

Ep #58: Listener Q&A



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With Your Host

Krista St-Germain

[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

Ep #58: Listener Q&A

Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 58, Listener Q&A.

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 episode you've ever listened to, welcome, welcome. I think this one might be useful. So, we're going to look at some more questions from listeners like you.

And before we do though, I'm going to read a couple of listener reviews because I like doing listener shoutouts. The first one is from Melissa Joy Sogavo. That's probably a familiar name to you because Melissa was on the podcast a little while ago.

So, Melissa wrote, "Krista, thank you for walking with me through crucial points in my grief, giving me tools to move through the grief in a way that slowly allowed me to strengthen my wings again and fly in a way I never knew I was capable of. Thank you for your podcasts. They always hit the mark and identify with my experience as a widowed mom in ways that no one else has. Your coaching is vital to the widowed mom community. Love you, Melissa Sogavo."

I love you, Melissa Sogavo. I can't wait to see what you do with your art therapy and how you help other widows. I know that you're already doing that and you're just such a joy. You're such a gift to the planet, honestly. So, thank you for the review. I appreciate it. But more than that, thank you for just being an amazing human, because you are.

Ep #58: Listener Q&A

And the next review is from Tracy Christmas. And Tracy wrote, “I’ve listened to three podcasts and all were excellent. I feel like Krista is speaking directly to me at times during her talk and I definitely feel much better, empowered maybe, to move forward on this unexpected journey of raising my two children without my husband and their dad. Thank you, Krista.” You’re so welcome, Tracy. And sometimes I know it feels like nobody sees you, but we see you, sister, so keep going, alright?

Okay, so this week, what I want to do on the podcast is just answer some more of your questions. Because I get emails regularly and I also get comments inside my *Widowed Mom Podcast* community Facebook group, questions that are posted there. And so, I just want to take this opportunity to review some of the questions that I’ve gotten that I think might resonate with a lot of you and give you my answers.

So, the first question that I received was from a listener who asked, “I’m remarried now, so how do I get my children to accept my new husband?” And I know we all want to know this, right? Even if you’re not remarried, maybe you’re thinking about dating, or maybe you are dating.

Maybe you’re not even close to that, but you’re just worried that someday you will be in another relationship and you’re worried that your children won’t accept that new person. Or maybe you, like this listener, are actually remarried and your children aren’t accepting the new person in your life.

So, here’s the answer. You might not like it. I’m sorry, but I’m going to be honest. The answer to, “How do I get my children to accept my new husband,” is that you don’t. You don’t, right? Because they have their own thoughts. They have their own opinions. They’re their own humans.

And I don’t know about you, but it’s hard enough to get my kids to take out the trash, let alone to get them to agree with me on something. And so,

Ep #58: Listener Q&A

unfortunately – or fortunately, depending on how you look at it – because they're their own humans and because they have their own agendas and their own thoughts about the world and your relationship, they may never accept your new husband.

And I know that seems like terrible news. But I want to offer that it's maybe not as terrible as you think because right now, if you're asking me this question – and chances are pretty high that you're probably trying to be maybe a little bit of a chameleon, maybe you're spending a lot of time and energy worrying about whether or not your children will accept this new person, and maybe that's influencing the way that you behave.

Maybe you aren't being your authentic normal self because you're trying to put your best foot forward or make sure that he's putting his best foot forward and trying to get the kids to accept him. And that doesn't feel really very good, when we're walking on eggshells or just really not sinking into who we are and being comfortable in a relationship.

It's complicated enough to be in a new relationship. But to try and be in one while worried about the opinions of your children adds an extra layer that I'm guessing isn't a whole lot of fun to you. So, the good news is that you can relax and you can just be you and you can let him be him and you can do the things that you want to do together and you can be together and you can still love your children fiercely and show up in a very loving way for them, even if they don't think how you want them to think about this new person.

Even if they don't feel how you want them to feel about this new person, you can still relax into that relationship and enjoy it for what it is. Because whether or not they choose to accept him, there's really nothing you can do about it. Of course, forcing him on them is definitely not going to be helpful. But I bet you're probably not doing that, right? They may just not be ready.

