

Ep #100: Thought-Colored Glasses



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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Ep #100: Thought-Colored Glasses

Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 100, Thought-Colored Glasses.

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 episode 100. What? Episode 100? I kind of can't believe it when I think back to having started this in 2019 and here we are in 2021. And yeah, I don't know, it feels a little bit surreal to me.

I am excited to bring you not only this episode but to bring you all the episodes that are coming in the future. I've been brainstorming them, been putting together topic ideas, and it feels like we're just getting started. In fact, let me give you a little sneak peek.

I introduced the topic as a discussion point in my Mom Goes On coaching group, and also in my closed Facebook group, which is free, and you're all invited. It's called The Widowed Mom Podcast Community. And I asked everyone to tell me what their worries and fears are around sex.

And oh my goodness, did I unleash quite the discussion. So I might have to do a multi-part series to get all the concerns addressed. But listen, if you resonate with that, if you're like, yes, I have lots of fears around sex and lots of thoughts about sex and widowhood, I hear you and we're going to do episodes on that coming up soon.

Also putting together a podcast book, summarizing the first 100 episodes. So that will be fun. And just really grateful. The podcast has made such a difference, and grateful to those of you who have taken time to tell me that. I also wanted to read a review since I haven't done that in a while.

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So this one's from Bridget in Northern California. And the title of Bridget's review is, "Widow suicide survivor." And Bridget wrote, "Thank you Krista for the episode When It Was Suicide. Everything you talked about was spot on. I've felt it all. My husband took his life while I was home and I found him. I'm almost four years out and I still struggle with the guilt, but I'm getting better. Your podcast has helped tremendously. I'm so grateful for you and what you do."

Thank you, Bridget for taking time to write that. And if you didn't hear the episode When It Was Suicide, I have gotten so much feedback about that. I would really love it if you shared that episode with someone who you think it might make a difference for, whether or not they lost someone to suicide, or just as a way of helping debunk the myths that are out there and change the stigma around suicide. That episode is really important to me. That was just a couple of episodes ago. Episode 97 it was.

Okay, so I want to talk today about thought-colored glasses. I know most of you have heard the term rose-colored glasses, and you've probably never put on a pair of rose-colored glasses, or maybe you have, but rose-colored glasses is often used when someone is being naive or perhaps positive when they see things in a way that makes everything rosy.

We will say that someone is wearing rose-colored glasses. Usually we don't say that in an encouraging way. We're kind of saying it to insinuate that someone is maybe being unrealistic.

But think about a time when you have put on a pair of colored glasses. Maybe you tried on sunglasses and they were blue. Not a big surprise that then when you look through those colored glasses, that the entire world is a shade of that color. Everything, if you're wearing blue glasses, becomes a shade of blue, yes?

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You know what this is like. Thoughts work the same way. When we have a thought, our brain filters the world through that thought and shows us a version of the world that matches that thought, that is the color of that thought.

And so in this episode, I want to share with you five thoughts that I have seen time and time and time again from coaching so many widowed moms. I think you're going to recognize yourself in these thoughts, maybe you haven't thought the thought exactly the same way, but you've thought some cousin of this thought.

And I want to show you how that thought is potentially coloring your world so that you can decide if you want to keep that thought, so that you can decide if you want to take off those thought-colored glasses and put on a new pair that colors your world differently.

The first thought, "No one understands." If I have heard this thought one time, I've heard it a million times. I used to think this thought all the time. No one understands. Think about how you feel when you think the thought no one understands.

For me, I felt isolated, I felt lonely, maybe you feel hurt, maybe you feel frustrated. No one understands. Most widows who have walked this walk have probably thought this thought at one time or another and many of them still agree that this thought is true.

But what I want to offer here is that wearing the thought-colored glasses of no one understands might not actually be helping you create the life you want. Because here's what happens. You think the thought no one understands, we think this thought. Thoughts cause feelings, makes us feel bad, isolated, hurt, lonely.

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When we feel that way, because feelings determine how we behave, most of us pull away. We shut down. We stop sharing. We isolate. And then we don't give people the opportunity to understand us. We don't put ourselves in positions where we're able to understand others because we're pulling farther away. We're removing ourselves authentically from our relationships.

