

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Krista St-Germain

[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 75, Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching.

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, everybody. Welcome to another episode of the podcast. So, I've been doing live coaching calls about twice a month, for free, to anyone who wants to join in since COVID started. And I thought, in today's episode of the podcast, I would just share with you one of those live coaching calls.

Because, if you've never been coached before, you might not have a concept of what it's like, and because the two women I coached in this call, you probably have a lot in common with. Even if you don't share their exact story, I think you'll take something from the coaching that they received.

And this is what I know to be true about group coaching and why I love my Mom Goes On group coaching program because, even though we're all having a different widowed experience, there are so many shared commonalities in our experience.

And what I love about listening to someone else get coached is that, if you listen with the intention of finding answers about how to solve the problems that you face, even though they might be different from the exact problems that the person who's getting coached faces, then you will find the value.

And when we're listening to group coaching, if we're not the ones in the hot seat, then our brain tends to be a little bit less resistant. And so, sometimes it's easier to absorb the coaching that someone else is getting than it is to

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

absorb the coaching that you're getting when you're in the hotseat and it's your life and your brain.

So, that's the way that I encourage you to listen to this episode today. You won't find yourself exactly in the stories of these clients. But look for what you can take from the coaching that they're receiving and see how you can apply it to your life. I guarantee you that there are some consistent patterns that, if you look closely enough, you will probably find in your own thinking.

So, with that, we will jump in and, if this is something you'd like to do in the future, you're welcome to go to coachignwithkrista.com and get on my email list. Then you will start getting notifications whenever I do free public coaching calls and you won't miss out. Alright, enjoy.

--

Krista: Okay, welcome. If we have never met before, if this is your first time on the call like this, I'm so glad that you're here. And I'm Krista St-Germain and I'm a Master Certified Life Coach and I specifically help widowed moms figure out how to actually love life again. My biggest pet peeve in the world is when we settle for this idea that we have to just get used to a new normal, air quotes, that isn't what we want. Because we can be just as happy as we want to be. We can love our lives just as much as we want.

So, that's my goal, to help you figure out whatever is in your way of loving life again. It's going to be different for everybody. So, whatever it is that is on your heart, on your mind, I am going to help you with today. So, who wants coaching? What can I help you with? Throw your hand up. Heather, I can see your hand. And Kelly, I see your hand too. Okay, Heather, I'm going to come to you first.

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

Heather: So, quick question. We are a year post-death and we just had an anniversary of, well, one of the memorials. It wasn't our memorial. It was a family member's memorial and we really weren't a part of it. So, we're having some different feelings. But what I'm kind of dealing with is, so, her first year of her teenage year, 13, was pretty much dealing with her dad's death. And then now we're in year two and I didn't notice it last year, but I really noticed it now is the whole teenage and single parenting. And it's hard.

I think it's one of the hardest things. And I'm not new to this field of grief. I'm not new to the field of mentoring. But I'm certainly feeling the weight of trying to guide and support without overstepping and trying to keep my feelings separate from what's going on in our household.

Krista: Okay, so what is the thing that you're struggling with right now?

Heather: Parenting a teen; a girl.

Krista: Tell me a little bit more about where this struggle is for you.

Heather: Taking responsibility for schoolwork and just doing the everyday stuff that is basic expectations and trying to be supportive and say, "Break it down in chunks and don't get yourself overwhelmed." And then trying to do my job as a parent and also working out of the home as well. I'm just feeling a lot of overwhelm and a lot of emotions and it seems to be, you know, as it comes in waves, and then this week has just been really, really hard for both of us.

Krista: So, you said overwhelmed. Is that one of the emotions that you're noticing the most?

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

Heather: Yeah. I think the emotional overwhelm.

Krista: Yeah, overwhelm is an emotion. Okay, so let's talk about that then. Maybe that would be useful to you. So, sometimes it's good to get specific. So, tell me about a time – since you said this last week has been particularly challenging, Heather – where you felt overwhelmed and tell me what happened.

Heather: Just getting my daughter to actually do her homework or stay consistent with it and be accountable for her work. I mean, she's 14, she can do it. she's smart. But she's tending to go into herself and hold back. Which is a normal teenage thing. But at the same time my fear is that she is getting depressed, even more. And then, I find myself getting frustrated. And then she just shuts me out and gets angry and tells me to go away and leave her room.

Krista: Okay, is that what happened? She told you to go away and leave her room?

Heather: Yeah, pretty much.

