." And I'm like, "Yeah, okay, I get it." But I still, I wasn't seeing the through line. It just wasn't hanging together for me. So, why me? And I really struggled with that.

And in the meantime, I was doing stuff like getting a graphic for the podcast and picking colors and maybe brainstorming some guests and making a spreadsheet. But I wasn't actually, like, the fundamental question, "Why me?"

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And finally, I realized that I was looking at it completely backwards, the wrong way. I was answering the question, like, “Who am I to host this show? I’m not an expert.” And when I flipped that on its head and I said, “Actually, I’m the right person to host this show precisely because I’m not an expert.”

Because I can stand in the shoes of my listeners and ask questions on their behalf, you know, informed whether it’s by my own experience, by the people that I talk to who are widowed parents who I know in my personal circles, by the people that I hear from who are listeners, you know, this kind of collection of, I can stand in the place of this body of widowed parents, ask questions on their behalf of this person, this person, this person, this expert, whoever, and let the expert speak to my listeners, let them to do the teaching.

Krista: Yeah, and do it in a way that it’s so pure because you have all these experts, and experts tend to speak in expert lingo. So, when you can ask the question from the end user’s perspective, you just have a different lens that you’re seeing it through.

Jenny: Yeah, I don’t know what I don’t know, and so I can just ask questions. Like, I’m a widowed parent, and if I’m hearing this, what do I want to know about it? Or if it’s an expert who’s written a book, I always read the book first, which you know what, the prep work in this is killing me.

But I think it makes a better discussion and I think it makes a more useful resource for my listeners. And so, I read it with the frame of mind of I am a widowed parent and maybe I have kids this age or that age, or maybe I have this situation or that situation and kind of composite and figure out then what would I want to know from this person? Here’s their work. I think their work is terrific. Which parts of this should I inquire about, to extract some of that knowledge to share then with my listeners?

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Krista: Take some things that can be really intellectual and makes it tangible and applicable.

Jenny: Exactly. And so, I just was focusing on the experts, but I also, the other categories of people I interview, widowed parents who are down the path a ways, who have reflection to share, like when I interviewed you for example. And you kind of had two hats on. A lot of my guests have two hats. You have the widowed parent hat, and you have the expert hat as a coach. Then it's kind of like a hybrid discussion.

But anyway, so a bunch of the guests have been widowed parents and I really find, people write to me all the time and they say that they like feeling like they're not alone and listening to these people, even the ones who are purely sharing their own story and their journey and their own experience without an expert hat on, right? So many widowed parents – you probably hear this a lot too – feel really alone. They don't know somebody in their personal circle, their neighborhood, their school community who's in the same boat.

Krista: That's exactly why I eventually switched from one on one coaching to groups because so many conversations were people thinking there was something wrong with them or something abnormal about their experience. And when you sit back as the coach and you see it over and over and over and over and you realize, if I could just get all these women together in the same group, so much of their experience would just be normalized, just from realizing that they're not the only ones that thing that way or feel that way or are having that experience or problem.

Jenny: Yeah, for sure. And I think it took me a while to appreciate that because – I guess I'm unusual in that I happen to know a bunch of widowed parents in my real-life circles. And I didn't realize how unusual that was. So okay, for example, the woman across the street from me, the woman two doors down from me, the woman around the corner from me,

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the woman around the other corner from me, all widowed with kids in grade school and high school. And another small handful within a 15-minute drive.

Krista: Fascinating.

Jenny: And these are not people I met through the podcasts or the grief groups. These are people in my actual school circles and neighborhood circles.

Krista: From my experience, that's not normal at all. Most people that I come into contact with very much feel like they're on an island by themselves.

Jenny: Yeah, and I've come to appreciate that that is – I think my situation is unusual. I mean, I'm lucky that I can meet with these people and get together and stuff. But the number of people who have written to me and said that they like hearing this because they don't feel so alone. SO yes, I've come to believe that that is true.

But the third category really has been interesting and a privilege to talk to these people that are adults now, and when they were kids or teenagers, they lost one of their parents. And I'm so glad they've been willing to be so open and sharing those stories. Many of them are not doing grief work or doing anything where they routinely talk about their stories. They just somehow or other got connected and were willing to come on and share.

And one of the things I love about it, it's not going to tell me exactly what my own kids are going to go through because everyone's situation is a little different. But it gives me a lot of ideas about things that should be on my radar screen, things that might come up, things I should be aware of that I wouldn't have thought of otherwise, gaining some appreciation for the perspective of losing a parent as a child or a teenager.

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You know, my kids and I, we all lost the same person. His name was Dennis. But I lost a spouse and they lost a dad at the ages of nine and 11. And it's a different relationship. It's a different experience. And it's not that one is easier or harder or better or worse. It's that it's different.

And I think, if we can try to see all sides of that and if I as a parent can try to do everything I can to better understand my kids' perspective and their possible journeys from talking to other people, it's really been helpful. And those have been some of the most – I was going to say some of the most interesting interviews that I've done. They're all interesting. So, maybe I can't say that. They're all interesting for different reasons. But it's such a privilege to talk to them and I'm so appreciative of them for sharing their time.

Krista: Yeah, so how did the idea for – because I know you're writing two books. One is a memoir and the other is more of a handbook. It's kind of the concept of a widowed parent handbook. Is that what you're calling it, the title?

