

Ep #107: How to Know if You're Ready for Coaching



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 107, How to Know if You're Ready for Coaching.

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. Just got back from Colorado, little trip to the mountains and my dad's cabin over Memorial. Took my daughter, my son, the boyfriend, his youngest son, and it was a lovely little trip.

Just kind of the right amount of time, always have to kind of prepare myself for the grief grenades when I go to Colorado because - well, a couple things happen. One is that we always drive by the site of the accident where it all started really. And I don't love that part, never have.

And then also of course, Hugo just loved Colorado. He loved being at my dad's property, he loved the mountains, and so I have a lot of memories with him there. And it went so well this time. It's kind of gotten easier every single time and this I think was by far the least triggering, least stressful, least emotional time at all.

I almost didn't even notice honestly driving by that spot on the highway either coming or going. And that was different because almost every other time I've really, really noticed. So I hope that when I tell you these stories you aren't comparing and despairing. I hope you aren't thinking, "Here she is almost five years out and maybe I'm not that far along, or I'm out farther than that and it hurts worse for me," or making yourself feel bad.

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But I do like telling my story with hopes that it will inspire you and lift you up if you're maybe worried that it's not going to get better for you. I guess I just want to assure you that it will. It's definitely gotten so much better for me.

So let's get into the episode, shall we? I get questions all the time from widows who are intrigued by life coaching and they think they might want to try it but they aren't sure if they're ready. And when I discovered life coaching, I was really ready for it, but I understand that you might not be so sure that you are, and you might be wondering how you can tell if you're ready.

So I've created this episode to help answer that question for you because it's one of the most frequent questions that I get. So first I'm going to tell you about two common myths that people have about life coaching and grief, and then I'm going to give you a little checklist you can use to assess your own readiness for coaching.

And also, if you have questions about the differences between life coaching and therapy, I'm not going to address that in this episode because I've already recorded an episode on that subject specifically. It's episode 81 where I interviewed a friend of mine, Sandy Arguello, who happens to be a coaching colleague of mine and also has been a licensed therapist for many, many years. And we shared our opinions on the differences between life coaching and therapy. So if you're interested in that, go check out episode 81.

Okay, so are you ready for coaching? I want to start first with two myths. Myth number one is that a certain amount of time has to pass before a widow is ready for coaching, and that's not necessarily true. In fact, I would say it's not really true at all.

Timelines are less relevant than I used to think for sure. Some women are ready very soon after losing their partner and some women aren't. I used to

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think there was a certain amount of time that had to pass before someone was ready for coaching but I've been proven wrong so many times I just don't believe that anymore.

Women who I imagined couldn't possibly be ready shocked me at how beyond ready they were. Even sometimes only a couple of weeks after their partner passed. And then women who I assumed would be ready weren't ready at all and it wasn't a good next step for them.

So the amount of time that's passed since your partner died just isn't a reliable indication. However, widow fog is an important consideration, and that usually happens in acute grief. So if you've never heard of widow fog, go check out episode six because that's what it's all about.

But if you're experiencing it, you probably already know what I mean, you don't even have to listen to the episode. If things are so foggy for you, which they were for me in the beginning, so foggy that you can't watch a short video and then answer some questions or fill out a worksheet without getting overwhelmed, then it's probably too early.

Because part of my program is learning tools that help you manage your brain and manage your emotional life. Once the program's over, not only do I want us to have worked through your current obstacles, but I want you to have the tools that you need to work through obstacles that you're going to face in the future, instead of creating a dependency on coaching.

And so while I think we do a great job of supporting and guiding you through the program, you want to be at a point cognitively where you can watch a video and fill out a worksheet. And that might sound basic, but I promise you, not everyone is ready for that yet.

So if you aren't ready, give yourself some grace. Know that the widow fog will get better. And when you feel ready for it, coaching will be there for

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you, I'll definitely be there for you. So that's myth number one, that a certain amount of time has to pass before a widow is ready for coaching. It's not at all true.

I'll also add that it isn't necessarily even a widow who lost their partner in a long-term illness who's ready. So sometimes people assume, "Well, if it was an accident, if I didn't see the loss coming, then for sure I need more time," versus someone who had helped their partner perhaps as a long-term caregiver in a terminal illness type of a situation, but that's not even an accurate stereotype.