Krista: Alright, and then afterwards, you felt overwhelmed?

Heather: Yeah, I just – I mean, I know the alternative is if things don't get done, it just piles up. Then she goes into her anxiety issues.

Krista: Okay, so when she said, "Go away and leave my room," what did you think about that that created this emotional experience for you?

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

Heather: I mean, I know that we need space and that sometimes that's needed. But I just kept thinking, if she doesn't get her homework done, this is just going to pile up. Because she just came off a week of being sick.

Krista: So, you thought it's going to pile up if she doesn't get her homework done, and then you felt overwhelmed?

Heather: Yeah, because I know I'm not in control of everything that she does, but I think part of it is just knowing – I didn't bring it up. She talked about it. She's like, "Do you know what day it is?" And I said, "Yes." It was the anniversary of the memorial.

Krista: Okay, so that factors in a little bit too. So, it's the anniversary of the memorial. She tells you to go away and leave her room. And your thought about that is it's going to pile up if she doesn't get her homework done, and then you feel overwhelmed?

Heather: Yeah, well, she felt overwhelmed too. She just doesn't want to talk about it, so...

Krista: Yeah, and if she were on the call, I could coach her, but since she's not, I'll just coach you and help you. So, overwhelm is so, so common, especially as a part of grief. It's common as a part of parenting. But what is useful to know is that when we feel overwhelmed, it is our option to change that feeling because it's our thought that actually created it.

There's nothing inherently overwhelming about anything outside of us, which is why we all get overwhelmed around different things. What might overwhelm you would be different than overwhelmed to someone else. So, it's never the thing outside of us that causes the overwhelm as much as it is our interpretation of what's happening that causes the overwhelm.

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

And overwhelm is an interesting one because when we feel it, we don't usually act in any way productive. Overwhelm kind of stops us in our tracks. So, when you feel overwhelmed and when you've been feeling it this week, what behaviors does it lead to? How do you act when you feel overwhelmed?

Heather: I either read or I'm working on a big grant right now, so I may sidestep that. The last time I felt that, we were supposed to be going to Chicago this weekend. And I do some future planning or I look at research. So, I try to do stuff that's productive to get my mind away from that and just kind of let it sit. Because I know, sometimes, if you let things sit, they resolve themselves.

Krista: What happens if you actually act from overwhelm, meaning that overwhelm is what's fueling your behaviors?

Heather: If I act from it?

Krista: So, you think a thought, "It's going to pile up if she doesn't get her homework done," then you feel overwhelmed. Then, I think, what's happening for you is that then you're thinking something else, "Well, if I just let it sit, it might resolve itself." And then maybe you feel peaceful or something else. And then, from that place, you go and work on things and you start being productive.

But what I know about overwhelm and humans is that when it fuels our behavior, we actually don't do anything productive. Overwhelm keeps us stuck. It makes us spin. It makes us lay there on the couch often. It makes us avoid.

Heather: Well, another thing I do is sometimes I reach out to her school social worker and just say, "Here's what I'm seeing. Would you mind

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

checking in with her?” So, we did just have a 504-plan meeting, finally, So, I know that I can breathe and just let that part of it go. The conflict comes at home. And I’m sure I’m not unique in any way, shape, or form, for teens and parenting, especially as a single parent.

Krista: I’m sure you are not either. And so, it sounds like you are taking quite a lot of productive action. You’re reaching out and talking to teachers and you’re kind of letting it set and working on other things in your life and your grant writing and all of those things. So, that’s useful.

What I want to point out to you is that that’s not coming from overwhelm. That’s coming from other thought-feeling combinations. Thoughts cause feelings, feelings drive actions. So, when you’re thinking something that creates overwhelm for you, it’s going to pile up. If you act from overwhelm, your things will pile up, most likely, and you won’t be able to parent as well from overwhelm, because we just can’t.

And so, that’s just useful to know that no matter what your daughter says or does, she does not have the power – and we love her so much, but she does not have the power to make you feel overwhelmed. Only thoughts in your brain can do that. You get to be the boss of those thoughts. You get to decide whether what she does is going to create overwhelm for you or not. You can be the calm in any storm. You can take productive action no matter how much homework she does or doesn’t do, no matter what she tells you to get out of her room. She doesn’t have the ability to cause your overwhelm. Nothing outside of us does.