Jenny: Yeah, The Widowed Parent Handbook. I figure it goes along with The Widowed Parent Podcast, The Widowed Parent Handbook, they kind of go hand in hand.

Krista: So, at what point did you decide that you wanted to write the handbook and what's that turning out like? Where are you?

Jenny: Yeah, well I'm a lot further along with the memoir, but as far as the handbook, I realized pretty early on – well, if I back way up, one of the first things I did was go onto Amazon. And somewhere I read recently, Amazon is one of the biggest search engines. Like, how do I be a widowed parent? Where's the book?

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And listeners can't see that I'm typing with my fingers in the air here right. Where's the book that's going to tell me how to do this new role, this new thing? I didn't sign up to be a widowed parent. I had a parenting partner. Now I've got me. So, where's the book that's going to tell me – not that it's going to give me all of the answers, but I don't know, put things on my radar screen, give me the landscape, the lay of the land. What do I need to know about?

There's no book like that, it turns out. Yeah, so it's been in the back of my mind all along, kind of in tandem with starting the podcast. Like, you know what, these podcast interviews kind of have a dual purpose. They are also research inputs into this handbook. And early on, it wasn't maybe so obvious how it would come together because, week to week, it's a different guest each week, it's a different topic each week. It's a different piece of the puzzle. But it's not necessarily in any particular structure, different things come up.

And so, once I got a certain number of interviews in and things maybe started merging and I could start identifying things I've learned or things that I think would be useful for other people to have access to. And at first, you assume everyone's going to listen to episode one and then episode two and then episode three. And in the beginning, they do because that's all you've got, right?

But then, after a while, if a new listener hears about it today, there's 71 episodes. It's like, where do they start? Well, I realized, I needed to have a start here page and organize it. And I realized that organizing it was kind of creating themes and saying, you know, if you're interested in this part, start here, this part, start here if you have younger kids, whatever.

And that was the beginning, I think, of the process of trying to – I don't know what the word is – structure it in some kind of way and pull out those themes that I wanted to cover. And so, as far as that handbook I view it as

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very much at the research stage still and at the – I've really been going around in circles about what is the outline that I want?

For as much as I have identified those themes and whatever, it's still really hard to figure out how to pull 70 episodes together into a coherent structure and answer that question as a widowed parent, you know, what would be a useful book for me to have here? And I'm actually thinking of, rather than – and originally, I was thinking, this is going to be like the magnum opus on widowed parenting.

And I'm like, maybe I should back off that a little bit and maybe I should do multiple volumes or something and even try to get one or two volumes out sooner. Because one of the things that I'm realizing is with the pandemic going on and the increase in grief and the increase – unfortunately, there are more widowed parents every month or whatever than there would normally be because of COVID and all this. and maybe people need the book sooner rather than later.

And rather than waiting until I can tie a little bow on a giant tome of a gazillion pages that has everything ever said on the subject of widowed parenting, it's probably not realistic anyway. But it also wouldn't be helping anybody for a really, really long time.

Krista: And it would probably be more difficult for your readers to consume because it would be so comprehensive. There would be so much there.

Jenny: Right, and there's a lot to be said for, "Here's something accessible that's a quicker read and volume one and two will get you started and then volume three, four..." whatever. I haven't mapped it all out yet, but that's the direction that I'm thinking of it for right now.

But I'm also still thinking about – and part of the reason I'm struggling to get the outline together, whether it's an outline across multiple volumes or

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whatever, is to identify those gaps of who else do I need to interview that I feel like I've covered maybe these and this and that, but I have a gap here and here. And so, I need to maybe invite certain types of guests or certain types of experts or whatever. So, that's kind of where I'm at with that.

Krista: Yeah, it seems like to me, I think of you as this great connector, this great disseminator of information where you're not trying to be the coach or be the counsellor or be the therapist or be the professional that's serving the end client, but yet, you're connecting people with the resources and the wisdom that you've kind of gathered along the way. It's like an RSS feed where you like, just pulling it all together and disseminating it in a way that's going to be useful for people.

Jenny: Yeah, and I think that's a role that works for my interest and my background and my, you know – and one of the things I try to do also, if there's a grief program in a different city, you know, to highlight that. I heard from a listener for example from Atlanta that didn't know that Kate's Club was right there. And it turned out it was right on her daily route and didn't know it was there. And so, I feel like by helping to get the word out about resources like that, and I've featured different programs in other communities as well, you know...

Krista: You are in Seattle, creating a podcast that connects a listener in Atlanta with a resource in Atlanta.

Jenny: Yeah, and literally right down the street from her in Atlanta. Which is awesome. And she was so kind to write to me and let me know because otherwise I would have had no idea that it was helpful in that way.

Krista: It's interesting, the reason that you have gotten into this work, it feels a lot like the reason I did too. And I relate so much to what you said about going to Amazon. Although I'm pretty sure I went to Google. But it was just like, "Young-ish widow, younger widow, lost husband in

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accident...” like, I couldn’t find anything that felt like it was my age, my situation. I couldn’t even relate to the term widow. That didn’t feel appropriate. So, just figuring out, how can I create what I wish would have existed?