I've worked with women who lost their partner in accidents they never saw coming very shortly after the accident and they've done marvelously well. So myth number two, coaching is only for newer widows. That is not true at all either, but I think a lot of people think that.

Even if you've been a widow for years, coaching will still change your life. And yes, the majority of women who have gone through my program aren't more than a few years out from the date of their loss on average, but that is by no means a rule.

And maybe you didn't get the opportunity to get coaching in those early years because frankly, life coaching for widows didn't exist yet. The program that I've created is the program I couldn't find but would have loved to have gone through. When I found life coaching, it was because I found a generalized life coach and I just happened to then take what I learned and apply it to grief and my study of post-traumatic growth and my own personal experience.

So for a lot of us, it just wasn't an option. Maybe you were doing the best that you could to survive and just put one foot in front of the other and that took you years to get to a place where you're actually ready for coaching. And I see a lot of times that it takes a while for us to get to the place where

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we're ready to invest in our mental wellbeing and we're ready to invest in our future and maybe we see what avoiding grief has created in our lives and we want something better for ourselves.

So please don't exclude yourself because you think you're not a new widow. In fact, many of my widowed clients have been dating, some have been remarried, remarried and divorced, and maybe they come to that place where they realize they aren't really in love with their lives and they don't know exactly why or how to fix it, but they do know that it has something to do with something that has gone unprocessed or undealt with as it relates to the loss of their partner.

So if that's you, I hear you, you're probably very ready for what we offer inside my program. Please don't discount yourself because you are buying into the myth that coaching is only for newer widows. It's just not true.

So I told you I would give you two myths and then a checklist. So the first part of the checklist is how to know that you're not ready for coaching, and then I'll tell you how to know if you are.

So you are not ready for coaching if you haven't accepted, at least logically, that your partner has died. Now, chances are you have accepted at least logically that your partner has died, or you would not be listening to a podcast with the word widow in the title.

But if by chance you are still preparing for them to return, or you are holding onto their belongings in case they come back, then coaching is not a good fit for you. I don't think this applies to almost anyone who's listening to this podcast, but this is a real struggle for some and I don't want to ignore it because it has happened.

You are also not ready for coaching, as I mentioned before, if your widow fog is so intense that you're overwhelmed at the idea of watching a 10-

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minute video and completing a worksheet. A little more time needs to pass if that's still where you are.

You keep listening to the podcast, you keep making sure that you are resting when you need it, you're taking good care of yourself, doing all the things to practice good self-care. And then when your cognitive functioning is better, then we can reconsider.

This I get actually more often than you might think. You're not ready for coaching if you believe coaching is a magic pill. Sometimes people seem to think that they can pay me and poof, their lives will change. Unfortunately, as much as I wish that it could work that way, it doesn't.

Coaching is very much a two-way street. I provide the tools and I provide the coaching but participants have to participate in the process. Otherwise it's like pushing rope. It's not very effective. It's also not very fun for me either.

So if you are at that place where you really just want to throw money at something but you're not willing to engage in the process, then coaching would be a waste of your time, it would be a waste of your money. So that's definitely something to consider. Nothing wrong if you're wanting to wave money at something and hope it goes away. It's just not going to be effective for you and I don't want to steer you in that direction.

You're not ready for coaching if you are crying all day, struggling to spend time out of bed, you have symptoms of depression that aren't being managed, you're unable to meet your own basic needs, for instance, maybe you're struggling with hygiene, you're struggling to shower.

And I don't mean that some days it's hard and you just want to stay in your pajamas all day. I mean that on a consistent basis, a regular basis, it's impacting your life and you aren't at a basic level, a minimum baseline of

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functioning. If that's you, I highly recommend that you get yourself seen by a mental health professional. Until you're able to function at the most basic level, what I offer in coaching, it would just be overwhelming for you. It would not serve you at all.

And then of course, and I think this goes without saying, but it's important and so I'm going to say it anyway. If you are thinking about harming yourself, if you are talking about taking your own life, you are not ready for coaching. That is not for you.

