

Ep #82: When You Feel Like a Failure



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 82, When You Feel Like a Failure.

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.

How many times have you said, "I feel like such a failure?" It feels terrible, right? I have done this so many times. So, today I'm going to tell you what to do when this happens.

First, I'm going to give you one last reminder because it's already late December. If you are called to share the podcast so that other widows like you can find it, there might be something in it for you. Remember, still running our little game which is that you can win a \$100 Visa gift card simply by sharing the podcast, doing a little screengrab and sharing it on social.

You can share on Instagram, tag me @lifecoachkrista. You can share it on Facebook, tag me @coachingwithkrista. And then send us an email at support@coachingwithkrista.com. Let us know that you did it. And then every time you do it, we'll enter your name into a drawing for a \$100 Visa gift card. And we'll do that through the end of December.

So, if you haven't done it already, do it. If you've done it already, do it again. Because the more often you do it, the more often you get entered. And it's super-fun and it helps me reach the goal of getting this podcast into the ears of a million widows. Because there's over 11 million of us just in the US, and surely we can reach a million, right?

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Okay, let's talk about when you feel like a failure. I remember times when I fed my kids takeout more times than I thought a good mom should and I told myself, "I feel like such a failure as a mom."

I have looked at the state of my house, the amount of dirty laundry, the length of my to-do list, any number of things my perfectionist brain is so good at weaponizing and told myself, "I feel like such a failure."

I've even done it based on other people's behavior, especially my children's behavior. I've literally watched another human do something of their own volition and then made it mean I'm a failure. And I know I'm not alone because these types of things come up in the coaching work I do with widows all the time.

So, here are some things I've seen in my clients. Maybe you're doing some of these too. Maybe your partner had a health condition and you're telling yourself that, now that they died, that you failed them because you didn't see the signs. You didn't listen to what they were telling you about the symptoms, or you didn't insist that they go to the doctor or that they get a second opinion or a third opinion.

Maybe they died by suicide and you're thinking that you feel like such a failure because you didn't see it coming and you should have. Maybe you notice your kids looking upset or disappointed or sad, or maybe they're misbehaving and you tell yourself that you feel like a failure as a mom. I wonder if this sounds familiar. And if it doesn't, I bet there's somewhere in your life that you're doing it.

So, now we know some areas where we might be seeing, "I feel like a failure," showing up in our lives. Now, I want to talk to you about what to do about it.

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First, failure isn't a feeling. It's a story. It's a story that you're telling yourself, "I failed. I'm failing. I feel like a failure. I'm such a failure." We say the word feel, but failure isn't a feeling. It's a story. And those optional sentences, "I failed, I'm failing, I feel like a failure, I'm such a failure," those optional sentences are nothing more than stories that you're buying into about how something is wrong with you, about how you're doing something wrong or about how you've done something wrong.

And I know, I hear you, "But Krista, I'm legitimately failing. If you could see my life, you would know." I hear some of you thinking that right now. And I hear you and we're going to get back to that. But I want you to stay with me. Failure isn't a feeling. It's a story.

Feelings, on the other hand, also known as emotions, are not stories. Feelings are what we create when we tell ourselves stories. And feelings are one word. For instance, happy, sad, angry, glad. Those are feelings. Feelings are what we experience in our bodies when we believe our stories.

So, "I'm failing," or "I'm a failure," or "I feel like a failure," are sentences in our mind, stories. And those stories cause feelings, emotions in our body; disappointed, embarrassed, hopeless, doubtful, insecure, anxious, despondent, depressed, sad, those kinds of feelings.

We create them with the story that we're failing. So, when you're thinking the thought, "I feel like a failure," or some derivative of that thought, it's that thought – which is an interpretation, not a fact. It's not objective truth. It's that thought, "I feel like a failure," that creates an emotion, a feeling. Are you with me?

We say it all the time, "I feel like such a failure." But it's not really how we're feeling. It's what we're thinking. Because failure is not a feeling. It's a story.

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So, what feeling does that story, that thought create for you? And how do you know?

Here's what you do. You think the thought, "I feel like such a failure." And you go to your body. And what is the feeling that you experience when you think the thought? And for me, when I think the thought, "I feel like a failure," I experience the emotion of disappointment. I create the emotion of disappointment with my thoughts.

Disappointment doesn't just happen to me. Disappointment is not caused by what my child does or how much laundry there is or how long my to-do list is or what I got done yesterday or how my husband died or any of it. Disappointment is caused by a thought in my mind that I believe.

