

Ep #108: Being Both Parents



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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 108, Being Both Parents.

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. Whether you have little kids or grown kids or somewhere in between, trying to be both parents is a common struggle for widowed moms everywhere. My hope is that today's episode will give you a different perspective and help ease your struggle.

And before we get into that, I want to do a quick listener shout-out. I haven't done one of those in a while. This one came from a reviewer that calls themselves JUDLUK and the title of the review is, "Life can go on."

And JUDLUK wrote, "I have podcast-surfed and finally found my home. I was referred to Krista's Mom Goes On coaching program, thank the lord, through someone who personally went through the coaching program. I was so hesitant. The cost, the time to devote, the time spent away from my bed and sleeping my life away. But I did join and I can't stop listening to the podcast. Thank you, Krista for getting me out of bed."

I have some suspicions on who this person is but I just want to say thank you for that review because I think sometimes people are listening to the podcast and maybe judging themselves. Are you judging yourself? Are you telling yourself that you should be further along or that there's something wrong with you because you're struggling to get back to living?

If so, I hear you, I see you, and I'm thinking of you. Anyone can apply the tools that I teach. I promise you that. Alright, keeping you updated on the

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move. If you've been listening to the podcast for any amount of time, you know that the boyfriend and I have bought a house. We are moving. We close very soon on that house and then move after that.

And the grief grenades just keep coming, you all. I'm almost five years out since Hugo died and I just want to keep normalizing this for you. It doesn't really matter where you are but even when I expect it to be hard, sometimes it's less hard than I expect and sometimes it's more hard than I expect.

This weekend I was caught quite off guard again, just packing some of Hugo's stuff. There in my bedroom is a TV and underneath that TV there's a TV stand. And that's where I had kept most of the paperwork related to the accident and the estate and it's a big, massive expanding file.

And you might have one of these kinds of massive files yourself because you know for a lot of us there's just so much paperwork and stuff that we have to keep when we go through a loss like this. And so I hadn't really looked at some of that paperwork in a while.

I also have still the box of Hugo's cremains in that TV cabinet. What's the right place to put cremains, right? I don't know. Is there a right place? There doesn't feel like one. But it's still my intention at some point to go hike the mountain that Hugo and I had intended to hike in Colorado.

Before he passed, we had hiked Mount Yale and then we were intending to hike Mount Harvard, which are both in the Collegiate Peaks areas, they're Fourteeners, and I want to take his cremains and spread them there. But oh my goodness, seeing that paperwork and seeing that box, I don't know, I knew they were in there. But it just really caught me off guard.

And the other thing that it was, it wasn't even - now that I'm thinking about it, it was the paperwork and it was the cremains, but it was also the funeral

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box. Did you get one of those? The funeral box that has - the funeral home gave this box to us and it has the leaflets from the memorial service and the little bookmarks and all the notecards from the flower arrangements that were sent.

I'm sure everyone has a slightly different experience here, but that's what we got. And I hadn't looked through that in a while, and boy, howdy, lot of tears. A lot of tears. Again, use what I told you to do in grief grenades and just didn't tell myself it shouldn't be happening. I kept breathing deeply, I loved myself through the whole thing, and I just let it be what it was, which was hard.

That's just the way of it. That's just grief. So that's what's happening in the move and in my little world. So let's get into this episode. This is what I hear a lot from widowed moms, and I did this to myself a little bit too. "Now that my partner's gone, I have to be both parents."

And I want to offer to you that no, you really don't. In fact, this is an unfair ask because you can only be one parent. You can be the best parent you can be, but you can still only be one parent. You cannot be both parents. So let me know if any of this sounds familiar.

The other parent was the fun one and I'm not that fun. The other parent was the smart one and I'm not that smart. The other parent was the disciplinarian and I'm too lenient. The other parent was the athletic one and I'm not athletic. The other parent was the one they connected with and they don't relate to me the same way.

We could put almost anything behind "the other parent was and I'm not." Whatever it is that you're telling yourself came easily to the other parent that doesn't come easily to you or that was unique or special about the other parent that isn't unique or special about you. And now you're trying to compensate.

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For me, Hugo was the one who could help the kids with math. Not me. He was the electrical engineer, math and science came very easily to me. It didn't come easily to me. He was also a phenomenal snow and barefoot water-skier. Me? No, not so much. He spoke French and English beautifully; I spoke one language.

So it was really easy for me to see all the things that he brought and then believe that I was less than because we were different. And making yourself less than because of your differences or telling yourself that you have to compensate for the other person's strengths doesn't add any value to our parenting.