Now, sometimes you might want to make that choice. Sometimes you might not want to share everything with everyone and I get that. I'm not trying to suggest that there's a right or wrong here. But if you've been wearing the thought-colored glasses of no one understands, and because of that you've been feeling terrible and you've been pulling away and you've been shutting down and you haven't been giving people the opportunity to understand what's going on for you, then maybe you're creating less connection with other people at a time when what you really want is more.

So do you want to keep the no one understands thought? Thought number two, "I'm stuck in my grief." Or just generally, I'm stuck. Have you thought this? I've thought this so many times. I'm stuck. Not only in grief but just in my business, in life, in certain areas of life. I really do believe this thought sometimes that I'm stuck.

And guess what? When we believe that we're stuck, we feel kind of paralyzed. We feel maybe frustrated. We actually take less action because we're wearing these thought-colored glasses, I'm stuck, and so we feel kind of stuck, confused, paralyzed, frustrated, and humans don't take productive action from that place.

And remember, thought-colored glasses, our brain goes on a search for evidence of our thinking. Our brain goes searching for all the areas that we aren't making the progress that we believe we should be making. Just like it does when we're wearing the no one understands thought glasses.

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Our brain is only looking for evidence of the people who are acting like they don't understand. It's not showing us the evidence of the widowed friend down the street who actually does understand. Or people who understand in ways that even if they haven't walked the exact same life experience, they're with us.

So our brain is always trying to show us evidence of what we're thinking. It's coloring the world with those thought glasses. So when we're wearing the I'm stuck in my grief thought-colored glasses, and we're feeling stuck and paralyzed and frustrated, we take no action. Our brain finds lots of evidence of this inaction and of how we are so stuck, and we literally create stuckness with our minds.

We literally block ourselves from being able to go where it is we want to go in life. But it's not because we're genuinely stuck. It's because we don't know we're wearing the thought-colored glasses of I'm stuck. And if we took them off, and maybe put on glasses that colored the world with I'm figuring it out, or I know where I am, or all I have to do is put one foot in front of the other, we have lots of options. But I'm stuck in my grief perpetuates itself.

Number three, "No one will love me like they did." I used to have this thought too. No one will love me like they did. Again, thoughts cause feelings, feelings are what drive our behaviors and our behaviors create our results. Thought, feeling, action cycle.

So when you think no one will love me like they did, when you're wearing those thought-colored glasses, how do you feel? Sad? Depressed? Despair? That's how I felt. I felt sad. Just at such a loss. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with sadness but think about how sadness changes how we show up.

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Think about how wearing these thought-colored glasses of no one will love me like they did colors your world. Now your brain starts looking for evidence of your own belief that it's true that no one will love you like they did. That would also have you probably not dating, not giving someone else a chance, getting on online dating apps and then deciding that nope, none of these people will work.

Someone tries to set you up, even though you're interested in dating again, you say no. We don't put ourselves in places where we can find love. We don't open ourselves up to the opportunity, the potential that amazing love could exist because we're wearing these thought-colored glasses and finding evidence for how it's true that no one will love me like they did.

Thought-colored glasses number four, "I don't know who I am." If I had a nickel for every time I either thought or had another widow tell me I don't know who I am, you get the point. Very common thought. Imagine what that thought creates. If you are wearing the thought-colored glasses of I don't know who I am, how do you feel? Probably scared. Maybe lost. Untethered, unmoored.

It's very uncomfortable this thought, I don't know who I am. And remember, then our brain goes looking for all the data that lines up with this belief. I don't know who I am. Our thought-colored glasses color our world and show us the areas that we're unsure of and completely block us from what we do know.

We become unable to recognize what we do know about ourselves. I remember having this thought after Hugo died. I remember looking in the mirror and thinking, "I don't know who I am. Who is that person looking at me?" It was such a surreal feeling.

So when I'm giving you these thoughts, I know that they feel real. You're not doing anything wrong because you think them. I've thought every one

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of these thoughts multiple times. But what I want you to see is what the thought creates in your life.

And I remember feeling completely lost and unsure of myself and that thought felt so true to me, I don't know who I am. But it's not really true. There's so many things you still know about yourself right now.

