

Ep #54: Navigating Father's Day



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With Your Host

Krista St-Germain

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 54, Navigating Father's Day.

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. How are you doing? Are you stressing about Father's Day? I think a lot of you are. Very common, very normal. In fact, I decided to post in my *Widowed Mom Podcast* Facebook community, just to kind of get a sense of what was on people's minds right now.

And that's what I want to address with this podcast today, is just talk to you about four things that I want you to consider, four things that, if you do them, will absolutely improve your experience of Father's Day.

So, before I do that though, I was browsing through my Mom Goes On coaching group, so that's my private small group of widowed moms that I coach. And I was looking through our online community and I was reading through the victories section. And that's where we're always posting victories and kind of training our brain to celebrate even the littlest of things because, what we focus on, we get more of.

So, we do a lot of celebrating what's going right. And I just wanted to share this with you because this victory made me so happy. Now, I'm not going to read the names because I want to protect the privacy of my client.

But she wrote, "This weekend was one of the best at home in a long time. My daughter and I had fun and truly enjoyed each other's company. We went shopping for clothes yesterday. Normally, this would have resulted in

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screaming and a horrible weekend where we were at each other's throats constantly. Because I'm in better control of my emotions and she's also leaning some of this, we were able to listen to each other and compromise on what was appropriate; a difficult task for a leggy size-two fourteen-year-old girl.

And, when she did melt down once, I gave her space and she worked through it. Then, we went on with our shopping and enjoyed the rest of the day. I can't believe how different things are after just a few months in this program. Thanks, Krista, for helping me start to figure this out and get my relationship with my daughter back."

Seriously, how lucky am I that this is the work I get to do all day every day? I get to help people love their lives and love their relationships and get through whatever is keeping them stuck after the most awful loss. So, thank you, you know who you are. I'm so grateful to be part of your life. I'm so grateful that you are experiencing benefits in your relationship with your daughter and those kinds of things literally just make my day.

So, I'm not going to cry anymore. I'm going to move on and we're going to talk about navigating Father's Day. Okay, I'm going to get it together. So, before we get into this episode, what I also want to recommend is that if you have not listened to episode 11 on Deathiversaries, that you go and you consider listening to that episode because so much of that episode, even though it's related to the anniversary, which I call the deathiversary of your husband's passing, a lot of that episode is so relevant to navigating Father's Day.

So, go listen to that one, if you haven't, episode 11. And I'm going to guess, not that there's a right or wrong answer here, but I'm going to guess that the emotions that you are likely feeling as we approach Father's Day are probably dread, worried, nervous, anxious, sad, maybe angry, maybe

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scared. These are the ones I'm seeing the most often and have seen the most often in my Widowed Mom clients. And those are the ones that I have experienced.

It doesn't matter. All of them are okay. There's nothing you should or shouldn't be feeling as this day comes up. I wanted to do this episode and release it a little bit ahead of time so that you would have, kind of, time to ready yourself and that you would hopefully spend less time stressing and less time worrying and less time dreading this day. You can be ready for it, alright.

So, I've got four things that I want you to consider. Number one, many of you are very worried that you're going to make this day worse for your kids. You aren't going to make it worse for your kids, okay. I promise you this. And worrying about it is not serving you and it's not serving them and it won't make things better. It's just going to consume your precious energy and it's just going to get your brain caught up in a spin cycle that makes you miserable.

You're not going to make it worse for your kids. The truth is that they lost their dad, and that just sucks. So, whether you bring it up or don't bring it up, whether you ignore the day, whether you celebrate the day, none of it makes the loss easier. None of it makes the loss more difficult. The loss is what it is.

And you can't control the thoughts and feelings of your kids no matter what you do. They're each going to have their own response. And whatever their response is, it's okay. Let them have it. So, that's the first thing. You're not going to make it worse for your kids. And I know you're worried about it, a lot of you. I hear it from you. But I want to give you permission to just put that worry down.

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It's not going to be any better or worse, no matter how you deal with this one day. The loss is what it is, okay. That's the first thing. The second thing, don't minimize anyone's feelings, yours or theirs; especially yours. Because a lot of you tend to focus so much on your kids, which comes from the most loving motherly place, but listen; however you feel is okay today, and that day, and any day.

So, don't minimize your feelings. Acknowledge them. Let them be. I know you don't want to upset them, but pretending that you aren't upset in front of your kids does not take away their pain. It doesn't make them any less upset. Their upset is not coming from you.

Whether you cry or not does not make them think differently about this loss. It doesn't make them experience this loss any differently, better or worse. Now, I'm not encouraging tsunami wailing, which is what I like to call that uncontrollable crying that might be scary to a child. I'm not encouraging that.

But telling yourself that your kids can't handle tears or that you shouldn't be crying in front of them can really backfire. We want to send the message to our kids, no matter what their age is, that tears are normal. Tears are natural. They're totally acceptable.

And not only is sadness acceptable, but so is every other emotion for that matter; anger, guilt, frustration, sadness, joy, relief. All of the emotions are acceptable and we want to normalize them for ourselves and for our children. And it doesn't matter if this is your first Father's Day. It doesn't matter if this is your 40th Father's Day without him. All of the emotions are okay.