Jenny: Yeah, I mean, it gives passion and motivation to the project too because this isn’t like some abstract, “Oh, I’m working on something that maybe will help some people.” This is like, “No, this is an important topic, and I know it’s important because I’ve been through it and I’ve talked to a lot of other people who have.” And so, it kind of gives you that, I don’t know, motivation to keep going.

Krista: I’m curious to know, when you kind of look back and you step back and you see 70-plus podcast episodes and countless people that you’ve met and talked to, what do you think has been the most impactful types of things that you have learned or experienced?

Jenny: Yeah, that’s a hard question. How long do we have here because we could...

Krista: I know, we might need to do episode two.

Jenny: One of the things that comes to mind, and it’s along that theme of talking with people who lost a parent when they were young, and one of my guests, his name is Austin Shoecraft – I forget the episode number, probably around six, seven, maybe right before you. He lost his dad when he was like 11 and he is part of this organization called The Dinner Party, which is for – I guess it’s mostly people in their 20s and 30s who have lost a close – I think most of them have lost a sibling or a parent. I suppose you could be a very young widow as well.

And he knew that I was going to be interviewing him and he asked if he could take any questions to chat with his Dinner Party group, to kind of get

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some collective input, anonymously, of course. And so, when I interviewed him, he said one of the themes that emerged from their group's discussion at the table that night was the – and all these people were in their mid to late 20s – this idea of how important it was that that surviving parent figured out how to take care of themselves, figure out how their life is going to – you know, they've had this terrible loss. They've lost their partner. The other parent of now this young person.

These 25 and 30-year-olds were saying that in far too many cases, their surviving parent had ended up basically destroyed by this loss and hadn't, for whatever reason, figured out how they were going to continue living. And I don't mean living-living, but you know fully living. And so now, these 25 and 30-year-olds were taking care of their 50 and 60-year-old parents at a time when they were expecting they would be out building their careers and starting their families and whatever they're doing as young adults. And you know, you think that when your parents are 95, you're going to be helping take care of them. But not when they're 55.

Krista: Yeah, not when they're...

Jenny: Yeah, and so, this theme from these young adults, they said, you know, "This is putting me in a bind. I love my parent. I want to help them. I want to take care of them. But I shouldn't be doing this as a 25-year-old." And tracing it back to them not taking care of themselves after the loss of their spouse.

Krista: Yeah, it so lines up with what I see, which is often that we tell ourselves, as the surviving parent, that we need to be focused on the kids. And so, because we think we're supposed to be worrying about their happiness, which P.S. we can't control, it's not up to us. Then we have the best of intentions, but we don't put ourselves first. We don't figure out how to make ourselves happy. And we tell ourselves that should be lower on the

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priority list and then ultimately, we're less able to help our kids because we aren't helping ourselves. It lines up so much with what I see all the time.

Jenny: Yeah, and I had never thought of this extra wrinkle. Like, I know it's important to take care of me for me. But this added idea that it's also important to take care of me so as not to place an additional burden on my kids down the road.

Krista: Yeah, because the place that we parent from or live from emotionally, when we're meeting our own needs and we're figuring out how to navigate our own grieving and we are figuring out how to create life after whatever has happened, when we figure that out for ourselves, then we can be so much more effective to those that look to us, children or whoever. You can't pour from an empty cup. It's a cliché, but it's kind of accurate.

Jenny: Yeah.

Krista: It's funny, I had a conversation with a woman the other day, exact same thing. She said her college-age daughter had just told her – she was home because of COVID from school – and she said, “I recognize how stuck I was when my college-age daughter,” I think she said she was 23, “Said to me, don't worry, mom, I will take care of you.” Basically, “When the money is gone, I've got you.”

And she was like, “Wow, I have got to figure this out for myself. I cannot have my young adult daughter taking on the responsibility of managing my life.” But here she is several years into it and that's what kind of woke her up a little bit. Amazing. So, what do you wish that you had known sooner?

Jenny: That is a really good question. And I think, one of the things that I didn't understand early on was the importance of being honest with kids about difficult topics. And fortunately, I did get some advice early on when

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my husband was sick. A friend of mine – well, I had a CaringBridge journal where I was keeping everybody up to date. And it ended up being quite a large community of people, which is wonderful because they were very, very supportive, including the school community, at the school where my kids were at.

And so, the biopsy came back and it was cancer and it was officially glioblastoma. It was such a poor prognosis, you know, they basically couldn't fix it. So, the whole school community knew this. And my friend calls me up and says, "When are you going to tell your kids?"

And I was like, "Wow, I don't know. How do I do this?" And it, of course, totally dreading this and maybe I can defer it or maybe, I don't know. And my friend says, "We told our kids tonight at dinner that it was cancer and they asked if he was going to die and we didn't want to lie to them so we told them yes. We didn't know when, but he would."

And so, my friend says, "Your kids need to hear this from you and they need to hear it tonight so they don't go to school tomorrow and hear it from somebody else on the playground." And I was like – and I knew she was right, but still...

Krista: Kind of forced your hand a little bit.

Jenny: Yeah, but it's this question of how do you best – everybody wants to protect their kids. And I think there's a lot of confusion around, like, is it better to, quote unquote, protect them by hiding something from them? Or is it better to protect them by telling them the truth?