And what I hope people don’t hear when I say this is that there’s something wrong with us when we feel overwhelmed. That’s not what I’m saying at all. I feel overwhelmed a lot. I still do feel overwhelmed a lot. But the sooner we recognize that it’s what’s happening in our mind that’s causing the overwhelm, then we can step back into a more powerful place and decide

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

on purpose how we want to think about what's happening outside of us that we can't control.

Because you can't control your daughter at all. None of us can. As much as we want to, we just can't. Otherwise you would. She'd have her homework done and she'd be following all the rules and doing what you want. But it's not that there's a limit to what you can control. It's literally that you just can't control anything about our children, darn it.

But what we can control is how we want to think, so that we feel what is useful and productive for us, so we can show up as the kind of parent that we want to be. So, what would another option be for you, even if, again, she had the same response to you, even if she hadn't done her homework and tells you to go away and leave her room? What would help you stay how you want to stay, whether that's calm or patient or loving or whatever, Heather, you want? How can you think about it in a way that would help you create what you want?

Heather: Well, one is continue to just do the next right thing. What I need to do as a person, number one, and then for the household parent...

Krista: How do you feel when you think that, "I can do the next right thing?"

Heather: It feels like I'm moving forward. So, at least...

Krista: Productive, yeah. So, you can think it's going to pile up if she doesn't get her homework done. And that will have you feeling overwhelmed. We can understand why your brain would go there. Also, another option is, "I can do the next right thing," which would then have you feeling productive.

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

Heather: Yeah, and then I guess the other thing that I try to – I'm really focusing on it this year – is giving myself grace. That is a huge thing for me. Because I work with a lot of single moms and most of them are either divorced or separated. But my situation is a little bit different. I was divorced for a year and then he passed away. And we wouldn't have been divorced had there not been a substance abuse problem.

Krista: Yeah, there's never a downside to giving ourselves grace. That ought to be step one. As much as we want our children to, you know, do their homework on time and stay current and follow the rules, you could be the textbook perfect mom and do all the things that the experts tell you, and your child still has agency. They still choose how they think and how they feel. And none of that can you actually control. So, yeah, grace.

Heather: Yeah, and natural consequences.

Krista: And natural consequences. Who do you want to be? What kind of parent do you want to be when your child says, "Go away and leave me alone," and it's the memorial anniversary? And an overwhelmed parent doesn't sound like it's your favorite place to be.

Heather: Well, I don't want to be the cool parent. Nor do I ever want to appear that I've got it all together. Because that doesn't do anybody any good. And I say, I'm new at this too. I planned on having a child or children with my husband, and I didn't expect to be – none of us expect to be single parenting for whatever reason.

Krista: Yeah. I think, to your idea of grace and having never done this before, sometimes it's really good to remind ourselves, in the moment when our kid says the thing, it's like, we're both doing the best job we know how. We're both doing our best right now. Because guaranteed, that is your daughter's best.

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

It's not to say that she's not capable of doing her homework. But right now, in that moment for her, I would bet a whole lot of money that she's not trying to hurt anybody. This is her best right now.

Heather: Right. And I remind myself of this, that she struggles greatly with anxiety. And I know for many years, she has worked very hard to keep it together during the school day. When she gets home, she just wants to unplug. And unfortunately, our days aren't over until we complete those extra things that are at home. So, it's just trying to be the gentle support.

Krista: Yeah, and you'll be able to do that so much more when you're not coming from overwhelm, right? When you put the whole weight of her future education on your shoulders, which is kind of what we do, like, "I've got to fix this," then it's going to be a problem. Then it just blocks us from being able to figure out what a possible solution is. And it's so much more difficult to meet our child where they are and kind of love them through it because we're taking on the responsibility of something that we could never even possibly control.

So yeah, show yourself some grace and then decide how you want to speak to yourself. How do you want to talk to yourself? Because our brains offer us so many things that are un-useful when conflict happens. And usually, they're pretty darn self-critical. If we could just talk to ourselves more than we listen to ourselves.

Heather: I don't know, I think I do both.

Krista: Yeah, but talk to ourselves nicely, with grace, with compassion, be our own champion, tell ourselves, "I can stay calm here. I can do the next right thing. I can love her. She's doing the best she can. I'm doing the best I can. We're going to get through this."

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

Heather: Okay, thank you.

Krista: You're welcome. It was nice to see your Post-It note on the video. Take care, Heather.

Heather: Thanks.

Krista: Okay, Kelly, I think I have time to coach you. I don't see any questions. But Kelly, it looks like it says, FYI, your husband died a year ago too and you have a 13-year-old girl and an 11-year-old girl. Kelly...