Ep #58: Listener Q&A

I've talked to widows whose children – and they were decades... I'm trying to recall the last conversation I had about this with someone. But I recall it had been at least 10 years, and her grown children were still not supportive of her being in another relationship.

But there's really nothing she can do about that. And there's really nothing you, listener, can do about that other than just do you. I highly doubt you're trying to replace their father. I highly doubt you're shoving this new person into your children's lives and forcing them to call him dad or doing things that, you know, really put him in their face. I doubt you're doing that.

So, assuming that's true and you're just enjoying this relationship with your new husband and they don't agree, we just kind of have to let them not agree. So, I would, when you're having conversations with them about this new person, you know, engage with them without judgment.

Communicate to them in ways that show them that however they think and feel, it's okay. They don't have to accept him. It's alright. They can still think whatever it is they want to think and they can feel whatever it is they want to feel and you're still living your life and you're still going to have this relationship and you are still going to be with this person because you love them.

But they don't have to. And I think it's helpful to make that known. Sometimes, kids see the presence of a new father figure as a replacement for their dad. And you can have that conversation and tell them, this isn't a replacement for your dad. You don't have to see him as a dad. I want to be in a relationship.

As an adult woman, it's important to me to be in a relationship, and this is a person that I love and that I love spending time with him and I love what he

Ep #58: Listener Q&A

brings to my life, and we love each other. And you don't have to participate in that love.

We still expect you to be respectful. If they live under the same roof, I'm sure you still have expectations of how we treat humans. But they don't have to call him dad. They don't have to think he's amazing. And you're not trying to replace anybody. You just want more love in your life.

So, that's what I would offer to you about that. Unfortunately, we just can't control other people, especially not our children. And they may never accept him. And you need to make peace with that being okay and know that your happiness and your contentment and your peace have nothing to do with what your children think about this new persona and everything to do with what you think about him and whether or not you're willing to let them be their own humans and have their own opinions.

Of course, they can still be respectful. So, you didn't give me any details here, but if there's disrespectful behavior, you are the parent. You still get to set our standards. You still get to have consequences for what happens based on whether or not we follow the rules of the household. But they don't have to like it and they don't have to accept him.

Okay, next question. A listener asked, "When am I going to stop reaching for my phone to call him and tell him about something; anything that's popped into my head that I think he'd like to know?"

So, listener, the answer to that question is, I have no idea when you're going to stop. But here's the deal. I think you think it's a problem that you're doing it. I don't think it's a problem. I wonder what you're making it mean that you pick up your phone.

Ep #58: Listener Q&A

Because in my mind, this is just your brain working as designed. So, our brain wants to be efficient. It's very efficient. This is a good thing, It's good for our survival. If our brain had to think through every little detail of our day to day movements, it would be so busy trying to process and make decisions that it would be burning a lot of calories. This would not be good for us as humans, right?

Our brain is designed to take the things that it does in repeat and delegate them to the part of the brain that kind of handles our autopilot. There's so many things that we do during the course of a day, there's many things you're doing right now that you're not even consciously choosing to do.

So, maybe you're out on a walk as you're listening to the podcast. You're not really thinking about walking. Your brain is just doing that. Or maybe you're driving a car as you listen. Or maybe you're at home, you know, and you're taking care of some sort of chore and you're not really thinking about how to do those things. You're just doing them. You've done them so many times that your brain has delegated that to the lowest part of your brain, and now it's on autopilot. And that's really a good thing for our survival.

So, you picking up your phone to call or text your late husband about something that popped in your head is something we want to treat just like how your brain delegates taking a walk or driving a car or doing the dishes. It's just a well-established neural pathway that your brain has put on repeat.

And so, the fact that that pattern is there doesn't mean anything other than you have a really efficient brain that is functioning as it was designed. So, of course, it's going to take time for new neural pathways to form because you've been doing it this way for a long time. You didn't say how long you were married, but I imagine he was your person. So, of course you're going to pick up the phone and want to text him things.

Ep #58: Listener Q&A

So, I want to encourage you to not think about this too hard and not make it mean anything other than you have a brain with some really strong neural pathways, as does everyone else in the world. We all have patterns in our brain, and that's not a problem.