And at first, I really didn't know. I didn't have any inherent – I didn't have any experience with this. I had no idea. I wanted somebody to tell me how you do this. And I've come to realize now, through talking to all these different children's grief experts and childhood development experts and

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various people, that it really is important to be honest with them and it actually causes a bigger problem, that it is so important that the kids be able to trust their surviving parent.

And if that surviving parent hides something from them, at some point, the kids will find out because it can't be kept secret forever. And then you're going to rupture that trust. And that trust and that relationship between the surviving parent and the kid is so important, both for its own sake and as a pattern for future relationships with anybody down the road, whether it's friends or partners or anybody.

And I heard from a friend recently, she said that – I had put something on Facebook about being honest with kids and she said, “This is such an important message.” Somebody in her neighborhood, the dad had died and the mom told the kids that it was a heart attack, but it was a suicide.

And word got out in the community, like the official line is it's a heart attack. The kids don't know. But all the other adults in the neighborhood and whatever, the adults knew the truth. And so, my friend was one of the neighbors, not part of the family. But she's like, it is so hard to have the burden of having to lie to these kids.

So, eventually, it will come up. And this person I interviewed recently, she said it so well. Her name is Elke Thompson and she's amazing. And she's in Scotland. I don't know if you had a chance to listen to that interview, but oh my gosh, I loved her.

Krista: She's the author?

Jenny: Yes, she wrote two children's books. And she gave a TEDx Talk which I watched and in the TEDx talk she says it so well. She says she doesn't think that she's protecting her kids by hiding hard things from them. That she's protecting her kids by equipping them with the skills to become

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emotionally mature, emotionally resilient adults who can handle hard things. And I just thought that was so amazing because I, you know...

Krista: It's everything, Jenny. It's everything. We hide. We don't want our kids to experience negative emotion because we weren't taught that negative emotions aren't problems. They aren't problems. Emotions aren't. And if we ever want our kids to be resilient, we have to give them opportunities to actually experience life and not just constantly try to shelter them from the things that make them stronger, the things that make them better-equipped to be adults in the world.

Jenny: Exactly, and hiding these hard things from them is not going to make them equipped to be adults in the world. It's going to then hamper them in some way down the road. So now, this is very, very consistent with everything I've heard on all the latest thinking on children and grief and difficult topics.

I don't think this is always the way it's been. And it's not maybe what people know from whatever experiences they might have had as a child or if we go back 20, 30, and 40 years, I don't think people would have been advocating this. So, I think there's a lot of older idea still around out there about the best ways to do this.

Krista: And I think we see it too. If you look at just parenting styles in general, not even grief-related, but this whole concept of helicopter parenting or lawnmower parenting, where we go in front of our kids and we try and blaze this trail and remove all of the obstacles because we think that that's helping our children. But what it's really doing is depriving them of opportunities to become resilient, to develop the skills that they need to then later go out and face what is real in the world. But it comes from good intention.

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Jenny: It does. It does and that's the thing. It's a matter of – I really felt like I don't know. When my friend says, "When are you going to tell your kids?" I don't know. I don't know what's the right thing. Is it right to tell them? Is it right not to tell them? Is it right to tell them maybe they can fix it? Is it right to – I don't know. Will somebody please tell me?

Krista: Yeah, so many times, I think, we get ourselves hung up asking that question as though there is a right that exists objectively outside of us. We hold ourselves back from taking action because we're so concerned that we're going to get it wrong, but really, the only thing that ever even makes something wrong is that we choose to believe that it is. And that's always a choice that we can make.

We can always look back on any decision we've ever made and say, "You know what? I made the best decision for me at the time. I did the best I could with what I knew. It is the decision I made, therefore it was the right decision for me." And still learn from it and apply the lesson going forward, but not get ourselves so wrapped up and so frozen sometimes because we're so worried that we're going to do it wrong.

Jenny: Well, and maybe not beating yourself up if some decision from the past, now maybe you know more and you wish you did it differently, but you can't beat yourself up because you were doing the best you had with the information you had at the time.

Krista: Yes, I don't think there's any possible way to go through a loss, but especially loss, without getting it, quote unquote, wrong. We're all going to stick our foot in our mouths. We're all going to say the thing we wish we hadn't said. We're all going to do the thing we wish, with hindsight, that we hadn't done. But can we just be a little more compassionate towards ourselves after it's happened and know that we were doing the best job we could do with what we knew? And sometimes, that means we're not rock star parents.

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Jenny: Well, and you can always go back to your kid and say, “Look, I’ve been thinking a lot about how this went and, you know, I wish I had done this differently and here’s now,” you know, let’s say you tell the kid it’s a heart attack when it was really a suicide and later you find out that you’ve got to fix that. You can’t let them keep thinking it’s a heart attack.

You know, it’s always better to go back and say, “Look, I didn’t know how to handle this. I was trying to protect you and I thought I was handling this the right way and now I know that really I need to be honest with you, and so let me...” I heard an example recently where some kid came into a grief program, you know, a new participant, and the person says to the kid, “Oh how did your parent die?” And the kid says, “well my dad died of suicide, but don’t tell my mom, she thinks it’s a heart attack.”

Krista: Oh...

Jenny: I know. And yeah, so...

Krista: What I’m curious to know, what has surprised you that you’ve learned that maybe you didn’t expect to learn in all of these interviews that you’ve done, or just in life experience, maybe, since your husband died that’s been surprising?