Imagine you traveled to a country that you've never been in. You don't speak the language, you don't really understand the culture, you didn't really study up before you came. You get off the plane, you're in this foreign country, you're probably not going to tell yourself, "I don't know who I am." It's not going to occur to you. You're going to say, "Wow, I've never been here before. This is new. This is unfamiliar. I don't speak this language yet. I better get a map. I better get Google Translate."

But at no point when you get off that plane do you start doubting that you know who you are. But yet this is what we do in grief. This is what we do when we lose a spouse and we believe it. I don't know who I am. But I want to offer to you that that thought will block you from what you do know and you will convince yourself that this thought is true because your brain is doing its job and finding evidence of your thinking.

But what if it's not true at all? What if it's just thought-colored glasses? What if you know so much about who you are? And maybe you're in a new country, maybe you've never had this life experience before. Maybe you feel very disoriented, maybe you don't speak the language, maybe it's a little scary.

But you still know you. You still know what you like, you still know what your preferences are. You still know who you are. You, the you that is you hasn't really changed. What if you decided to wear those thought-colored glasses? Would that serve you? Try them on. Try them on.

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Alright, the last thought. “He or she shouldn’t have died.” Again, I thought that so many times. He shouldn’t have died; it shouldn’t have happened. And then you go down the toilet spiral of other terrible thoughts. So you think he or she shouldn’t have died, and then you feel resistant, you feel basically terrible.

And then your brain starts finding evidence for how it shouldn’t have happened. You resist their actual death. You get preoccupied with the past. You become unable to stay in the present moment. You run all the scenarios, the would’ve, could’ve should’ve scenarios about how you could have done it differently and they could have done it differently and the doctors could have done it differently, or whomever could have done it differently, should have done it differently.

Every time you think he or she shouldn’t have died, your brain just finds evidence for how that’s true. And it blocks you from staying in the present moment and we then prevent ourselves from living in the now. This matters. This thought-colored pair of glasses, he or she shouldn’t have died, that prevents us from living.

Now, you’ve heard me address this line of thinking before. And I am not suggesting that we have to go from he or she shouldn’t have died, to they should have died. That’s a stretch for a lot of us. If you had asked me to think that after Hugo died, I would have told you to go take a flying leap. That’s how I felt about that.

But they did die. They did die. That’s acceptance. Think about the difference between the thought-colored glasses of they shouldn’t have died and the thought-colored glasses of they did die. Then we aren’t giving all of our energy arguing with the past. We aren’t telling our brain to show us what really did happen in life shouldn’t have happened.

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So here's the truth; our whole human experience is made up of thought-colored glasses. Our whole human experience is determined by the thought-colored glasses we put on and leave on. And most of us aren't doing it on purpose. We aren't doing it consciously, with intention.

Somewhere along the line we picked up some thought-colored glasses and we put them on and we've been wearing them for so long that we don't even know we can take them off. We don't even know we're wearing them anymore. It's just the way we see the world.

I could come up with dozens and dozens and dozens of thoughts that I have had as a widow, that I have coached my clients on. And most of them aren't ones we choose on purpose if we could fully see their impact. If we could see how they are coloring our world, we would take off those glasses because they block us from the life we want. They hold us back from loving our life.

And that's what I want for you. That's what's possible for you. That you can truly love your life. Not just tolerate it but actually love it. So I challenge you, which one of these thought-colored glasses that I covered in this episode do you want to take off of your face? Just pick one. Just pick one.

Every time you realize that you're wearing that pair of glasses, you can just take them off. You don't even have to put on any new glasses. Just take off that thought. What would your life be like without it? So much easier, so much less suffering.

And then start looking for the other thought-colored glasses that you're wearing and you haven't even noticed. Which ones do you want to keep wearing? Which ones do you want to take off? You get to choose. This is your life. You get to be the boss of your thinking. You get to be the boss of your future.

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We can't control what happened in the past, but we do get to choose how we want to think about it. We do get to choose how we want to think about ourselves. We do get to create our present and our future on purpose, and that starts with knowing what glasses we're wearing.

Okay, that's what I've got for you on episode 100. Thanks for hanging out with me and celebrating with me. Here's to another 100 episodes and remember, I love you and you've got this. I'll see you next week. Take care. 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.