And so, every time you do it, just laugh about it is what I would honestly suggest. Like, "Thank you, brain, for being efficient. I get it." You can pause, have a little moment with yourself where you think about something that you want to think about your husband, right?

Or if the feeling is sadness because you can't text him, let that feeling be there. There's no harm in feeling sad either. But don't make it mean anything about your healing. Don't make it mean that you're doing anything wrong with grief or that it should be gone by now.

Just chalk it up to, you have a brain that's working as designed. You've got some neural pathways in there. it's basically a habit and it's not a problem. And at some point, it will probably lighten up, and it's okay until then. Don't put a timeline on it and don't judge yourself for it. Don't make it mean anything, okay. That's my suggestion.

Next question, "How do I love life again?" Such an interesting question, right? Really no details. So, I don't really know what's going on in this listener's life. But the reason I kind of like this question is because I think everybody's asking it. I think everybody wants to know, "How do I love life again?"

And the challenge with that question is that it's so difficult to imagine. When you're in the middle of your life and you aren't loving it, the idea of loving it just seems like such a foreign language that you have no idea how to speak.

Ep #58: Listener Q&A

So, first, what we have to do is not blame ourselves for not loving our lives right now. We haven't done anything wrong because we aren't loving life, right? The chances are things didn't go according to plan and most humans in your place might not be just loving every minute of it. And that's okay.

And then, we get to decide that even though right now the idea of loving your life seems, like, impossible to imagine, consider just deciding that no matter how long it takes, no matter what you have to do, that you're committed to figuring it out for yourself. That at some point you will.

And it doesn't matter how long in the future it is. But just make that decision for yourself, "Someday, I'm going to figure this out. I'm going to figure out how to love my life again. And I don't need to know how right now, but I know that I will. I know that I will." And kind of let that knowing, that certainty, even without knowing how, even without knowing the timeline, but find comfort in that commitment that you will figure it out for yourself.

And then you start figuring out – which is what I do a lot in coaching with my clients is we start figuring out, what is it that we can control and what is it that we can't and how can we maximize spending our energy on what we can control compared to what we can't? Because focusing our energy on things we can't control doesn't take us any closer to loving our lives.

But figuring out what we can control, which if you've listened to this podcast you probably already know, is our thoughts, our feelings, our actions, our results. Those are the only things we can control. We can't control other people. We can't control whether they like us. We can't control what they think. We can't control how they feel. We can't control the decisions that they make, anything outside of us, anything that doesn't happen within our own brain and our own body isn't anything we can control.

Ep #58: Listener Q&A

And so, we want to start maximizing the use of energy toward the elements of life, our thoughts, our feelings, our actions, which create our results, that we can control. And we just spend as much time as there is possible. And we notice when we aren't spending time there, and we bring our attention back to where we can make change, to where we can have an influence. And we do that on repeat, and we get really good at it.

So, you haven't done anything wrong if you don't love your life. It's okay. You have to decide that even if you don't know how, you're going to figure it out. You make that commitment to yourself that, "Someday, I will love my life again. I'm worth it. My happiness is worth it." And then you start figuring out, how do I separate what I can control and what I can't and how do I spend as much time as I possibly can on what I can control so that I can create the life that I love? And that's how that works. Simple to explain in concept, but not always easy to do, right? That's why I love coaching.

Okay, next question, "How can I not be angry that he's gone?" Again, these questions are interesting because I have no context. I have no idea why this listener is angry, but I kind of like it that way because sometimes the context makes it seem like she's in a unique situation that's different than yours. But maybe you're experiencing some anger that he's gone. And maybe your reasons are different than hers. And it doesn't really even matter because the root cause is the same, and so the solution is the same.

So, first I want to ask, listener, because maybe you're thinking that you're not supposed to be angry, I want you to answer the question, who said you're not supposed to be angry? We're taught growing up sometimes that, you know, we're not supposed to be angry. Anger is somehow not desirable.

Ep #58: Listener Q&A

And if anger is already part of your experience, I want you to give it permission to be there. Because guess what; it's already there. Yes, our thoughts cause our feelings. Yes, there's something that you're thinking that's making you angry, but that's not a problem. That doesn't mean you're doing anything wrong.