Kelly: I am okay and I wanted you to know that I sent you that not because it was just helpful, because I had a 13-year-old too, who ironically is at a loss and the grief is manifesting itself in anxiety, which she already was dealing with too.

So, in hearing her speak, there's three things. And I don't know if I let you or let me pick. One is definitely being stuck – not stuck. The stuck is, I'm stuck in a place in my grief that is the loss of my husband before he even died. He died of brain cancer last September. For certain, there's grief that we felt all through his diagnosis and everything we went through.

But I'm realizing, a major part of my grief is actually for the three or so years before he was even diagnosed, he all of a sudden, his job took him to traveling all the time. And I'm finding that when I think of him and loss, it's that period of time, the way our lives and our relationship changed then. So, you can hear it in my voice. That's a place where I'm stuck grief-wise.

And then, my other topic, which I wouldn't have thought to bring up, except Heather did, is because of the stress of parenting alone and two teenage girls. I'm not the type of parent that I want. I find that I get very impatient

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

and show anger with them when they are being their obnoxious teenage selves, you know. The normal fighting among one another I can't stand. I feel like that's the thing that makes me the maddest. And then I'm not happy with my reactions.

So, grief-wise, the thing I feel like I'm really stuck on and not positive how to handle it is that sense of loss, three years of our lives before he was diagnosed. And I actually was not only a school counsellor, but I was the counsellor, the chosen one of the four of us that got to be the counsellor of all the kids who had lost a parent to cancer, ironically.

So, I too have a little experience with this. So, when I say I'm stuck in my grief, in the period of time before he was even diagnosed, and I'm not sure how to handle it, I would tell myself to write a letter to him to try to do step one, start addressing that. And I haven't made myself do that.

Krista: Okay, well let me ask you a question. Because I'm curious, why are you telling yourself, what makes you think that you were stuck?

Kelly: Just because when I'm sad, I'm stuck back there versus being stuck that he's gone for good. So, I feel stuck. It feels like I need to work through that to officially grieve him being completely gone.

Krista: Okay, so what's happening – tell me if I've got this right – is that you're thinking about the period three years before he died. And when you think about that, you feel sad. And so, because you're thinking about something that happened three years before he died and you're feeling sad about that, you think that's causing you a problem presently.

Kelly: Not that it's causing me a problem. But I'm stuck on how to address it. Or it doesn't feel right. It feels like if I don't work through this, I'm not going to even be able to begin working through the fact that he's just totally

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

gone. And I want to get there and work through that loss. But for me, it feels like we really lost him back when he started having to travel all the time.

Krista: I like to teach that grief is really just thoughts and feelings about loss. And we have so many thoughts and so many feelings. And there are so many perceived losses. There's the loss of him traveling. There's the loss actual physical loss of his death. And there's all these other losses that we could probably – we could probably brainstorm a huge list of all the loss. But to think of one as weightier or more problematic than another, I think, just adds an unnecessary level of complication.

Kelly: I never, for me – I appreciate that. But for me, it felt like, not wrong, but in the way that I can't get through that to even address the fact that he's gone for good. So, it's that. But I understand what you're saying. And it's not even that it feels more important. It might be – I can tell I need to deal with it. Does that make sense?

Krista: Let's deal with it then. But I don't think it adds value to you and the healing that you're doing to make it seem like, to believe the story that you're stuck in one area because of your thoughts about another. You have thoughts about one area and you have thoughts about another area. And that's okay. If we decide that that's okay, it's going to be a lot easier to work through both of them. And then we stop putting so much pressure on ourselves to resolve the thoughts about the other issue. Let's talk about the other issue then, while we're here. So, what's so upsetting about the travel and the three years before he died?

Kelly: It just completely changed our lives. It changed our relationship with one another. There was less emotional intimacy because he was home so infrequently that was in the mode of, like survival mode, of raising two kids alone, and didn't get to enjoy one another as much as we could have. Loss

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

of his presence, because he was a really good guy and a nice guy to be around. The loss of that for our girls. And also that's when I started being a really impatient type of mom that I don't want to be. So, that's a big part of it...

Krista: Is how you started parenting?

Kelly: Well, that for sure. No, just everything I just said. Those are the biggest parts of the loss.

Krista: What bothers you the most about what happened in his travel?