Jenny: Well one thing that I didn’t know that’s a little surprising is that it’s okay not to have all the answers. Because you’re used to – as a parent, you’re kind of conditioned, if your kid says, “Why can’t I have dessert before dinner?” you have to give them an answer. “Why do I have to go to bed now?” you have an answer. “Why do I have to wear my seatbelt,” or whatever? You have answers for those things.

And when you start to deal with death and loss and cancer and all these difficult topics, it’s like, there’s going to be a bunch of questions you don’t have the answer to. And some of them are because the doctors don’t know

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yet. But it's okay to say, "I don't know. Here's what I do know. We're going to the doctor next week and I will update you as soon as I have more information," that kind of thing. Some of them may be hard questions but you can go research the answer together.

The kid asks some question about cancer or cremation or whatever they're thinking about, and those things do have answers. If your kid really wants to know how cremation works, you can go together and get an answer to that question. Some of them don't have answers, like, "Why did dad have to die?" Or, "Why did I have to lose my dad when I was 10?" or eight, or six, or whatever.

And the idea that you don't have to – well, you can't have an answer, so you don't have to pretend to try to have an answer. And that the real thing to do is to connect with the kid around that emotion. "I don't know why dad had to die, and you're right, it's not fair, and you're right, it sucks. And you're right, you feel sad, that's totally understandable." And validating those emotions. That is the task in that moment is validating the emotion as opposed to, "I need an answer," or, "I need to put some silver lining twist on it like, but it's going to be okay because X, Y, Z, something else..."

Krista: Yeah, so even – so, what I think I hear you saying is not only are negative emotions not problems we have to fix with answers. We don't have to try to take our kids' sadness away with some sort of silver lining thought. But even uncertainty is not an emotion that we need to fix. We can make space to just not know.

Jenny: Yeah, because there are some things you're just not going to be able to – why did my dad have to be the one that got brain cancer? Don't know... But let's talk about what that experience is like for you. Let's talk about how you're feeling about that. Let's talk about anything around that's a connection topic around that, as opposed to the actual question because

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you can't answer that one. But some of them, you can. How does glioblastoma work? Well, I don't know...

Krista: but why did this have to happen to us? You couldn't answer that one. Yeah. And really even, I think it's an interesting thing that we're all grappling with, with the COVID-19 stuff that's happening right now is because we aren't really very well-versed in allowing for uncertainty to exist as a part of our life experience, that now that we're having a lot more questions that can't be answered and a lot more of what we would consider to be normal being challenged, it's really challenging for people because we aren't used to just being okay with uncertainty. And it's actually kind of a useful skill to have.

I wonder too – so, I'm always thinking about things that kind of frustrate me, like what do I want to teach and how do I want to help people and what are the patterns that I'm seeing. So, one of the things that literally just makes me want to, makes my skin crawl, is when I hear the term new normal misused. And what I mean by that is when people use it in a way that gives them hope and inspiration and they feel like, "Okay, I can't go back to the normal that I had, but I can create a new normal and I can feel good about that new normal."

But so often I hear people say – they say it with kind of this sense of resignation, like, "I better just get used to my new normal," as though they can't love life again. So, I wonder if you see patterns like that, what is it that you see that kind of gets under your skin that you have noticed or you find frustrating about maybe the information that's out there or...

Jenny: Well, thoughts about the resiliency of kids. And it's interesting, I tried to ask a lot of my guests about – because it's kind of a conventional wisdom. Kids are resilient. I'm doing air quotes here...

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Krista: We both do a lot of air quotes, Jenny. I'm, like, fist pumping, you're typing and...

Jenny: Which we have to then verbalize out loud for the listeners since they're not seeing us, yeah. You know, this is a really tricky one. And some people will say, "Of course kids are resilient." And some people will say, "No they're not."

I think that – well, Lane Hendricks at Kate's Club had a really good analogy. I love this analogy. She said that some people like to think that kids are like those super-balls, the bouncy balls that they just bounce right back. But her analogy was they're more like a basketball. Basketballs bounce pretty well, but they do need some help. And this idea that, you know, many kids are going to need some kind of support, whether it's from you, the parent, whether it's some kind of a grief program group where they can connect with other kids that have similar experiences, whether it's more. Maybe it's therapy. Maybe it's, depending on their particular situation. But just not to assume.

I think a lot of people assume. They're young. They'll forget. They're young. They never knew their parent, so it's no big deal. Or something that kind of dismisses the fact that they might – and I'm not saying to assume that your kid is going to have big problems. But I think it's really worth trying to consider. And it can be different for different kids in the same family too. Like, which if your kids maybe needs more support. Which of your kids maybe can go to Camp Erin once and be like, "That was awesome. You know what, I'm feeling pretty good about integrating the loss. And yes, things are still hard but I'm kind of moving forward here."

There's actually a person I'd like to interview who's doing research about traumatic grief and that there's some percentage – and I think she calls it a not-insignificant minority. There wasn't a number on it. But there's a big

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enough chunk of kids who are really going to struggle without more support.

Many kids will do just fine with some support, but there are a bunch that will need more support. And so, trying to somehow – and not that there's easy answers, and I'm trying to learn more about this – trying to figure out, is your kid one of the ones that needs more support or less support, and not make assumptions about what they are or are not going to need.