So, I want to encourage you to not minimize anyone's feelings, yours or theirs. Make space for all the feelings. I know a lot of you get worried that

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you don't know how you're going to feel ahead of time, but I just want you to decide to give yourself permission to feel however you feel, however you feel is okay.

And you don't have to make however you're feeling mean anything. It means nothing about your progress. It means nothing about your love for him. If you're feeling overly sad, it doesn't mean you're not healing. If you're feeling joy, it doesn't mean you didn't love him, okay. Make space for all the feelings and don't make them mean anything. Especially don't weaponize them against yourselves.

We're so good at this. We're so good at taking our emotions and saying, "I should be feeling something else," or, "I shouldn't be feeling this way." I give you permission, I beg of you, because I care about you, please don't do that to yourself. Please, don't.

So, the first thing, you aren't going to make it worse for your kids. The second, don't minimize anyone's feelings, yours or theirs. And the third, show yourself and those around you some grace. No one is going to do it perfectly. You are not going to do it perfectly. Everyone is going to do the best they can.

We hold such high standards when it comes to some of these special days that we could never possibly live up to. And we get these ideals in our mind, and then when things don't go according to plan or we feel differently than we'd imagined or our kids react differently than we'd imagined or hoped, then we make it mean something and we aren't kind to ourselves.

We don't show ourselves and we don't show others the grace that would make us feel so much better if we did. So, I want you to be nice to yourself. Other people are probably going to have opinions about that, about what

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you do and how you do it. We're going to show them some grace too because everybody wakes up doing the best they can at life.

This is my firm belief and this belief has brought me so much peace. Everyone wakes up, nobody wakes up trying to suck at life. We all wake up trying to do the best job we can with what we know. So, show yourself some grace. Show the people around you some grace.

And the fourth and final thing I want to offer to you is that you get to celebrate Father's Day however you want. You get to decide. And if you notice the word should creeping into your inner dialogue, let it go. Put it down.

There is nothing you should do. You get to decide, okay. Give yourself that permission. If you can't give yourself that permission, I want you to hear my voice giving you permission. You can spend this day however you want to spend it. There is no morally right or wrong way to do it. Your way, the way you decide, is the right way.

Other people will have opinions. Let them. They always do have opinions. Your job is not to make other people happy. Your job is to make you happy. That's the only person you can ever make happy. It's you. And I promise you, when we take responsibility for our own happiness, that's when we're best able to support our children.

So, when other people have opinions, you still get to decide what you want to do. All options are on the table. You can do something serious. You can do something lighthearted. What did he love doing? Where did he love going? What are the funny memories, the fun memories, the happy memories that you want to share about him?

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Do you want to take a trip? Do you want to tell stories? Do you want to have donuts with dad? Do you want to do sort of a community service project or make a donation in his honor or do something nice for a neighbor? Maybe you want to let your kids pick the destination. Maybe you want to let them pick the activities. Maybe each kid gets to pick something. You get to choose what you want to do.

I have a lot more ideas in the Deathiversaries podcast that I mentioned. So, if you're looking for actual strategies and actionable ideas, definitely go listen to that episode.

Another thing I want you to consider, because I hear you asking me this question, some of you are in a new relationship and you're worried that you can't both celebrate Father's Day with whoever it is that you're dating or married to now or in a relationship with, and you're worried that you can't honor both. Of course, you can. Of course, you can.

But remember that what we think about, we bring about. So, if you're convinced that you can't do both, then that's what you're going to prove true. So, I want you to ask your brain to show you how it's possible that you can honor both.

And for some of you, that might mean not someone new that you're dating. That might mean your own father, or that might mean your husband's father. There are lots of fathers. And when we tell ourselves that we can't honor all the fathers or we can't do it in the right way, then we're going to prove that true.

So, your brain will show you that it's possible to honor all of the fathers that you want to honor. But it will only show you that when you decide that it's possible. So, decide that.

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Okay, so, in summary, you're not going to make it worse for your kids. And worrying about it is not serving you or them. So, please put the worry down. You have my permission. Don't minimize anybody's feelings, your feelings or other people's feelings. It's going to be different for everyone.

Yes, the same person died, but everyone has a different relationship with that person. You do, all of your kids do, his family does. One person, many relationships, lots of thoughts and feelings, all of them are okay.

Number three show yourself and those around you some grace, because nobody's going to do it perfectly and everyone's going to do it the best they can. And lastly, decide how you want to celebrate it. you are the boss here. You get to drive, alright.

I hope that's useful for you. If you need anymore support, as always, reach out. You can always email me at krista@coachingwithkrista.com and, of course, if you are interested in doing this work and taking it to a deeper level, then I'm now accepting applications for the July cohort of my small group coaching program. And you can find out information about that by going to coachingwithkrista.com and clicking on the request a consultation button.

That is what I have for you as we prepare for Father's Day. I hope it really serves you. I hope it's what you needed to hear. And, as always, I love you, and you've got this. Alright, take care, everybody. I'll see you next week, 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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Text the word PLAN to 1-858-widows-1, or visit 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 and get your free game plan today.