

**Ep #57: The Phrase “New Normal”
– Helpful or Hurtful?**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 57, The Phrase “New Normal” – Helpful or Hurtful?

Welcome to the *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 truly look forward to. Here’s your host, Master Certified Life Coach, grief expert, widow, and mom, Krista St-Germain.

Hey there. Welcome to another episode of the podcast. If this is the first time you’ve listened, welcome. I hope you find this podcast to be really useful, no matter where you are in your journey.

And a little bit about what’s been going on in my world lately – of course, I record these podcasts usually a little bit ahead of time, just because I like to plan in advance like that, it feels a little more comfortable to me to not have to worry about it at the last minute. But, in my world, it just feels like it’s been nuts lately. With everything going on in the world, it’s just been nuts.

So, in my own personal work and self-coaching, I’ve been taking a good hard look at what it means to be anti-racism and kind of challenging my own unintentional thinking about the subject. I think I’ve been going along in my life kind of thinking I was perhaps more aware of what was going on in my brain than maybe I was.

And as with any subject, racism, anti-racism, money, you name it, it doesn’t really matter the subject that we’re talking about, I just think it’s a good reminder that all of us have unintentional thought patterns, unintentional belief systems that we’ve picked up just by being humans on the planet and just by living in the culture that we live in.

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There’s nothing to be ashamed about for having picked up some of those thoughts and belief systems. It doesn’t mean that because thoughts appear in our brain or because our brain has neural pathways toward a particular belief, it doesn’t mean that we are those thoughts or that we are that belief. It doesn’t mean that, if that belief is there, that we can’t change it if we find that we no longer want it. And it doesn’t mean that we did anything wrong because that thought or belief showed up in our brain.

And as long as we think that we’ve done something wrong, because we think in a particular way, then we’re naturally going to want to avoid doing the work required to change our thinking. We’re naturally going to avoid it. Our brain is designed to seek pleasure, avoid pain, and be efficient.

So, I’m noticing that same kind of gut reaction, initial response from my brain. Which is like, “Oof, this is a little uncomfortable, to look at some of these thoughts.” And so, I just keep reminding myself, “Listen, it’s okay that these thoughts are there. I’m not my thoughts.”

You are not your thoughts. We are the watcher of our thoughts. We’re the ones that gets to think about our thoughts. And just because we have thoughts in our brain, it doesn’t mean anything about us. And if we decide that it does, then we don’t have any ability to change those thoughts.

So, I encourage you to just decide that whatever showed up in your brain from who knows where, it says nothing about you. And when you decide to believe that and you just see that, “Oh, this is just the software that my computer has been running. But if I don’t like the software, I can change it.”

Then you can start to do the work in whatever area of like you’re wanting to do it in, whether it’s about you and your thought about yourself and what

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you're capable of or it's thoughts about other people or it's thoughts about money or thoughts about your weight or thoughts about some habit you want to change or thoughts about your career or thoughts about you as a parent, you know, as a widowed mom or thoughts about you entering into another relationship.

It doesn't matter. We just want to have an open mind and an open heart. Thoughts appear in our brain. Some of them serve us. Some of them don't. This is the magic of coaching. This is why I'm so into what I do, right, to help people see that whatever's in there, we can change it. We don't have to keep it just because it showed up.

So, I've been doing a lot of thought work on myself, just trying to be more aware, trying to educate myself, showing myself some grace and compassion and really being willing to look at what's happening in my brain and maybe some things are there that I didn't really think were there and really don't want to keep. And I'm going to do that work.

And that's part of my continuous growth and part of why I believe I'm on the planet; to keep growing and keep evolving into that next best more intentional, more conscious, more aware version of myself. So, that's that. Also, I'm so happy, I finished my master coach certification.

You might have heard me, in episode 51, on how to overcome perfectionism with failure. That was part of my master coach certification project and I finished. Yea verily, I am a master coach. And I take that quite seriously. I take what I do quite seriously and I'm so very proud to have that designation and to have worked through all the work that it took for me to get it.

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And a lot of that, to be honest, is self-work. Because if you can't coach yourself, then it really limits what you're able to do for other people. So, not only have I up-leveled the coaching that I'm able to provide widowed moms, but I've really up-leveled my own self-coaching practice, which makes me more effective as a coach for others. And it also just makes me a more intentional version of myself, which is what I want. It's the magic of coaching.