Krista: Yeah, okay, so it's individual to the child and we kind of want to find the balance where we're not treating them with kid gloves, which is ironic, that phrase, as it relates to this. We aren't withholding information. We're being honest. We aren't trying to shelter them from the realities of anything, but we also aren't assuming that they're so resilient that we can just walk away and not provide the support that maybe they do need or would benefit from, which would be different for every kid.

Jenny: Yeah, and the other really interesting thing – because, when you hear traumatic grief, it's most likely that somebody's going to have traumatic grief, whether they're an adult or a child, after something like a homicide or a suicide. They're more likely to have traumatic grief. But if you exclude those and you look at other types of death, that adults are more likely to have traumatic grief after a sudden surprise death; an accident, a surprise cardiac incident, something that catches them unaware. A kid is more likely to have traumatic grief after a prolonged illness.

Krista: That's fascinating.

Jenny: Yeah, I thought that was really, really interesting. And there's probably some different aspects to it. One is that kids don't apparently get the concept of anticipatory grief. They may not necessarily even know; they don't understand that because this person has cancer or because this and

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this are happening that my parent's going to die in six or 12 or three years or whatever.

But also that, if you look at my kids, my husband was sick for eight months. So, eight months is a lot of disruption in the life of an eight-year-old. The percentage of their life, it's a lot of disruption. And many times, the family's life is completely turned over when you have maybe family members or friends watching the kids for extended periods of time.

Maybe the parent with the cancer or the illness and the other parent are going together to some other city for long periods for treatments or trials or something, leaving the kids in the care of loving people and they're cared for in terms of life. But it's deeply upsetting and traumatic and a disruption to life as they knew it. And so, all that kind of, you know, upheaval around that ends up, in the case of children, making a prolonged illness like that end up being more traumatic in their life.

Krista: Yeah, I think what that speaks to too is we want to be careful when we use the term trauma. Because what's traumatic to one person isn't necessarily traumatic to another. And so, I think sometimes, it's easy for us to make associations of things that we might find traumatic and then just to assume that other people would have those same responses to those same circumstances. But it isn't true.

Some things can be really traumatic to an adult that aren't traumatic to another because of how we interpret what's happened. And so, it makes a lot of sense to me what you're saying, that yeah, for a child, because trauma isn't universal it is determined by our response to whatever it is that's happened, that they would have such a different experience. It makes a lot of sense.

Jenny: Yeah, and I think it's just important to understand kind of the different possibilities and the different scenarios and the different options

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and what the issues might be so then you can think about your own family, your own self, your own kids, and like, “Okay, if I have more awareness of all these different things, what is happening with my kid and myself and my other kid and my other kid.”

Krista: Right, because none of it is formulaic.

Jenny: Exactly.

Krista: It's like, I'm imagining your book. It's going to be a handbook, but it's not like somebody can just go sequentially through your handbook and, like, poof, success. It's really just, it's got to be guidelines. It's got to be possibilities. It's got to be trends.

Jenny: Which is why I'm having such a hard time figuring out the structure and the outline because, if I could go, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, if you do these things then wash your hands, you're done. Your kids are going to be like, “Everything's good now...” And yet, it's not like it's just a complete, like, throw your hands up in the air, there's nothing to do so just cross your fingers and hope everything works out.

And so, figuring out, well, what is that? What are those guidelines or guideposts or yardsticks or considerations? Yeah, but what do I need to put on the radar screen? What should people be thinking about for short-term, long-term, medium-term? And then not to mention like, if your kid is a baby or a medium sized child or a teenager, the issues or whatever are going to be different.

Not that one is going to be better, worse, hard, or easy or whatever, it's just you're maybe going to expect different things. And something that's going to be challenging for one age of kid is going to be no big deal for the other age of kid, but for that kid, something else is going to be harder.

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Krista: Are you going to be addressing adult children in your book? Or do you have in mind it's like, 18 and under?

Jenny: Through college age.

Krista: Through college age, okay. Because so many of my clients have grown children. I think people hear Widowed Mom Podcast and they just sometimes assume that it's always kids that live under the same roof with you. But there's a lot of unique facets to relationships with adult children. Their thoughts about mom dating again and what dad would have wanted and sometimes the dynamics can change in terms of how the children treat the mom now that dad has gone. And so there's some interesting things.

Jenny: Originally, I was going to do up to 18 or up to high school and I realized - I mean, even for the podcast scope. But then I realized no, that college age group is still - they might be living away at college but they're still very much, still in the family orbit. And so I expanded it to include that, but I got to draw the line somewhere.

Krista: Well, we'll just give it a decade and then when your children...

Jenny: And then I'll add volume 10 will be like, now your kid is 30.

Krista: Will be the next volume as they age.

Jenny: Maybe it will be, yeah. I don't know.

Krista: Parenting for grandparents.

Jenny: I'll never get the magnum opus out if I have to.

Krista: I know, I know. Let's see, what else do I want to know? There's so many things. So here's the thing that I'm interested in that I would love your

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perspective on. So you know that I am fascinated by the concept of post-traumatic growth and really what I want for my listeners is for them to be able to know that they can still absolutely love life.

Not because they have to or should, but they can use the loss as a way to propel themselves to the next chapter of life that they love, to reconsider what's important to them and to become more resilient and that just because the world came crashing down doesn't mean we can't rebuild the building and we can't rebuild it in even more magnificent fashion.