Anger is one of the most common emotions in grief. So give your anger permission to be part of your experience and don't fight against it. don't tell yourself it shouldn't be there, that there's something wrong with you because you're angry. You haven't done anything wrong because you're feeling angry.

So, when you notice it, I'm wondering what it is that you say to yourself. And I suspect it's something along the lines of, "I shouldn't be angry." And I want to suggest that instead of telling yourself that you shouldn't be angry, that you tell yourself, "I'm angry and it's okay. I'm angry and it's okay because all humans get angry. I'm angry and it's okay because I can handle this emotion."

And you might be thinking, "Well, Krista, if I let anger be okay then I'll act in angry ways." And that's not what I'm talking about. You might want to consider, especially if you're new to this podcast, going back and listening to episode three, How to Feel Better Now, just for a review on how to feel emotions.

But just because we allow emotion to be physically present in our body, doesn't mean we have to let it fuel our behavior. So, just because we're angry, just because we notice the feeling, the emotion of anger, doesn't mean we have to yell at our kids. It doesn't mean we have to slam doors. It doesn't mean we have to pound pillows. It doesn't mean we have to be snappy or short. It doesn't mean anything.

Ep #58: Listener Q&A

When we react to an emotion, when we let an emotion fuel our behavior, yes, that's when we might start creating results in our lives that we don't really want. That's when we might start showing up in an angry way. And maybe, listener, that's what it is that you are struggling with here.

But actually, just letting anger be part of your life experience, letting it run its course, letting it process through your body is not a problem. We need to do that with whatever emotion we feel. And if you've been experiencing grief for a while, then you are probably having the experience of lots of different emotions, many of them unpredictable.

And that's not a problem. That's actually quite common. The problem is when we don't know what to do with those emotions and we don't support ourselves when we have lots of big emotions. So, whatever the emotion is, whether it's anger or sadness or loneliness or jealousy or regret or guilt or relief, or joy, whatever it is, we need to give ourselves permission when we notice it for it to be there.

We need to let it be there and stop fighting it. It's the fight. It's the judgment of the emotion that causes the suffering. And we just want to drop into a place of allowance, where we are loving and kind to ourselves. This is anger and it's okay that I'm angry. It's okay that I feel this feeling. It's okay that I feel any feeling. All feelings are welcome. Because feeling them, allowing them, is the only way.

And when we actually allow them and you do what I tell you in episode three, that's when they actually pass relatively quickly and so much less painfully. But when you get good at it, it doesn't even really matter if they pass so fast because when you drop out of resistance and into acceptance, you won't be nearly as bothered by the presence of an emotion. It just won't be that big of a deal.

Ep #58: Listener Q&A

You just start bringing it with you and it's no big deal. It's not a problem to solve. It's just something to be felt. And usually, the process of feeling a feeling really only takes a couple of minutes, and then it dissipates.

It might come back because you might think the same thought that brought it up in the first place for you. And that's okay. But we just learn this skill and we do it on repeat. We notice the feeling; we allow it to be there. We stop arguing with it. We stop judging ourselves for it. We just tell ourselves that it's not a problem and we can handle it. It doesn't need to fuel our behavior. It doesn't need to change who we are. But it's just part of being human. And especially a human who's grieving.

And then, we let it be. And we continue on. We don't have to sit there and, you know, give all of our attention to focusing on feeling the feeling. We can continue doing whatever it was we were doing before we noticed the feeling. It doesn't have to be a show-stopper.

All day long, if we looked back at all the feelings we felt, we're doing this all day long. Or at least we want to be. We want to be feeling our feelings because that's when they just flow through us and they're not that big of a deal.

Okay, last question, "Why am I such a mess?" this listener asks. Why am I such a mess? Again, a question, I have no idea what you are judging as a mess, right? But what I will tell you is that grief is messy. Loss is messy. Being human is messy. So, whoever told you that you weren't supposed to be a mess, I don't know, maybe they were denying their own messiness.

Maybe you just picked up that message from culture that says we should be perfect. But listen, it's okay to be messy. How would we not go through an experience like this and not be messy? I think everybody is messy. And for me, messy means feelings all over the place, emotions, lots of thoughts,

Ep #58: Listener Q&A

uncertainty, identity shifts, lots of discomfort, the realization that dreams aren't happening the way you thought they were going to, this whole reconciliation with what we thought our life was going to be and now how differently it's going than we had planned it.