Okay, so let's jump into today's subject. This phrase – I'm hearing it a whole lot lately. But for once, I'm not hearing it as it relates to grief as much. I'm hearing it as it related to COVID-19 and the pandemic, “New Normal.”

And I'll be honest with you. This phrase for me is, more often than not, like fingernails on a chalkboard. I hear it and it's like, “Make it stop.” So, I wanted to do an episode where we talk about it because I do think it can be helpful, and it can be hurtful. And I want to talk about the difference and I want to give you some things to consider so that you have some insight into how you're using it in your life. Is it helping you? Is it hurting you?

So, I'm hearing it as it relates to COVID, because people are talking about what is our new normal and can we get used to our new normal and this is the new normal... we're throwing that phrase around a lot of different ways. But I really want to talk about it in the context of grief, in the context of you, as a woman who has lost her partner.

So, new normal can work for us. It can be helpful. It can also be hurtful. It can limit us. It can hold us back. So, the first thing I want you to ask yourself is, when you hear the phrase “New Normal,” how do you feel? Thinking specifically about it as it relates to you as a widowed mom to the

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fact that you have lost your partner, your spouse. When you hear that phrase, how does it feel in your body?

Because remember that thoughts cause feelings. But some thoughts that you might think could be the same thoughts that I might think. And we might have completely different emotions when we think those thoughts. So, this work is very individualized.

So, what’s the emotion. What’s the one word that you feel – and you might have more than one – but what does it feel like in your body when you think about a new normal? This is how you will know if it’s helping you or hurting you.

And the reason we know this is because thoughts cause feelings. So, if you think the thought new normal, or some sentence that comes to mind about a new normal and you feel, let’s say, hopeful, optimistic, encouraged, inspired, motivated, determined, peaceful, accepting, then it’s probably useful to you.

How we feel, as humans, determines how we behave. And those emotions, if you are acting from them, will probably create results that you want in your life. Those actions that you would take from any one of those feelings would probably align you with a result that you desire in life.

If, however, when you think about a new normal you feel something else in your body, you feel hopeless or defeated, resigned, sad, disappointed, that definition, that, whatever the subtext is of new normal for you, “I just have to get used to my new normal...” can you feel the difference?

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So, if the line of thinking about new normal is that now life has to be less than, now life has to be something we settle for, now, since what we were dreaming about is no longer possible, we have to stop dreaming or settle for something less than what we want, that somehow we're now at the effect of what has happened to us. It's that use of new normal that hurts us, that holds us back, that doesn't serve us, that disempowers us.

And that's when it's like fingernails on a chalkboard for me. I can't even stand it. I know how it happens. It makes sense, right? And when we think about new normal in a useful way, of course, it can help us. We aren't ever going to go back to the way life was before. That's to the way life is ever lived. It's always lived forward. We never return to what was because we live life going forward.

It doesn't matter if there was some sort of loss or not. We're always moving forward. So, yes, it won't go back to the way it was because it isn't the way it was. Unless somehow you have figured out time travel – and if that's the case, I wish you would tell me about it. But we haven't. I joke, but we live forwards.

So, we don't go back to the old normal, and we can create the normal feeling again because initially, everything feels so awkward, so foreign, so unknown, so not normal. And that's normal.

It's normal that it doesn't feel normal. It's common that it doesn't feel common. And eventually, whatever changes happen to us in life, they always feel unusual, abnormal, uncomfortable in the beginning until we've practiced them for a while, and then we start feeling normal again.

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So, think about when you graduated high school and you left for college or you left for whatever you did after high school. It didn't feel normal. Of course, it didn't feel normal. And you didn't ever go back to the way that it was before.

You pushed forward and you created the next thing and then, eventually, that thing became normal for you. And this is the same thing that's happening now.

But new normal means different than, it doesn't mean less than. It means different than. Yes, life going forward will not be the same. It will be different. And there will be parts of it that I like and parts of it that I don't like. And that's part of being a human. and I'm still in charge of living the life that I want to live.

There will always be elements of it that I cannot control, but I will always get to choose who I want to be, even when there is a major plot twist. And that's what's happened; a plot twist of epic proportion. But that doesn't mean we have to stop living. That doesn't mean we have to stop dreaming. That doesn't mean that we have to stop creating.