So I'm wondering what your thoughts are in terms of your life experience. What has changed for you in terms of your resilience and your perspective and the way that you find meaning in life?

Jenny: Yeah, that's a great question. And you know, I was telling someone recently, sometimes I think of it this way. My husband got half of a life, give or take. He was 44. So maybe that's half a life. Who knows? And I feel like if I kind of live the rest of my life - is this a G-rated show?

Krista: We can put an explicit if we need to.

Jenny: Well, if I live half-ass for the rest of my life, that would be kind of like, doubly tragic. It's already tragic that he got half of a life. I can't change that now. I don't have a magic wand. I can't erase what happened in May of 2015 when he started to show the signs of that cancer and what happened in January of 2016 when he died. Can't magic wand that away.

I can control what I do for the next 50 years. I hope it's 50. Actually, I'm shooting for 105 so I think that's 57. I don't know. I'll have to get the calculator out. And the other thing I read somewhere recently, if my life was the exact same five years from now as it is now, or actually, let me not say right now. Let me say - let's back myself up to that first year after my husband died.

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If my life was going to be the exact same in five years as it was then and then to say to myself, would that be okay with me? And if the answer is no, or especially if the answer is hell no, then now is the time to do something and start taking whatever those steps are so that five years from now, my life isn't the same as it is now.

Krista: Yeah.

Jenny: And framing it that way helped me a lot because I do think it's hard from day to day. Well you know, today's okay, tomorrow's okay, the next day's okay, whatever. But if today, tomorrow, and the next day and the next day and the next day and that day five years from now still look like tomorrow...

Krista: Would you be okay with it?

Jenny: Yeah. Am I okay with that or not? And when I realized that the answer was no, then I started saying alright, now I - I think I said way back in the beginning there's this dual reality like my husband getting sick five years ago seems like just the other day and it seems like 20 years ago. Both. Both true. They both seem true.

And I don't have to reconcile those. And there's also kind of a dual - now I have to choose what comes next in my life. But it's also true that I get to choose. And those can both be true too. And by focusing on I get to choose what's next so that I'm not just kind of dragging my way through the next 50 years, that has been really important to me.

Krista: It feels so different emotionally when you think of it that way. You get to choose. I also think we have to choose the way that we want to think about it in a way that works for us, and that clearly works for you because when you think it, I can tell, it feels good to you when you think I get to choose.

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But some people might be listening to this and they might think that same thought and they might not feel good when they think it. And so I always want my listeners to know like, we have to do what works for us. We have to pick thoughts that feel good to us and help us move the direction that we want to go. And it's totally fine if what works for me or what works for you isn't what works for everyone else.

But we always have a choice of how we want to see what it is that has happened. So important. You know, the other thing I have to say, I don't remember how it came to pass that I found out that you and I are in the same sorority. Do you remember? Did you tell me or did I tell you? How did we even find out?

Jenny: I feel like maybe I was looking at your LinkedIn profile. Maybe do you have it listed on there or something?

Krista: I just remember because I was so fascinated by your story and what you were doing and I just thought it was lovely. And the motto of Delta Gamma which was our sorority is "Do Good," for those people who don't know. And so I just remember when I heard that about you that you were Delta Gamma, I just thought, "Of course she is."

Like of course. Here is this person who has gone through this experience who has now made it her life's work to go and be a resource and help other parents so selflessly. Of course. It was just such a cool moment.

Jenny: Well, we need to go to the Delta Gamma people and say you know, hey look, we got two DG podcasters, same space, different aspects.

Krista: Do you know they have a podcast now?

Jenny: They do? Really?

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Krista: They do. It's called DG Talks. In fact, I have another client who's actually a DG who we figured that out connection for fun. Okay, nobody cares about that but us. It's fine. Is there anything else that you wanted to talk about or any other advice that you have? Wisdom, pearls, anything you wish that we had covered?

Jenny: You know, we've covered so much here. Let me think. You know, well, I didn't say much about the memoir and I know, I don't want to keep your listeners too long here. This has been so wonderful and so long so thank you for sticking with this.

But I am working on a memoir now and it's based on the CaringBridge journal that I had when my husband was sick for those eight months. And it was important to me to be the writer of the CaringBridge updates at the time.

Krista: And let's tell people because not everybody knows what CaringBridge is. So CaringBridge is kind of when you are going through a long-term diagnosis, or it doesn't even have to be something that results in death or anything, but it's a way to communicate with a lot of people who are interested in following the journey without having to send a whole bunch of individual texts. It's a service that you can sign up for. And so then you publish these posts to CaringBridge and then everyone can just kind of follow your journey.

Jenny: Yeah, and essentially like blog posts except that you don't have to create your own blog and figure all that out while you're dealing with this health crisis that they've created the structure for you and you just - you can post updates. And so in the beginning, I think - I actually did think, "Oh, I'll just send people texts and kind of keep them updated."

And my sister was like, "You might want to think about doing a CaringBridge journal." I was like, no, but then I realized pretty quickly that

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that was not going to be sustainable. So I think she created the first post like, you know, he's out of surgery. And then after that, I took it over.

