

Ep #78: Holiday Drama



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With Your Host

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[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 78, Holiday Drama.

Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, the only podcast that offers a proven process to help you work through your grief, to grow, evolve, and create a future you can 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. Glad to have you back. If this is your first episode, maybe you're experiencing some holiday drama. If so, you would not be alone. Which is why I want to cover this topic this week.

And a little life update real quick. I told you all I would be taking a trip to Arkansas to see the leaves with the boyfriend. And we did. And in true 2020 style, the leaves had already fallen from the trees. And they were beautifully displayed on the floor, on the ground.

And the people we talked to in Arkansas, which Northwest Arkansas, it's beautiful, by the way, even without the autumn leaves, it's still just a really pretty terrain. But the people we talked to said, "Yeah, usually the leaves are still around in mid-November and through Thanksgiving." And this year, no. They just fell early. So, 2020, who knows? I don't know.

And then, even then, on Saturday night while we were there, there was a tornado warning. This is, like, early November. There was a tornado warning. We weren't in any danger, but there was rotation in a storm fairly close by.

So, keeping it exciting. But it was a good trip and we really had a good time. I enjoyed being with him. So, even though we didn't get to see the leaves and even though there was a tornado warning, it will go down as a

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memorable trip and maybe we'll try again next year and do it a little bit earlier.

I also want to remind you, listener review. Just for fun, right? Who doesn't want to win a little bit of extra money? A \$100 Visa gift card being given away to those who are willing to share this podcast, so we can get closer to reaching our goal of one million widows listening, one million downloads.

Because there's 11 million widows. Surely we can reach a million of them and help them, right? There's no way I can serve that many women as clients. But I know that I can help them with this podcast.

So, if you want to be part of that effort, then just share a screengrab of the podcast. And you can share it on Instagram @lifecoachkrista and tag me. Or you can share it on Facebook and tag me @coachingwithkrista. And then just send us a quick email to let us know you did it, support@coachingwithkrista.com. And every time you do that, we will put your name in a drawing. And I appreciate those who are already participating.

Okay, let's get going. If you are dreading the holidays – there could be a variety of reasons for that. You might have some mixed feelings about the holidays. If a lot of what's coming up for you is grief-related, first I want to encourage that you take a listen to episode 24, which I did last year, called Happier Holidays After Loss.

Now, you can keep listening to this one as well. But be sure to go back and listen to that episode because that episode speaks to how to support yourself, how to deal with your feelings, how to make choices about where you're going to spend the holidays, from a place of self-compassion instead of perfectionism. And that's just as important this year, as it is every year. And that episode is out there for you.

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But in this episode, I want to dive in specifically to the aspect of holiday challenge that is caused by humans as they interact with one another during the holidays. So, the holiday human drama, if you will. That's what we're going to talk about in this episode.

I believe there is no drama unless we, you, me, are dramatic in our thinking. I'm going to repeat that again. I believe there's no drama unless we are dramatic in our thinking. That means we're more powerful than we think we are.

Now, if you have experienced drama in your past around the holidays and humans, you've not done anything wrong. There's nothing wrong with you. It just means that you didn't know what I'm about to teach you and that you've been unknowingly giving power to things outside of you. And now, you're going to have the opportunity to take back that power.

Because people in your life do not have the power to create drama for you. They don't. I promise you. They can do things and they can say things. And that's it. No drama.

I remember when I learned this for myself. It kind of made my head hurt just a little bit. Because I knew my coach was right, but boy, it just went against everything that I had known. And then I remember wondering, where was this information all my life? Because it completely changed a family relationship that I had really been struggling with.

It was to the point that I dreaded being around that family member because I didn't know how to get away from the drama and I thought they were causing it. And I wanted to be around them. But I thought they were causing the drama. And so, I couldn't reconcile that.

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And I definitely didn't know that it was possible for them to keep being them and for me to experience them without the drama that I was so used to. So, this really helped me. And I'm hoping it will help you too.