Kelly: Well, I don't know if it's because I feel bad because I was personally more distant. But our personal relationship with one another, for the most part. It's just the distance. And sometimes, he'd be gone for two or three weeks and home for two days and gone again. And it was places like China, so when he was home for the two or three days, he was exhausted because he was on a totally different time zone.

So, yeah, it was just the loss of our relationship, which was a great one. And it still was fine when he passed away. Better because of the 18 months he couldn't travel and work, so we got to spend time together again. But we missed out on those three years and I feel terrible that my girls did too.

Krista: What do you wish had happened instead?

Kelly: You mean that he didn't travel? Just that he was with us, like he used to be in that period of time. And I think we both felt like it would not be the rest of our lives and we'd be getting to spend time together. And he did his best, for sure, every time he was home to be with us and try to have him

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

and I spend time alone, you know, whatever he could do. He certainly did his best.

So, the answer to your question just is that he didn't have to travel. It was the same job, but it took a different format, or same company, same position in a different format. And so, I just wish he didn't have to travel and we had had that time with him.

Krista: Okay, so I'm wondering what you feel about it now looking back. I know you mentioned sadness. Is it regret maybe?

Kelly: Yeah, you know, maybe being hard on myself. I'm trying to think. I wasn't mean and nasty to him. But I was probably a little emotionally distant from him too when he was home because I was, like, still in single parent mode. So, I didn't really slow down and enjoy spending time with him because I still had all the kid stuff I had to do and pretty much do alone when he was just home for a few days here or there.

The truth is, when he was home for, let's say he was home five days, he had to get into work and catch up at work before he could go on his next trip; catch up on what he missed, plan for the next trip. So, it was a few years of major loss. And I know I hated it, I'm sure, at the time. And I know he didn't like it either. But I know that both of us were like, "Okay, we'll get through this. This can't go on like this forever.

There wasn't fighting. Well, I expressed how much I hated it for sure. I even tried to talk him into – I remember saying like, "Take a pay cut and let's move to the middle of nowhere, Pennsylvania," where his mom lives just so we can be together more. So, he knew I couldn't stand it. And it was not his idea because he loved being with us and the girls and myself, and when he was home, just tried as much as he could to engage.

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

Krista: Yeah, but now then after the fact, some of the story that you're telling yourself is that you should have slowed down and enjoyed time more with him.

Kelly: I don't even know if I could have slowed down. But I think what it was is not me slowing down. More so, like, I was tired. So, not wanting to go to bed super-early but wanting to spend time with him in the evenings. I was in the mode of, like, single parent, get them to bed and crash. And the little bit that he was home, I kind of stayed in that mode and we didn't spend a lot of time, alone time together.

Krista: Okay, and now you wish you hadn't done that?

Kelly: Yeah. The regret more so is just that he travelled, that he was gone all that time. And our 13-year-old has major anxiety too. And so, in the evenings, she has always been difficult in the evenings to just get her to settle and go to bed, and go to bed by herself. She is one of those kids, I just had to reimplement almost like Ferberizing your baby with her. But she's always been the kid that you have to sit in her room because of her anxiety until she fell asleep.

So, I'd come out of there in a near coma just wanting to go crash and go to bed, I'd be in a dark room with her with her sound machine on. And so, I don't know if I want to use bored – resentment with her. But that was a lot of lost time because we had that going on too. And I didn't know how to resolve it.

Krista: So, we can't go back and change time. Which I know you know. We can't go back and change time. But this is what happens, that we live life in a particular way, we make choices in a particular way, things happen in a particular way. And then, we get some perspective. Then we can look back

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

with our new perspective on the way it all went down, our role in it, his role in it, everything.

And then we start telling ourselves a story about the choices everyone made and we start telling ourselves that we should have done it differently. And it's really unfair to ourselves that we do this because we can't do it differently. And it assumes almost that we consciously chose to not do it the way we would want to, as though we weren't doing the best job we could do at the time.

And what's really true is that perspective just changes the choices we would have made. If you had known you probably might have made different choices. But you didn't know. So, it's entirely possible, if you want to believe that he was supposed to travel as much as he did. He was always supposed to travel that much.

And you were supposed to be exhausted when you came out of your daughter's bedroom because you were doing the best job you could do. And it was all going to happen the way that it happened and it had nothing to do with you not doing a good job or you not being a good mom or him not trying his best. Everybody's making choices with the information they have, doing the best job they can at that time.

Kelly: And you're right about that. It doesn't take away the regret and sadness.

Krista: Not yet.

Kelly: It doesn't take – you heard what I said?