We are still creating. Are we creating what we want? Are we allowing ourselves to believe and to dream and to become? Or are we just resigning ourselves to a loss and now limiting what is possible for us?

My kids and I used to have – well, still kind of do – but growing up, they had a favorite restaurant, this little Mexican restaurant not too far away. And we would go there pretty much every week. I always joked with them because, even now, they still go to the Mexican restaurant and order a grilled

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cheese. And it's an expensive grilled cheese, to be honest. It always makes me laugh.

But what they really love at that restaurant is the queso, the chips and queso. Chips and cheese is what they call it. And at a point, I don't know, about a year ago maybe, the cheese got really weird at their favorite restaurant. It got weird. It got grainy and the queso, just, it was gross.

So, to say, “I just have to get used to a new normal,” and say it in a resigned, hopeless, defeated, resentful, frustrated, limiting kind of way would be like me saying, “Well, this is our favorite restaurant and we do love the queso. And now the cheese is disgusting, but I guess we'll just get used to the new cheese. We'll just get used to this new disgusting cheese.”

No. No. Just no. We still get to decide. I know it's kind of a silly example. It certainly pales in comparison to what has happened in your life, but it's the same concept. Like, would you just go to the restaurant and eat the gross cheese and just decide that, “Well that's the cheese they serve now so I guess it's just the cheese I have to eat?” No, you would not. You would not.

So, let me tell you, I've had conversations with the management team at this restaurant multiple times about their cheese supplier. Because we like that restaurant, we want to keep going there. Eventually, they did get it together and now their cheese is better and we're still going there now.

But listen, if they hadn't changed their cheese, I'm going to find a new restaurant. I'm going to keep making choices. I'm going to keep creating what I want in my life and I'm not going to pay for gross cheese. And I'm not just going to roll over and be helpless and stop pursuing what it is that I want because something outside of me changed.

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And that’s essentially what happened here, on a very grand scale. Life didn’t go the way we planned, but that doesn’t mean we’re not still driving. That doesn’t mean we’re not still leading our life. It doesn’t mean we’re not still the ones determining what we want and the ones giving ourselves permission to dream and hope and create. Because we are.

So, please, please, please, if you are using that phrase “New Normal,” against yourself, I urge you to reconsider. If it is not serving you, we’ve got to change it. we’ve got to change it because there is no reason for you to settle for a life that is less than what you want. There is no reason; none.

So, yes, he died. Yes, that is not what we wanted. That is not what you wanted. That is not how you would have planned it. But it happened. And, of course, we want to show ourselves grace and compassion and love. and it takes time. Time isn’t the only thing it takes, but we don’t just go from the loss to perpetual optimism and hope and cheerfulness and excitedness, right?

It’s a process. We allow ourselves to feel all the feelings. We allow ourselves to grieve the loss. And then, at some point, if we notice that we have allowed ourselves to give up on dreaming, we decide that we’re going to start again, even if we don’t know how, even if we feel like we’re in completely foreign territory, even if it is just excruciatingly impossible to imagine what you want your life to be without him, that’s still where we start.

You’ve done nothing wrong because you feel that way. You’ve done nothing wrong because you think that way. But that is where we start and we decide that we’re going to start there and we decide that, yes, we can’t go backwards in time and we can’t change what has happened, but we are

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going forward and we can decide who we want to be going forward and what we want to create.

And the only limits we put on our future are self-imposed. That’s good news. Because, if we can put the limit there, then we can take it away. So, that’s what’s on my mind. Think about how you’re using this term, new normal. Does it limit you? Does it provide you hope? Does it hold you back? Does it help you move forward? Only you know. I can’t tell you. You have to check; how do you feel when you think it?

Post traumatic growth is real, friends. It is real. Just because something happens to us, many, many things happen to many people. For us, it is death of a spouse. But having that happen in life only defines our future if we decide to let it. And we’re so much more powerful than we give ourselves credit for. And the language that we use is an important part of whether or not we exercise that power or whether we hold ourselves back.

So, I hope that is useful to you. New normal, can be useful, can hold you back. I want it to serve you. Listen, I love you. And you’ve got this. And 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 and get Krista’s Love Your Life Again Game Plan delivered straight to your inbox. A future you love is still possible and

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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.