So, when I think, "I feel like a failure," I create disappointment for myself. It doesn't mean there's anything wrong with me. It doesn't mean there's anything wrong with you. It just means that, as humans, our thoughts cause our feelings.

And how I feel might be different than how you feel when you think the thought, "I feel like a failure." So, here's what I want you to do. I want you to think that thought, "I feel like a failure," and go to your body. Think it right now, "I feel like a failure." And what do you notice? What emotion does that thought create for you? Because it might be different from the one I feel, and that would be totally normal.

What you need to know is that thoughts cause feelings and failure is always a thought, and an optional one at that. And you might be thinking, "Well, Krista, this is just semantics, right? Does it really matter if I feel like a failure is a thought or a feeling?" Does it really matter?

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And what I want to offer is that yes, it actually does. Because once you understand that your thoughts create your feelings and then you see that you get to think thoughts on purpose, you will be set free. You will then be able to get yourself unstuck from all the thought and feeling patterns that are holding you back from loving your life.

So, yes, it matters. This is what I do in my coaching program. This is why I'm so passionate about it. I want to help you change your stories and your thought patterns because when we change our stories and our thought patterns, we literally change our lives. So yes, it matters.

Now, you don't need me to be able to do this. We're not creating a dependency here. But I can give you the tools. I can give you the support. That's what this podcast is about. That's what my coaching program is about.

And when you get help, you get somewhere faster. And the beauty of coaching is that I know what to look for to spot patterns that cause problems. Because I'm not living your life. It's easy for me to not believe your stories, because they're not my stories.

My brain is not attached to your stories. I can spot them from a mile away. And I can show them to you. And then I can teach you how to change them. And that's what my coach does for me. Because believe me, when I'm thinking my own stories, it's hard for me to see that they're stories. And the change process starts with awareness. If we don't know something's a story, we will never be able to change it. We'll just accept it as truth and we'll continue our lives and our patterns will stay the same. Same patterns, same life.

So yes, it matters that failure is not a feeling. It matters that failure is always a thought. And right now, if you can see that, then you can change that.

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Okay, and remember the part, “But Krista, remember, but Krista if you could just see what’s happening in my life, if you could see what’s going on, you would agree that I’m failing.” No. You ready? Because some of you are really believing this story and you think that everybody in the world, if they could just see your life, would agree that you’re failing in this area or that area or all the areas. But failure is always a story, always. It is always an optional interpretation. And we know this because everyone defines it differently.

I’m going to give you an example that’s not grief related. Let’s say you tell me your child is failing math. What does that even mean, failing math? Because some of you will think that your child is failing math if they come home with an F on one test. Some of you will choose to think that if your child comes home with a C on a progress report that they’re failing. Some of you will think your child is failing math if you notice that your child is struggling with homework one night.

Some of you will get an email that says, “Hey, can we talk?” and you will make that mean, “My child is failing math.” So, failing isn’t as cut and dry as it might seem. And because it isn’t cut and dry and not everyone agrees on what constitutes failure, it is subjective opinion, always. It is interpretation. It is story.

And every time you tell yourself that you feel like a failure, of course you will think it’s true. We all do. But that doesn’t make it factual. And it certainly doesn’t make it useful.

Even if we could objectively agree on what failure is, even if everybody in the world said, “Yep, you’re failing,” it makes us feel terrible to think it that way, right? Why would we keep telling ourselves that story? What value does it serve in our lives?

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And if it's not useful, if it doesn't help us improve – and trust me, it doesn't – why would we keep choosing it for ourselves? I don't think we would. I wouldn't. I don't. When I notice that thought, if I can see it as a thought, I do not choose to believe it just because it showed up. And I don't want you to do that either.

So, I want you to start noticing how the optional story of, “I feel like a failure,” is showing up in your life. Start considering that it could be optional. You don't have to believe you're a tremendous success. But you do have to start noticing what the, “I feel like a failure,” thought creates for you.

Because then, once you start noticing the thought as a thought, as an object you could pick up or put down, then and only then can you start to change that pattern, can you consider the benefits of no longer believing it when your brain offers it to you. You could have the exact same experience. You could have the same pile of laundry.

You could have the same to-do list. You could have the same teenager rolling their eyes at you. You could have fed them takeout exactly the same amount of times last week, everything could have gone down with your partner exactly as it went down. And without the story of, “I feel like a failure,” it would be different. It would be so different. And that's available to you. Like all patterns, this one can be changed.

Alright, that's what I have for you this week. Remember, I love you and you've got this. and you are not a failure, no matter how many times that thought shows up in your mind, I promise. Take care. Have a great week.

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

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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.