Krista: Yes.

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

Kelly: I can rationalize exactly what you're saying because I know we did. But even when I feel like I'm a bad mom, I'm impatient and angry, I feel like I'm doing the best I can, I do feel like I can do better, for sure. But in that moment that I feel like getting angry with them and frustrated and yelling, I can say, "I was doing the best I could do."

Now, the thing with the parenting thing is I also have had, for I guess eight years, terrible headaches. I finally tried a once-a-month shot a few weeks ago and it's making a major difference. And so, that's what's enabling me to look back too at my parenting and impatience with my kids and realizing, like, I can't believe I was acting that way. Because I don't get so frustrated and want to scream at them like I was when I had the headaches and he first died – even before he died, when we was traveling all the time.

Krista: It's interesting though how we do this, when we look back in time. And instead of being our own champion, we use the perspective that we now have and we weaponize what we've done in the past against ourselves instead of saying, "Yes, I was having headaches. Yes, this was really hard for me and I was waking up every day and trying really hard and doing the best job I could. And sometimes, that meant I did not show up patiently. And I am an imperfect human who is doing her best in the world." And have you back in the past.

Kelly: I think I can have my back now that I am not getting these headaches every single day. The thing that I'm so upset about is how that has to emotionally impact my kids. First of all, when he started traveling so much, any mom would just have been stressed and a little bit different. But just to feel like, you know, everything they did was going to trigger me and they had to live on edge, I just feel bad about that. It feels like there's no excuse for that headaches or loss of husband or husband traveling all the time.

Krista: Do you think feeling bad makes you a better parent?

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

Kelly: No, I don't. It feels almost worse because I think I am still, like, Pavlovian, a little bit trained to be triggered and get mad with them and I haven't eve – it still comes here and almost happens or happens in a milder version. So, no. I don't think so. But maybe it does. But I'm at least able to step back and analyze it. No idea.

Krista: It doesn't. I'll just tell you, it doesn't. When we beat ourselves up, it makes us less powerful. It makes us less able to be present. It gives more of our energy to the brain work that we try to do to change our past. And it prevents us from being effective and powerful in the future, and in the present.

Kelly: And so, I have a question for you. In life coaching in general, I feel like it might help me to adopt that attitude better, is that a general big theme of people being stuck and that's a big part of it because they're being hard on themselves and beating themselves up?

Krista: Yes.

Kelly: Because I feel like that might be – understanding that on that level instead of me feeling like a bad mom might more so empower me to do that, to beat myself up less and move forward and forgive myself and ask them for their forgiveness too.

Krista: Yes. And stuck is a thought. Stuck doesn't exist anywhere outside of our mind.

Kelly: Right, I can see that.

Krista: So, whenever we tell ourselves we're stuck in our grief, we have bought into a story. And we could equally decide to believe we're actually

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

doing really well. Look at you. You've come into a coaching session. You're bringing me things that are causing you pain and you're working on them. Are we stuck or are we making progress?

Kelly: I hear exactly what you're saying. So, if I came to you, which I did, and just said I feel stuck, other than helping me to understand it and how that's not even really a thing and just embrace it as what I'm upset about, what would you, if we only had five seconds to talk instead of a few minutes, what would you advise me to do? Would you suggest I do a letter to him? Would you suggest, with the parenting thing, my girls, they're 11 and 13, are they old enough to explain that to them and apologize? It feels like an excuse, like there's no excuse for parenting that way. So, if we only had a bit to talk, what would you recommend?

Krista: I would recommend that you start noticing the difference between reality, what everyone in the world would factually agree upon, and the story that your brain is telling you about it.

Kelly: It still doesn't feel okay. Loss of husband, headaches or not, just like...

Krista: Yeah, but the story is what causes the pain. The story is, "I should have done it differently." The story is, "I'm stuck." The story is, "I'm not a patient parent or I should be a more patient parent." Sometimes it's easier to see it in other people's lives than it is to see it in our own. But what we can all agree upon is that your husband died. We can agree that eh traveled. We can agree that, at times, you have yelled or acted in particular ways with your children.

We can agree that you have had headaches. Those things are all factual. We can all agree on them. And what we want to look at is how unintentionally you are interpreting those things and what you are making

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

them mean. Because sometimes, we tell stories that help us be more intentional and live the life that we want. And sometimes, we tell stories that make us less powerful and less able to live the life that we want.