So, I want you to think about the holidays. What's your worst-case scenario as it relates to drama? And I know this year is weird because of COVID. So, you might be spending the holidays over Zoom. Maybe the people that you're spending them with are very limited this year. But it really doesn't matter.

And I'm doing this episode now because so much of our holiday drama happens way before the actual holidays arrive. The planning, the preparation, and there's the mental drama that we subject ourselves to in anticipation of the human interactions before they even happen. Do you do this? I think most of us do.

So, maybe it's something your in-laws are going to say that you're worried about. And believe me, I have heard all the stories. Maybe your in-laws are going to bring up the headstone and tell you that they didn't like your choice or hint at it. Or maybe they're actually just going to say it out loud. Who knows?

But let's say they do. Let's say they actually say that thing that you're worried they're going to say. They do that thing that you're worried they're going to do. No drama. No drama. They can share their opinions with words.

I want you to imagine syllables coming from holes in faces. That's really all it is. Syllables, little sounds, coming from holes in faces, from mouths. And those little sound waves, they reach your ears. And that amazing mind of yours interprets them. But that's really all they are is sounds coming from other people's mouths, the holes in other people's faces.

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And here's what nobody can take away from you. You get to be the boss of how you let those sound waves impact you, or if you let those sound waves impact you. Those sound waves have no power over you. Even if the person meant them to be hurtful. Even if they did.

I don't know if they did. And I assume that typically they don't. But even if they did, you still get to choose who you want to be. And nobody can take that from you.

Maybe you're worried about how your mom's going to act. Maybe she's that mom that acts like nothing happened and doesn't bring up your late husband, doesn't want to talk about it. Even that doesn't have to be dramatic. There's no drama there, really. There's just silence, right?

Maybe she thinks it would hurt you if she talked about him. Maybe she thinks it's bad luck. Maybe it's just too intense for her. We don't know what's on her mind, we don't know what's on her heart.

But silence is not dramatic. We make it dramatic when we tell stories about it. But we don't have to. Silence isn't dramatic. It's just there. It's a choice that she is making. And you get to think about him and talk about him all you want.

Maybe it's like your sister, I don't know. Maybe you're dating again and your sister tells you that she thinks it's just awful and how could you even consider dating so soon. Or maybe it's his step kids. Or maybe it's your kids, I don't know. It doesn't matter.

It doesn't matter who it is and it doesn't matter what they say or what they do. There's no drama without our permission. We have no idea why they think this. We have no idea why they say these things. Maybe they're scared. Maybe they have people-pleasing tendencies of their own, right?

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Maybe they're genuinely worried about us. Maybe they actually believe that other people's opinions matter.

It doesn't matter. Because we know the truth. You know the truth. There's no drama. There's just words. There's just other people's opinions. Even if those words and opinions are delivered with raised voices or hands in the air, they still don't have any power over you. This is still your life and your choices and you can let people have their opinions. No drama included.

You know how it says, "Batteries not included," on packages sometimes, especially on kids' toys, batteries not included. It's like the warning for parents that, hey, spend more money, batteries are not included.

It's kind of silly, but I want you to picture that person who you think is going to be dramatic, and I want you to imagine them wearing a label that reads, "Drama not included." These are the types of silly little memory tools that will help you in the moment.

So, I want you to picture that person that you associate with drama. You got it? Can you see them? Can you picture that person or people? And I want you to imagine the drama not included label. It's on their forehead. Or maybe it's on their chest, wherever you want to put it, wherever your brain likes it. Go there with me. It will help you in the moment.

I don't know if you're going to do your holidays in person or you're going to do it by Zoom or whatever you're going to do. But here's another fun thing you can do. Have you ever played holiday human bingo? Or just human bingo or holiday bingo or family bingo? People call it different things.

We used to play bingo during meetings when I was in corporate America. I hate to admit this too loud. Sorry, former employer if you didn't know that we were doing this. But we were doing it.

