

# Ep #101: Sex and Widowhood - Part 1



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Krista St-Germain**

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 101, Sex and Widowhood Part One.

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. Oh my goodness, I brought up recently the topic of sex and widowhood in a few different places. I brought it up on social, Facebook and Instagram, where you can find me by the way at @coachingwithkrista on Facebook and @lifecoachkrista on Instagram.

And I also brought it up inside my closed Facebook group, which you are so welcome to join. It's called The Widowed Mom Podcast Facebook community. It's free and it's closed. But if you're a widow and a mom, come on in. And I also brought it up inside of my paid program, my Mom Goes On group coaching program.

And wow, the response told me that not only do I need one episode of the podcast about this, I need multiple episodes. So I'm going to do this at least in two parts, and in this episode, I'm going to talk about myths, and in part two, I'm going to start addressing worries and fears.

So first, I would like to suggest a book to you if you are interested in this. Joan Price wrote a book called *Sex After Grief*. If you're looking for a book to read on this topic, I would highly recommend hers. She's not a young, widowed mom, but she's honest, she's unapologetic, and the stories that she weaves throughout the book from other grievers I found to be relatable.

And she has a specific chapter on myths about sex and grief and it covers many of the same myths that I'm going to talk about in today's episode. So

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before we jump in, I want to tell you, you know I never believe that I know what's best for you to think. I don't know what's best for you. I really don't know what's best for another person. I have a hard enough time some days figuring out what's best for me.

So what I want for you always is to choose your own beliefs on purpose, to create your own life the way you want it. And so the eight myths I'm about to share are basically beliefs, but I don't want you to take as truth unless you decide consciously to do so.

So I just want you to see them as optional and I want you to make your own choice. I want you to form your own opinion and create your own life. Okay coach steps off soapbox. Let's jump in.

Myth number one, what you want isn't sex, it's just a physical connection. Have you heard this? Has anyone told you this? Oh dear, you don't really want sex, you just want some contact with a human, you just want some skin-to-skin contact, you just need to get a facial or a massage.

Okay, now, maybe you do want skin to skin contact. Maybe you do want a physical connection with another human. But wanting a physical connection and skin to skin contact is woefully different than wanting sex. They are not the same. Agreed?

By all means, if you want massages and facials and platonic cuddles, go get them. But if you want sex, please do not buy into the idea that you are confused and that you don't know what you want, and that what you really want is just touch. They're both amazing but they're not the same. You know what you want. You don't have to feel bad about it. That's myth number one.

Myth number two. Wanting sex means you didn't love your partner enough. Hello, this one is a tried-and-true recipe for guilt, is it not? We do not need

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this. The love that you had for your partner has absolutely nothing to do with your sex life. Zero. Zilch. Nada.

You are not cheating on your partner. In fact, many of us took vows that actually included the words til death do us part, and guess what? No big surprise here, they died. You are no longer bound to those vows.

If you want to be bound to those vows, okay, but choose that for yourself on purpose. Wanting sex doesn't mean you didn't love your partner enough. Wanting sex means you're human. Evolutionarily speaking, humans are wired to want sex. This is not news. Remember the motivational triad that I talked about in episode 23? Seek pleasure, avoid pain, be efficient.

That's how our primitive brain is literally wired. So please do not entertain people who offer this line of thinking to you if you don't believe it serves you and do not guilt yourself into believing that it's true.

Okay, myth number three. Sex is only appropriate after you've grieved for at least a year. Can you see me rolling my eyes? If you could see it through the podcast app that you're listening from, you would see my eyes. What is it with the obsession about the one-year mark?

Nothing magical happens one year after their death. There is no spontaneous healing, there is no divine intervention, no angels are going to sing to you. And I love you but nothing magical happens in a year. I think what most people mean when they say things like this is that they believe that grief will cloud our judgment, and yes, for some people the part of the brain that's responsible for decision making definitely does have even less bandwidth than before.

If you want more on that, you can listen to the episode on widow fog, episode six. So if you want to decide not to have sex until a year after your

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partner died, or any particular timeline, and that feels good to you, maybe because you've made the decision in advance and you don't have to use any of your brain space to contemplate it, you can just be free from worrying or thinking about it at all until the time of your choosing, I am totally on board with that.

But please don't do it because you think it's inappropriate within the first year or because you believe that at the one-year mark, the sun will shine brighter and the air will suddenly smell like unicorns. Because that's just not true. Nothing magical happens at the one-year mark, I promise you. Sex is appropriate when you decide it is appropriate.

Myth number four. Not wanting sex means there's something wrong with you. This one is a tried-and-true recipe for shame. What does it mean if you don't want sex? I say nothing bad. Nothing bad.

I think it just means you're a human on the planet with preferences. That's my opinion. Listen, I didn't want sex for the longest time after Hugo died. The idea seemed terrible to me. I was so emotionally drained that the mere thought of being with someone else and specifically all the effort that I imagined would be required to find someone else sounded exhausting to me. No thank you.

But I didn't make it mean that there was something wrong with me. I knew that a day would come when I would want sex again and it did. And I didn't buy into the lie that I was damaged or lifeless or any other similar nonsense. And so I'm hoping that you will give yourself full permission to want what you want and nothing more. And if what you want is a nap, you don't want sex, fine. You get to be the boss of when you want to have sex again. End of story.