Right now, you're telling yourself a lot of stories about your past that have you really wanting it to be different than it was, which takes your energy away from being present because none of us can go back and change the past. And it's entirely your option to decide you did the best job you could with what you knew at the time. If you could go back in time, you would do it differently with what you know now. But to show yourself grace and compassion for all of it.

Kelly: And I think I can for him. But I don't think I'm quite there yet with my girls. It feels like – it just feels like there's no excuse. Like, my job is to be there for them, you know.

Krista: You're thinking the thought, "There's no excuse." And then how do you feel when you think it?

Kelly: I feel bad. Terrible.

Krista: Right, so what other options are there available to us, besides there's no excuse?

Kelly: Well, there's plenty, but I can't embrace them, just primarily what you said. And I'm a big proponent of, "I did the best I could do." Not necessarily for me. But I have a middle sister – I'm the youngest – and the middle sister just has so much animosity towards my mom, hates her. And I'm able to see that my mom did the best she could do. Which may just be because I travel with my mom a lot to the place where she grew up, which is literally called Turkey City, Pennsylvania. And it was in trailer parks moving long

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

the turnpike. And I've spent time with her relatives. So, in my case, I'm able to see my mom did the best she could do. Even though my sister...

Krista: So, how is it true – stay with me – how is it true that you did the best job you could do?

Kelly: Well, I did a lot of things great, truly.

Krista: Even when you yelled, Kelly, how is it true that in that moment you were doing the best job you could?

Kelly: I don't think I was.

Krista: I know. And that's the problem. How is it true that you were?

Kelly: Not much of it. Like, I can't even pick portions of it. The only times it was, was when I was able to just tell them I need space from you because I'm really mad.

Krista: Okay, so let's understand why you yelled. Give me an example. You yelled. What were you feeling right before you yelled?

Kelly: I think it often was when I was already exhausted and had just done a lot of fun things for them or nice things on their behalf and then they would have some horrible fight or argue with me. A big part of it was at nighttime, because Lindsey, the 13-year-old with sleep anxiety would start stuff. Like, the minute it was time to take your shower, let's go get ready to go up to bed, she's the sweetest, kindest girl, and she would just start doing freakish things to avoid bedtime. And it was so aggravating.

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

So, it always started a fight and it was like the younger one, poor Margo was almost like the daughter of two alcoholics because every night there would be some fight between Lindsey and I because it was approaching bedtime and she had anxiety. And I would just finally lose it.

So, usually, the feelings I had before I would scream was like just complete anger with them. Like, how is this devolving, this great day devolving into this? And in retrospect, it was probably 80% or more of the time was because Lindsey was stirring something up because she did not want to have bedtime. She was freaked out about bedtime.

Krista: Okay, so you're exhausted. Lindsey is freaked out about bedtime. I'm imagining this goes something like you try and try and try and try and try. And at a certain point...

Kelly: You're right, what I'm skipping is the try and try and try and try. You're right, it's not like just an instant snap and it's having done a lot of nice things to make their lives and day nice. And yeah, the try and try and warnings sometimes, you know, "This is a warning." So, that's the part I'm willing to give myself credit for as far as, like, I did my best.

Krista: Is it possible – is it just a tiny bit possible – that it's true that you were doing the best that you could with what you did at the time?

Kelly: Of course, yeah.

Krista: And if that is true, it doesn't mean you're an advocate of yelling.

Kelly: Right, yeah.

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

Krista: This is being our own champion. This is grace and compassion. This is what allows us to stop arguing with the past. Because I guarantee you, if you keep bringing this into your relationship with your girls, it will change the way you parent now. You will create disconnection with them.

Kelly: I just figure, if I focus on it, it will ensure that I do a better job.

Krista: Nope. And I know. And most of us do this. and we do it in all sorts of areas of life. We weaponize our past and we tell ourselves, “Well, if I’m just critical of myself, then I will change.” But when we’re critical of ourselves, we actually tend to feel regret, guilt, all sorts of self-doubt, insecurity. And then, from that place, we actually are less able to change behaviors going forward. It’s the exact opposite of what we think. The best thing you can do for you and for your girls is to draw a line in the sand and say, “I no longer speak to myself that way.”

Kelly: Do you think verbalizing all of it and apologizing to them will allow me to do that and forgive myself? Or I need to forgive myself on my own?

Krista: I’m way less interested in the action that you take and I’m way more interested in the thoughts that you think. Forgiving yourself is a choice. You can make it without taking any particular action.

Kelly: Oh really?