If that is you, I'm going to give you a whole 'nother list here. And if any of these things apply, I seriously want you to reach out to the National Suicide Hotline and I'll give you that number. But if you are really seriously having suicide ideation, meaning that you are thinking of ways or talking about, thinking about, really creating a plan for how you might harm yourself, then we need to address that.

Now, many widows have told me and have had the thought that, "If I get hit by a bus, I'm not sure it would be all that bad." That is different than thinking about it or planning it.

So if you're thinking about it or planning it, if you're expressing strong feelings of hopelessness or being trapped, if you have an unusual preoccupation with death or dying, if you notice yourself acting recklessly, as though you had a death wish like you're speeding through red lights or you're abusing substances to the point that you could really harm yourself, if you are calling or visiting people to say goodbye, or thinking about that, if you are getting your affairs in order not because something messy happened when your partner died and you know what it's like to leave people or you know what it's like to be left with affairs that aren't in order, but if you're getting your affairs in order, like you're giving away things that are important to you, you're tying up loose ends because you're imagining that you might not be living much longer, saying things like, "Everyone

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would be better off without me, or I want out," those kinds of things are signs for you to get help.

And I don't think that most of you listening to this podcast are probably in that place. But if you are, I love you and I care about you and I want to make sure that you get the help that you need. And if you're listening to this podcast and hearing this list just brought someone to your mind, widow or not, then I encourage you to reach out to them and try to get them the help they need.

So everyone has it, National Suicide Prevention line, it's 1800-273-8255. 1800-273-8255. We'll make sure that's in the show notes as well. So that's how to know that you are not ready for coaching. Coaching is best for people who are - they're not thriving, but they're doing a decent job of surviving.

So you are likely ready for coaching if you're in that place where you're functioning, you're surviving, but you are not thriving. You're feeling maybe robotic, like you're just going through the motions. Maybe you're feeling a little numb. Maybe you feel like you're on an emotional rollercoaster and you hold it together in front of people, but then when they're not looking, you fall apart.

Maybe you're feeling hollow. That's how I described how I felt. It felt very hollow and empty to me. So I was doing all the things, but feeling very unsatisfied and definitely worried that my best days were behind me.

But you're not in bed all day crying. Other people are telling you how strong you are, and when they say it, you probably don't like hearing it. Maybe you think, "Well, that's nice that they say that but honestly, what choice do I have?" That's probably what you're thinking. Or you're thinking, "Yeah, but if they only knew. They just see the outside, they don't see what I feel like.

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They don't see what it's really like inside here, inside this mind, inside this heart."

But from their perspective, they see you functioning and they can't imagine being in your place so in their mind, you're a superstar. You're just a superhero. But you don't feel that way.

You're probably ready for coaching if you're in the place where you want to be optimistic about the future, you probably believe that it's possible that some people could go on and have happy futures, but you don't really think that's - if you think you can do it, you definitely don't know how to do it and you want help.

Or maybe you think it's possible for you someday and you don't want to wait until someday. You have glimmers of hope, but you really want some tools and some guidance to help you. So what I hear a lot is, "Well Krista, I want to believe that I can be genuinely happy. Again, I want to believe you, but that feels so hard."

And so yes, of course it feels hard. It's totally - it's hard. And it's totally okay if you want to love life again and you don't believe it's possible for you. If you fully believed it was possible and that you could do it, you'd be doing it already. There's nothing wrong with you.

And yes, maybe you think, it's possible for you but you're some sort of special snowflake, that's totally okay if you think that. All you have to do is just be willing to follow and try. Follow what I teach, give it a genuine effort. This is why I've always offered a money-back guarantee.

And it's not a money-back guarantee that says you can pay me and ghost. It's a money-back guarantee that says I know what I teach works and if you just genuinely apply yourself and try and show up and you're present, then it will work for you. I know that it will.

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That's why this episode is important because I never accept people into the program or at least I try very hard to not accept women into the program who aren't a good fit for coaching yet because it wouldn't be fair to them. It wouldn't be any fun for me because I wouldn't be able to help them, and it wouldn't be fair to them.