Of course, that would be messy. It's like a big scratch on a record. Like, okay, plot twist, everything just changed, my whole entire life. How would that not be messy? So, I say give yourself permission to be messy. First of all, stop judging yourself for it.

Secondly though, I want to bring to your attention the underlying problematic nature of this type of question, in that whenever we are asking ourselves a question that has a negative belief built into it, meaning a belief that we don't feel good when we think about, we're really giving our brain a homework assignment that we don't really want it to do. And so, we want to check this kind of question out and just look a little bit deeper into it.

So, for me, the idea of being a mess, it doesn't feel bad when I think about it because I think we're all messy. That's my belief. So, when I think about it, I don't have a negative charge because my thought is, "Well yeah, of course, your husband died. Hello..." You know, grief is messy loss is messy, being a human is messy.

It's not a problem. It's just part of our human experience. But whenever we're asking a question that has a belief baked into it that when we state it as a sentence feels bad to us, we really want to stop asking that question.

So, for instance, why am I such a failure? Why can't I ever do anything right? Why does my boss hate me? Why can I never accomplish a goal? How come I can't get it together? When we ask questions like that, that are based on sentences that have negative beliefs in them, right, I can't accomplish the thing, I'm not good enough, I can't get it together, then what

Ep #58: Listener Q&A

we're doing is actually sending our brain off to go and answer this negative belief and find evidence for it.

And all that does is it reinforces this terrible belief that we already have that's completely optional; completely optional. So, we don't want to give our brain the homework assignment of validating a terrible belief that we have about ourselves.

We want to give our brain that assignment of validating a belief we want to have about ourselves, a belief that actually serves us. And so, check the questions that are floating through your brain and make sure that you aren't just asking your brain to go on a scavenger hunt where the prize is, like, not one you want.

Because brains are really good at finding evidence of our thinking. That's how the filtering system in our brain is actually designed, right? It's designed to go and find evidence of what we think.

And so, when we're thinking something negative and we ask our brain why it's true, our brain is like a dog with a bone. It will bring it right back to you every time and show you, "Here it is, here's why you're not successful. Here's why you're doing life wrong. Here's why you'll never be enough. Here's why no one likes you. Remember this and then you did this and then you said this. Well, that didn't go your way."

And all of a sudden, our brain is really in on the doom and gloom, in on the validating the terrible belief. And that creates less of what we want. So, when we see those negative questions that we're asking ourselves, we want to stop asking those questions and flip them around. So, instead of, "Why do bad things always happen to me," which of course is not a question we want our brain to go and find evidence for, it could be, "How is

Ep #58: Listener Q&A

it possible that things could be better in the future than I think? How is it true that good things happen to me too?”

Do it in a way that feels believable to you. You don't want to go to a question that feels so syrupy-sweet and inauthentic that it makes you want to throw up, right, like, “How is my life amazing?” when you don't believe any shred of amazingness is happening.

Modify it a little bit, “How is it true that maybe things are a little bit better than my brain is giving me credit for? How is it true that it could be better in the future? How is it true that maybe it's not as awful as my brain has been telling me that it is?” And make sure that the questions that you're asking are actually questions you want your brain to answer.

Alright a little bit of a longer episode for you, but I hope that was useful. If you have other questions, and maybe it could be something really specific. These were all pretty vague, which is kind of why I chose them. But if you have any questions that I can answer for you, that would just be helpful to get my perspective on, feel free to email them to me, krista@coachingwithkrista.com. I'll do more Q&A episodes in the future and I would happily help you there.

Alright, so remember, I love you. You've got this. And I'll see you next week. Take care, everybody, bye-bye.

If you like what you've been hearing on this podcast and want to create a future you can truly get excited about even after the loss of your spouse, I invite you to join my Mom Goes On coaching program. It's small group coaching just for widowed moms like you where I'll help you figure out what's holding you back and give you the tools and support you need so you can move forward with confidence. Please don't settle for a new

Ep #58: Listener Q&A

normal that's less than what you deserve. Go to coachingwithkrista.com and click Work With Me for details and next steps. I can't wait to meet you.