And as I went, I really was sharing reflections and things in addition to - not just the practical details of, you know, and I had eight months of a lot of posts and of doing this. And so I realized that it was a window into a period of time that would potentially be interesting to different people, but I really realized in this pandemic, realized that what I was doing at the time was I was parenting through a health crisis that turned my world inward and upside down.

And you know, that's kind of a microcosm of what we're all trying to parent through this global health crisis that's turning our worlds inward and upside down collectively. And I think there's certain kind of universal - combined with the things I learned then and the things I've learned since then and what I'm doing is I have the journal entries, but then I'm adding reflections on after each one, kind of like the here's the five years later view.

And here's what I wish I knew. Here's what I did here, but I wish I had handled this with the kids differently or I wish, you know. So because our community was so incredibly supportive, there's that element of how do you support? How do you be an ally to friends who are going through crises like this?

And I learned a tremendous amount from all the people around us who supported us. And so I'm also sharing that back to. Like, how do you support people?

Krista: I love that.

Jenny: Yeah, so I wrote the first draft last August and it's kind of - I've been trying to carve out the time to start doing the editing and I finally decided to

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do encore episodes of the podcast this month in order to carve out a little more time.

Krista: Some bandwidth.

Jenny: Yeah, it's a mental space and the time. And last August, I did the same thing. I just was like, I was getting frustrated that I wasn't getting progress and I was like, I'm putting the podcast on reruns and I'm just going to do nothing but write this thing in August. And I wrote a thousand words a day.

Anyway, I was getting frustrated recently again. I said you know what, that worked last time, I'm going to try it again this time. So it seems to be working so far and it's been kind of fun because I've been challenging myself to do a daily video to keep myself accountable.

Krista: Oh fun.

Jenny: Because writing the first draft, it was easy to say a thousand words. That's the accountability mechanism, right? And posted on social. And you can count, how many words did I do? Did I do a thousand or did I not do a thousand? When you're editing, how do you do that?

Krista: Right.

Jenny: So I was like, I'll do a video, I'll put it on YouTube and social and stuff each day and kind of report on what I did. But it's not just reporting. It's also sharing reflections on what I'm doing.

Krista: And bringing people along in the journey, which I think people really value.

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Jenny: Yeah. And today, I posted actually shortly before we got on this call, I posted a video. I had written a draft of the back cover description because ideally, that should really encapsulate the themes that I'm trying to bring out and is the big picture solid here. So I posted the draft and I read the draft in the video and I said, give me your feedback. Is this clear? Is it compelling? Is it not? Does it speak to you? Who would it speak to? I actually literally posted it right before we got on this call so I have no idea if anybody...

Krista: You can go check. Well, keep me posted when both books are out and available.

Jenny: I will, for sure.

Krista: Let me folks know. So if people want to connect with you Jenny, what are the options?

Jenny: Well, so my website is jennylisk.com. And so you can find the podcast, you can find the updates on the book, you can find articles that I've written, all kinds of things. And actually, I put together a document that's called What I've Learned About Widowed Parenting, kind of some of the highlights of things that I've learned from some of my guests.

Krista: And that's available on your website?

Jenny: Yeah, directly at jennylisk.com/top10.

Krista: We'll put that in the show notes.

Jenny: Okay, yeah. I could send you a link to it too. And jennylisk.com/allies, I put together a similar document just for allies of like, help. Some of it with the pandemic, you're not going to be taking casserole. I wrote it before the pandemic, but there's a lot like how do you write a

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condolence card, what do you say, what do you not say, all these things. And social media, I'm on all the platforms, @liskjenny.

Krista: What's your favorite?

Jenny: Depends on the day probably. You know, I mean, I do a lot on Instagram and Facebook. Twitter, I re-share a lot of interesting things like retweet things whether they're parenting people or grief people. Kind of have a mix. So that's a good place. And then I recently started Pinterest, collecting things there so there's some good stuff, and LinkedIn as well.

Krista: Plenty of options to connect with you. You're everywhere.

Jenny: Well, I was able to get them all to be @liskjenny. You know, originally they were all different and I was like, this is just not going to work. I couldn't even remember myself.

Krista: I don't know who I am on social media. Well listen, thank you so much for coming on the podcast. The work that you're doing, it's really important. I hope people will go and listen to The Widowed Parent Podcast because you just have so much to offer and I think it's amazing the work that you're doing.

Jenny: Well thank you, and thank you for having me here. Kind of feels like we've come full circle a little bit here. You were on my podcast, I'm on your podcast.

Krista: Only a year and a half later.

Jenny: I know, right? Hey, you know, that's cool.

Krista: We'll do it again.

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Jenny: Yes, we should do it again. Absolutely. So yeah, this has been so great talking to you today and catching up and thank you for letting me come here today.

Krista: Thank you so much Jenny. Alright, we'll see you later. Bye.

Jenny: Bye.

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Alright, so I hope you loved my interview with Jenny. As always, if you have feedback on the podcast, if there are more things that you want to hear, let me know, krista@coachingwithkrista.com. And this is airing late May, so probably by the time this airs, our spots are going to be filled for the June Mom Goes on group.

But if you're interested in really having some support and building the next chapter of life, then I encourage you to go to coachingwithkrista.com. Click the request a consultation button and apply if it seems like the program is what you need. Then you and I will hop on the phone and we'll talk through it, make sure it's a good fit.

So that's what we have for you this week. 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.

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