Krista: Of course. If you decide to think that you were doing the best job you could with what you knew at the time, forgiveness isn’t even necessary.

Kelly: I think a big part of it for me is that sister that I just told you about; very judgmental. And so, I think hearing her talk about her hatred for my

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

mom makes me feel like I deserve the same hatred and I'm a terrible mom too. And I think that's not helping me to get towards forgiving myself, if that makes sense.

Krista: Totally. Your sister is probably not very forgiving of herself either. Just my guess.

Kelly: Well, not only that. I don't really respect a lot of that attitude and behavior from her. So, I don't know why I'm allowing it to control my feelings about myself.

Krista: We have the option to role-model this for our children. We have the option to role-model the belief and the way that we choose to be our own cheerleader. But also, the realism in that that says, "Listen, I'm an imperfect human who is doing the best job she can. And sometimes, I really mess it up, even when I'm trying my hardest, kids. And it's okay because you're going to mess it up too. We don't have to not mess it up. We just have to love ourselves when we mess it up and keep going."

Kelly: I hear you. I'm just thinking. I think I just need to spend some time – I can forgive myself for stupid mom stuff that we all do. But like I said, now that I don't have these headaches, looking back I'm like, I'm just overly appalled...

Krista: Headaches are gone, so therefore I should have been perfect?

Kelly: No, I just shouldn't have been so bad.

Krista: But it's just so optional to beat yourself up over the past.

Kelly: Really? Okay.

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

Krista: It is just so optional. We never would talk to our friends the way we allow ourselves to talk to ourselves.

Kelly: For sure, I agree.

Krista: Because there's no upside.

Kelly: No, it would never help them, so I would never do it even if I felt that way. You're right.

Krista: So, can we just turn that same grace, love, and compassion inward and extend it to ourselves?

Kelly: That's the first thing you've said that makes me feel like I actually can, just because I do feel like I'm a good friend in that regard and would never – I'd bend over backwards to help someone not be tough on themselves and figure out a way to do it in a way they'll feel better about it. So I can do it.

Krista: And probably your girls too, yeah?

Kelly: Yeah.

Krista: So, let's role-model that by extending it to yourself. Let's show them how it's done.

Kelly: Okay. Last question. Do you have an opinion one way or the other if it's good or bad at their age to bring it up to them and to talk to them about it? Not that any of it's an excuse.

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

Krista: It's not a matter of good or bad. Get yourself into a place where you feel love; love for you, love for them. And then, when you get to that place, ask yourself what feels like love. And you'll know the answer to that. You will know.

Kelly: For sure.

Krista: Okay, thank you so much for asking to be coached.

Kelly: Thank you for your time. I missed you last week. Someone had told me you did this last week and I had a doctor's appointment, so I'm glad that it worked. So, thank you for your time.

Krista: My pleasure. I'll do it again.

Kelly: It was really helpful.

Krista: You're so welcome, Kelly. Bye-bye.

Kelly: Take care. Bye.

Krista: Okay, I'm going to just answer this last question and then we're going to wrap it up. Last question, "What if you're trying to show yourself compassion and your close family member judges and ridicules you and cuts you off, or uses it as evidence that they are right because you correct them for accusing you of causing your dead husband emotional stress, and that if something is wrong with your child whose dad died, it's because of you."

Okay, so basically what I think you're saying is that you tried to show yourself compassion but then other people have thoughts and judgments

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

about you. And it sounds like there are a lot of thoughts and judgments about you. All the things you did wrong, they agree that you've done all these things wrong. How can you show yourself compassion when other people don't agree?

You don't need permission to show yourself self-compassion, ever. And there's never a downside to it. And sometimes, people aren't going to see the world the way that we see it. And if we don't show ourselves compassion just because other people don't see the world the way we see it, we lose.

So, it's always our choice to show ourselves compassion. You never need permission to do that. And nobody else has to agree. I will leave you with that.

Alright, I hope this was useful to you all. I know some of you already know this, and some of you, I see, are already in my program. But for those of you who want more coaching or think that this would be something you would like to do more of, this is what I do with my clients. All the time, this is what we do. And so much more. But we do a lot of life coaching.

November is full. December has a few spots left in it. So, if you're interested in checking out my group coaching Mom Goes On, then you can go to coachingwithkrista.com and you can click request a consultation and go through the process there and we'll see if it's a good fit for you. Okay, I love you guys. I'll see you later. 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

Ep #75: Ask Krista Anything: Live Coaching

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 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.