Myth number five. You should wait until you're not grieving to have sex. Have you heard this one? Said mostly by people who probably haven't

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experienced much grief in life. That sex which grieving is damaging and it's just a sign that you haven't accepted the loss, so you should wait until you're not grieving to have sex.

But here's the problem with that. Grief is not golf. There's no 18 holes to play and then you're done. Grief is a human's response to loss. We're always going to have thoughts and feelings about the loss. There is no finish line to grief. Unless we can go back and undo the loss, the thoughts and feelings will always be there.

I'm not suggesting - and if you've listened to the podcast for any length of time, you already know this. I'm not suggesting that sadness is going to be your predominant emotion forever. In fact, I believe and teach women how to love life, truly love it and not settle for a new normal even after the loss of their spouse.

There's no limits to that. But also, grief doesn't end. So if you're waiting to have sex again until grief is over, you're going to be waiting for a long, long time. As we would say in Kansas, until the cows come home.

Now, anyone who knows anything about grief is probably imagining that you should wait until your grief no longer feels super intense and until you're back to functioning in your life. Functioning well.

And I'm sure most of these people are just trying to protect you because they have their own thoughts about sex and what it would mean if you had some and that's okay. We can love those people. And we might even agree with them. That's okay.

But we can make our own decisions about what we want. Timelines are arbitrary in my experience. They can do more harm than good. So you decide what's best for you always.

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Myth number six. If you want sex, it's just because you're trying to escape your grief. No. See myth number one, you might actually just want sex. Now, some would offer that sexual connection with another is healing and amazing and can help you feel alive again.

And I want you to choose what you want to believe for you. And I know you've heard me talk about buffering, numbing before. I would add there's nothing wrong with distracting yourself from emotions. I just recommend that you do it consciously. Don't kid yourself into believing that using a behavior to numb out or distract means that you can avoid your emotions forever. You can't.

But if you want to use a behavior to distract or numb, again, you are a grown woman who can do whatever she wants. I just want you to do it consciously and safely. And no need to shame or guilt yourself over your choices. Deal?

Alright, myth number seven. In order for you to have sex again, you have to find the one. Meaning the person that you want to spend forever with. And again, you get to be the boss here. If you have chosen values that line up with this belief and if you like this belief and if you like your reasons, then I'm totally all in with you.

But on the other hand, if this is just a story you've been fed and it's not serving you and you don't want to believe this, you can put this belief down. We don't have to put so much pressure on ourselves and on the next person that we have sex with. It's not necessary.

And I'm not saying you can't wait until you find someone you want to spend the rest of your life with. I just want you to make this choice for yourself. Are you picking up the theme? Make choices about your thoughts consciously. Make choices about how you live your life consciously. Don't just take for

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granted somebody else's beliefs just because it was offered to you or it was the common belief in the culture that you grew up in.

Last myth in this episode, you'll know when you're ready because you won't have strong emotions about it. No. No, no, you're not a robot. You're a human. And I want you to make space for lots of different emotions around sex, just like you've heard me tell you to do in grief, there are no concrete, predictable emotional stages with grief. There won't be any with sex either.

So you may feel repulsed at the idea one moment and excited the next. You might be confident that you are ready in one moment and notice yourself feeling panicky or doubtful the very same day. This doesn't mean that anything has gone wrong. This doesn't mean that you're stuck and that you're not healing.

This doesn't mean that you're not ready. Have compassion for yourself. Let these feelings be there without judgement. You're human. Of course you're likely going to have strong emotions and of course they will ebb and flow. But you are not a robot and you're not trying to get to some robotic state before you give yourself permission to have sex again. I don't think you want to be a robot.

Okay, how was that? Dad, how you doing? I know you listen to the podcast. God, I love it. Okay, in the next episode, I'm going to cover some of the most common worries and fears that widows have about sex. I told you and I'm really not joking; we just lit a fire inside of my Mom Goes On group coaching program.

It's one of the things that I love about group coaching so much is because what I know about the widowed mom experience is that it's so isolating. And so many of you are walking around thinking that all the thoughts you're having or the experiences that you're noticing are just you.

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And especially when it comes to a topic like sex, if you have any sort of guilt or shame about bringing it up, then it's really easy to isolate and it's really easy to then believe even more that there's something wrong with you, or that the way that you see this is different than the way other people see it or experience it.

And I love that in a group coaching environment, we can just get all this out and everybody goes, "Oh yeah, I'm thinking that too, I'm so glad you said it, I was embarrassed to say it," and we can just talk about it and be honest and open and then we can just make progress so much faster because we normalize some of the things that are common in this experience.

So next episode, we're going to talk about worries and fears, including my strong opinions about what some call the wid-hoe stage. I will tell you all about what I think of the wid-hoe stage. Thanks for spending your time with me. I hope this episode helped you.

Remember, I love you and you've got this. And I'll see you next time. Have a beautiful 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](http://coachingwithkrista.com) and click Work With Me for details and next steps. I can't wait to meet you.