Are you doing this to yourself? I want to tell you why this line of thinking sucks for the one left to parent and then give you some thoughts to think instead. So you've heard me teach about the thought, feeling, action cycle. In fact, there's an entire podcast dedicated to that topic so you can go back and listen to that if you haven't.

But how we think determines how we feel and how we feel determines how we act. So this matters. Thoughts cause feelings, feelings drive actions. Feelings determine how we behave. So I want you to imagine this; obviously the other parent has died, we can all agree upon that. And then ask yourself how you feel when you think, "I have to be both parents."

Think that thought right now. I have to be both parents. If it helps, you can close your eyes, unless you're driving. I have to be both parents. How does that thought feel in your body? And it's probably different for different listeners.

But I'm going to guess that that thought feels something like stress, it creates pressure, maybe it creates resentment, anger, fear, anxiousness, worry, doubt, insecurity. Maybe it makes you feel trapped or obligated. Ask

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yourself, think that thought and feel it. I have to be both parents. Thoughts cause feelings.

Do you have the feeling? Now, how do you act as a parent when you are parenting from that emotion? Because we are certainly not living our best mom life when we are interacting with our kids from fear or anxiousness or doubt or insecurity, right?

We get snappier, we get shorter, more impatient, more critical, probably more distant. Ever been physically present but mentally you're somewhere else? Maybe we start finding faults with ourselves, we start second-guessing our choices. Our brains literally start looking for evidence of how we're not doing it well enough and should be doing it differently. Of how we have to be both parents but can't.

And we then see more evidence of our not enoughness, and our brain starts to hyper-focus on the differences between who we are and who the other person was. It's like a terrible recipe for showing up as the kind of mother that any of us want to be. "I have to be both parents" makes it harder for us to be the parent we're capable of being.

Now, in my coaching program, one of my main goals for participants is they come away really understanding the thought, feeling, action cycle, and they understand how to apply that tool, they understand how to find out whether thoughts serve them or not and identify the patterns that are creating the results that they don't like in their lives so that they can then use the same tool to create whatever it is that they want in their lives.

I don't focus a lot on that in the podcast because it's really not something that I can teach as well in a podcast episode that you're just listening to. It's something that you actually have to practice and we have to work on together.

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But even when I'm doing that, I want to remind you that I am never the authority on what's best for your life. But you are. You are the authority on what's best for your life, and you get to choose how you want to see your role as a solo parent.

So when I offer a teaching like this, I want to continue to encourage you to take what works for you, leave the rest. And just because I have to be both parents, or some similarly unuseful thought shows up in your mind doesn't mean you have to listen. You don't have to give that thought, that story about having to be both parents any airtime.

You can notice it and like the weather, you can just let it float on by. You can talk to yourself more than you listen to yourself. You're going to hear me say that a gazillion times. So here are some thoughts that I love that you can make your own if you find them helpful, and I'm going to leave you with that.

There's four of them. You ready? "All I have to do is love my children and I know how to do that." All I have to do is love my children and I know how to do that. You know how to love your child, right? Grown or little. You know. All you have to do.

When we make decisions from love, it's magic. So much easier to parent from love. Sometimes the decisions we make from love mean that the child doesn't get what they want. It means that as the parent, maybe no is the best answer, the most loving answer. But all I have to do is love my children and I know how to do that. That's thought number one.

Thought number two. "I was chosen to be their mom and I'm all in." I love that thought. I was chosen to be their mom and I'm all in. How do I know I was chosen? Because I'm their mom.

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Thought number three. “I’m not a perfect mother, but I’m the perfect mother for my child.” Think about how you feel when you think that thought. I’m not a perfect mother, but I’m the perfect mother for my child. Do you feel calm? Do you feel peaceful? Do you feel grounded?

And thought number four. “My only job is to love them as only I can.” My only job is to love them as only I can. You can love your child unlike any other person on the planet. And what if you just chose to believe that that was your only job? Is just to love them, just to be there for them, just to support them, just to witness, just to love.

Not to change them, not to get out in front of them and prevent problems from happening in their lives, not to take away their hard feelings, not to be both parents, not to be anyone other than who you are, but just to show up and love them as only you can.

And then we can relax just a little bit. It’s not about perfection, it’s not about never making mistakes. It’s just about showing up and loving them. Not trying to be both parents.

Alright, that’s what I have for you this week. Wherever you are and whatever’s going on, I love you and you’ve got this. Take care and I’ll 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.

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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.