But I do know that doubt is normal. Doubt is normal. So if you're genuinely willing to try, even if you're having some self-doubt, even if - I've had this conversation so many times too. Even if you're like, "Well, I'm a good starter but I'm not a good finisher, I always start things and I never finish them," okay.

That's part of coaching is working on why do we do that? Why do we start things and only do them for that brief moment of motivation and then quit on ourselves? How do we increase our ability to follow through? That's part of coaching. It doesn't change unless we change the pattern, and we don't change the pattern unless we understand the pattern, and coaching teaches you how to identify the pattern.

So okay, also, it's okay to be crying regularly about the loss. It's fine. Songs are still going to make you cry, things are still going to make you cry. You're probably going to talk about it and you're going to cry. I think everybody who ever comes to their first coaching session with me is always worried that they're going to cry. It's not a problem.

Crying is not a bad thing at all. Now, if you're crying so much that it's impairing your ability to function, that's a different level of crying. That's probably a sign of depression that we want to get you some help for. But still continuing to cry when you talk about your partner's loss, that's okay. That's okay.

We're almost always our worst critics. And so I think a lot of you are out there thinking, "Well, I'm not ready for coaching, I don't think I'm ready for

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it, maybe someday.” And that’s why I really wanted to give you a way to think about coaching. I want to give you an actual list of questions, I want to talk that through with you so you can decide, am I ready? Or is it not yet for me? And let’s get you the help that you need.

Two more things I want to tell you. Questions that I get a lot. Sometimes I’ll talk to someone and they’ll say, “Well, what do you think? Do I need coaching?” No. Coaching is not something anyone needs. Coaching is a want. It’s not a need.

So do I need coaching is not the right question to ask because coaching is just never a need. Coaching just gets you where you want to go faster when you’re ready for it. And so what I want you to hear is that you’re going to be okay regardless of whether you ever coach with me or anyone.

This is not a need. Food and water and ideally a roof over our heads, those are needs. Those are needs. And the appropriate licensed mental healthcare professionals if we’re struggling with something that could be life-threatening or is really impacting the quality of our life and has us below that minimum baseline of functioning. Those are needs.

But you are resilient. You have what you need inside of you already to be happy again. You do not need a coach. I want you to imagine it like a road trip. You’re currently at point A and you want to get to point Z. Point Z is where you’re absolutely in love with your life again.

You can absolutely get to point Z. You have what it takes. Whether you drive your car, you take a bus, you ride your bike, you walk, eventually, you can get wherever you want to go in life. Coaching just helps you get there faster.

Hugo and I worked together for Bombardier Learjet. Little plug, not that they need it from me. But he was with the company for 20 years, I think

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he'd just recently celebrated his 20-year anniversary right before he died actually, and I had been there for 10 when I left.

And so very familiar with business jets. A Learjet can travel 500 miles an hour or more. It gets you where you want to go much, much faster than any other method of travel. When you fly on a Learjet, you do not have to go through TSA, you do not have to go through a metal detector, you do not stand in line.

When you go out of the country on a Learjet, customs comes to you. But do you need a Learjet to go on vacation? Absolutely not. Does it save you time? So much time. So much time. And it's amazing to ride in. It's cushy and it's nothing like flying commercial where you're going to be seated next to someone that you don't even know or don't have anything in common with.

The only other people on the Learjet are probably with you. They're probably your people. That's a lot. That's kind of like, how I like to think about my coaching program. It's like, going somewhere in a Learjet. You get where you want to go much faster, you've got a pilot in the cockpit who knows how to fly the plane and chart your course, and all the people on the plane are your people. It's a beautiful thing.

But it is not a need. So please don't be asking yourself, "Do I need coaching?" No, you don't. If you want it, let's go. If you want it, let's go. And then the other question I get a lot too is, "Well, what if I need one-on-one coaching and not group? And you only offer group, so what if I need one-on-one?"

Again, the reason I do group coaching, I used to do only one-on-one in the beginning as a coach, I only coached one-on-one and for the longest time, I just did one-on-one. And after a while, you have enough of these

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conversations and you help people and you put them through a process and you help them get where they want to go and you see the trends.