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We would have bingo cards with the things people normally did in a meeting. And some of them were specific to the types of meetings that we had or the personalities that were typically in those meetings. Just for entertainment purposes, right, because oh my gosh, such a large portion of the day was in meetings.

And so, it would be someone walks in late into a meeting and says, “What did I miss?” So, you can just count on that happening, right? Or somebody blames somebody else for a deadline that they didn’t hit or they don’t accept responsibility. And that would be a square on the bingo card. Or someone comes in the phone conference and someone in the room says, “Who just joined?” It’s such a classic. Those kinds of things. Someone runs out of coffee, starts getting edgy.

There’s actually a person – he’s not listening to my podcast, but Bill, I’m talking to you. Because we all knew that when Bill ran out of coffee, he was going to go downhill fast. But he doesn’t listen to the podcast. I digress.

So, a little human bingo. What are those things that your family members always do and you rail against it when they do them and you’re like, “Why do they do that thing?”

But instead of expecting people not to do what they always do, how about we expect them to do what they always do? They’ve always done it, why don’t we just expect them to do it? We don’t have to put them in a box, but we can have a little fun. We can take it less seriously. We can lighten up a little bit. We can expect them to do what they’ve always done and we don’t have to turn it into anything dramatic. We can have fun with it.

We can just go, “Yep, this is just the part where so and so says that thing they always say and does that thing they always do.” And then we laugh a

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little bit and we, like, silently high-five ourselves and mark our bingo card off, mentally at least.

But what I want to offer you, regardless of whether it's human bingo or drama not included signs, whatever, is that the same things can unfold over the holidays that have unfolded over past holidays. Now maybe your husband's been gone for a while. I don't know, maybe your loss is more recent.

But regardless, if the other things that people said and the other things that people did, those things that you are dreading, those things that you are worried about, those things that you think are going to be problems for you, if you chose to see them without the label of drama, if you instead chose to see them as just words, just humans doing things, just patterns of behavior, things that can't harm you and you saw yourself as able to navigate those things with grace and with humor, as though you were in one of those large hamster balls.

Have you seen those hamster balls at carnivals where there's one person in each ball and they're running around the field and they're bumping into one another and it's really silly and ridiculous? We can do that. We can each stay in our own little ball and be who we are and not cause a negative effect on the other person. You can let the people at your holiday gathering or in your family be who they are and not cause harm to you.

And if you consider them toxic, now might be a good time to listen to episode 32, Dealing with Toxic People. Because I teach that emotions aren't contagious. Therefore, you don't have to worry about people being toxic. And so, episode 32 might be a good reminder. Toxic people, toxic work environments, it's just not a thing.

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It's not a thing and it's much easier to navigate the events and people that you find challenging when you decide to drop the toxic label because that label will have you feeling afraid, right? Afraid to be around them because they might ooze onto you. But it can't happen.

And I also want to remind you, you can still choose not to be around people. Because you are a grown woman and you get to do what you want. You don't have to be around anybody. You get to choose. But I want you to choose powerfully because it's your choice. Not because you're afraid of someone. Not because you're worried that they will cause you drama, but because you are a grown woman and you get to do what you want with your life.

And you don't need anybody's permission to decide who you want to spend your time with or how you want to spend your time. Because you get to be the boss of that.

Okay, in summary, people in your life do not have the power to create drama for you. They can do things and they can say things and that is it. No drama without our permission. You get to be the boss of whether you see your holidays or the people in them as dramatic.

You can play a little holiday human bingo, even if it's just in your mind to lighten things up a bit. You can visualize people in hamster balls or wearing the drama not included label. Whatever helps you stay in your own power so that you don't make yourself victim to a story that your brain has about someone being dramatic.

Because the holiday season for widows can be hard enough without adding any human drama. We don't need to do this to ourselves. And nobody else has the power to do it to you. And if you need help, I'm here, alright.

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Okay, remember, I love you, and you've got this. Take care, everybody. I will see you next week. 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 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.