I've seen the trends and I got to a certain point where I thought, man, there's so many women out there beating themselves up and so hard on themselves and wondering what's wrong with me, and why is this a problem for me, and assuming that they're the only ones that are struggling with these aspects of grief.

And I could just see, if I could just get these women together to see it's not them, there's nothing wrong with them, this is just grief. If we want to grow after grief, if we want to love life again, this is what we have to go through. These are the obstacles, these are the pitfall. This is what we all come up against.

And I knew that if I could get everyone together, that you could go so much faster. So much faster. Because we can just normalize all that stuff straight out of the gate, be done with it. You can see, "Oh, there's nothing wrong with me, this is just grief. Oh, she's going through that too, okay, I don't have to beat myself up for that. Oh yeah, she brought up that topic I was really too embarrassed to bring up but I'm struggling with that too."

That's why group coaching is so powerful. Because everyone's getting coached because they have similar concerns, they're having a similar life experience in that they lost their spouse. But we can move through some of the normal stuff first and that way then we can get to the stuff that's really specific and unique to your own life.

And the other thing that is really strange but makes a lot of sense when you understand how the brain works, you can actually get more out of watching someone else get coached sometimes than you can out of being coached yourself. It's the most fascinating thing.

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Because when I'm coaching you, I'm really challenging your brain in useful ways, but remember, the most basic part of our brain does not like change. It would really rather just keep repeating what it's used to because it's more efficient that way.

And so sometimes when you're being coached, and if you're listening to this and you're in my program, you know exactly what I'm talking about. Your brain just feels kind of grindy or twitchy. It's a very strange feeling as you're getting coached. It's why I record all of our sessions so you can go back and watch yourself get coached and absorb the coaching after it's over when your brain is less resistant.

But you'll notice your brain is really resistant to what's actually happening. And so that isn't happening when you are watching someone get coached. When you're watching someone get coached, it's very clear to you what I'm saying and what I'm helping that person with and where she's stuck and why.

And you will say, "Oh, that's what's happening. I see it. I see why she's so stuck in her relationship with her mother-in-law," and maybe you're not stuck in your relationship with your mother-in-law, maybe you're stuck in your relationship with your sister. But you can see the pattern because it's not your life and it'll be really obvious to you and you go, "Oh, that's what I'm doing, I didn't even know I was doing that."

And time after time after time I'll coach someone and then somebody else will say that's exactly the coaching I didn't know I needed, exactly what I needed to hear. And we'll - I hate the expression kill two birds with one stone because I don't even know, who wants to kill birds?

But it's just a very efficient way of doing things where you don't have to be the one in the hot seat to benefit. In fact, oftentimes you benefit more by watching, which I just love that about group coaching. So if you're saying, "I

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have to be coached one-on-one," no, you don't. Actually, group is so much more efficient, and it's more supportive, and everyone gets you.

And I don't know about you, but for sure when Hugo died, I didn't know any other widows my age. I didn't have any other widows in my immediate circle of friends for sure, and I felt like I was on an island by myself. And so it's really nice to watch everyone get supported and develop friendships with other women who of course are varying in ages and have kids who are little and kids who are grown and that doesn't even matter because they just get each other on a level that most people don't.

So okay, that is what I have for you this week. I hope if you've been considering coaching, this clears some things up for you. And if you have any questions though, I want you to reach out. So you can go to coachingwithkrista.com and you can find how to contact me there and reach out if you have questions. We'll help you, we'll point you in the right direction.

I want you to get the support that you need whether you get it from me or someone else. If coaching isn't a good fit for you, let me help you steer you towards what is a good fit. And if it's not a good fit for you yet, you just keep listening to the podcast.

You just keep taking good care of yourself and you get the support that you need, especially if that includes someone who is on your team from a mental health perspective that is licensed. Do that because you're worth that. Your wellbeing is worth that. Your kids are worth that.

Sometimes we don't want to invest in ourselves because we think it's selfish but I promise you, your mental wellbeing, investing in that is never a bad thing. It's always - I hope it will always be a priority for you. Okay, everyone, I hope you have a beautiful week, I'm going to go do some more

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packing, the move is going to be here before I know it. I'll keep you posted. I love you, you've got this, and I'll see you next time. 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.