

Ep #120: Self-Pity vs Self-Compassion



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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 120, Self-Pity vs Self-Compassion.

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. Have you ever wondered how to tell the difference between when you're stuck in self-pity versus when you should be more kind to yourself?

This topic came up in a coaching conversation I was having the other day with a client who is a widowed mom, and I think it's an interesting question. And so I wanted to share with you my take on it in this episode.

A little update on my life before we get into that. Just did our Mom Goes On Masters retreat, which was spread out over three days. I love it. So powerful. It's like I get to be - even though we're not doing them in person yet, I get to be online with women who are so invested in loving life again and in figuring out what that means for them next, and in using the tools that I teach.

And it's just really fun for me and fun to watch them grow, and also fun to celebrate their growth. I know sometimes it's hard to see your own growth when you're so close to your life. Sometimes part of what I have to do is remind them of how much they've grown so that they can see it for themselves.

So did that Masters retreat, that was fun. We're planning a celebration event at my house, COVID permitting, in November. And I've invited members, former members, current members, Masters members, but all Mom Goes On widowed mom clients to apply.

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And then come to my house and I'm going to bring in a videographer and a photographer and hair and makeup artists and spoil them for a day. And it's going to be a lot of fun, and I'm going to let them tell their stories, and hopefully then they're going to feel amazing to celebrate their progress, they'll get to tell their stories. That feels amazing.

Making meaning out of your journey and sharing that and being able to provide hope and inspiration for other people I think is so, so valuable. Plus, all of these women I've never actually met in real life because the entire time I have coached all of them, it's always been online and I've never gotten to meet any of them in person. So, super excited for that.

Okay, so let's get into self-pity versus self-compassion. First of all, neither one is bad or good objectively. Some of us hear the word pity and we automatically make that bad. But pity isn't objectively wrong or bad. Sometimes we might actually choose to feel pity for ourselves or pity for others. It's not good, bad, right, wrong. It's just a choice we get to make.

But I do think it's worth exploring the different between self-pity and self-compassion because for most of us, I know for sure for me, compassion feels a lot better than pity by a landslide in fact. So the way that I'm going to break this episode down for you is I'm going to talk about self-pity and self-compassion in terms of how they sound, how they feel, and what they look like.

How they sound, how they feel, and what they look like. So first, how they sound. And by that, I mean how does self-pity and self-compassion sound in your mind? And here's what I think.

Self-pity says poor me, and it stops there. Self-pity asks, why doesn't anyone understand what I'm going through and what it's like for me? Self-pity says I'll never be able to do it, it's too hard, it's all going downhill from here, nobody likes me, everybody hates me, I'm going to go eat worms.

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Do you remember that song? That's self-pity. But self-compassion sounds different. Self-compassion sounds like - well, first of all, it's not all sunshine and rainbows, it's not forced gratitude, it's not silver linings, but it's different than self-pity.

Self-compassion says this is hard, but I'm doing it. Self-compassion says everything is figureoutable, thank you Marie Forleo. Everything is figureoutable. I can ask for help. Self-compassion asks how can I take care of myself, how can I take care of my kids? Self-compassion asks how can I love myself through this?

Self-compassion doesn't say it's easy, self-compassion doesn't say it's all amazing and there are these gifts of grief and we should all love them and be super happy. It's not fake. It's not forced. But it's very different than self-pity. Can you hear the differences?

So that's how self-pity and self-compassion sound differently in the mind. And here's how they feel. Self-pity feels sad and stuck. Self-pity feels stagnant and hopeless. Self-pity is a downer, it's a bummer. Self-pity drops your gaze to the floor. Self-pity gets you focused on what sucks.

Self-compassion however feels understanding. It feels loving and encouraging, compassionate. Self-compassion lifts you. It doesn't pull you down. It lifts you. Or at least it meets you where you are and holds you there and loves you there.

Self-compassion lifts your gaze even if it's just ever so slightly. Self-compassion gets you focused on what is possible, instead of you keeping focused on the suck of it.

So they sound very differently in the mind, they feel very differently in the body, but what's really interesting is that they might not look that differently from the outside. The actions we take from self-pity might look very similar to the actions we take from self-compassion.

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So other people might not know if we're in self-pity or self-compassion. We don't even care. What matters is that you know. So let's talk about that. Sometimes self-compassion looks like rest and rejuvenation and crashing on the couch and Netflix. And sometimes, self-pity looks like staying on the couch and Netflix, but while feeling sorry for yourself.

So if I had a camera following you around, I might see you doing the same thing, being on the couch, watching Netflix, but are you doing it because you know that you need the rest and the rejuvenation is good for you and it feels like love to take some downtime and be on the couch, or are you doing it because you're feeling sorry for yourself and you're thinking that everything sucks and you're hiding?

Sometimes self-compassion looks like saying no to the invitation because what would feel like love, like self-compassion is alone time in your own safe little cocoon. Sometimes that feels like self-compassion.

But self-pity could also mean saying no to the invitation. I don't want to come to the party, thanks but no thanks. But in that case, it's because you're buying into the hopeless story that you can't fit in, won't fit in, that you won't have fun.

You could still say no to the invitation. But are you doing it because you're being compassionate towards yourself or you're having pity on yourself? Sometimes self-compassion looks like not pushing yourself because you need rest. Sometimes self-pity looks like not pushing yourself because what's the point, it won't matter anyway.

Sometimes self-pity looks like cleaning all the things, and all the while thinking woe is me and feeling sorry for yourself. And sometimes self-compassion looks like cleaning all the things because you love how it feels to have a clean home and that's what you want for yourself. That's what feels loving and nurturing to you is to create an environment that feels good to you.

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Self-compassion does the thing that helps you create the life that you want, whereas self-pity holds you back from it. Self-pity assumes that the worst will be true, the worst in others, the worst in you, the worst in life. Self-pity says this sucks, you suck, the future sucks, it all sucks. Suck, suck, suck.

Self-compassion stops to figure out what's going on when you don't feel quite right. Self-compassion says hey sweetheart, what's this all about? What's going on here? I love you.

Self-compassion seeks to understand what's happening for you from a place of love, instead of a place of judgment. It assumes the best is possible for you and your life. It assumes the best in other people too.

So the next time you're asking yourself, am I doing this out of self-pity? Am I doing this out of self-compassion? Am I stuck? Am I being kind to myself? I hope you'll consider this. What is going on in your mind? Is it everything sucks or is it this is hard but I'm doing it?

Is it nobody likes me, everybody hates me, I'm going to go eat worms? Or is it I'm amazing and this is a hard time in my life but I'm going to figure it out? Does it feel stagnant and stuck and hopeless? Is it a downer? Or it is encouraging and compassionate and lifting you up?

Because it could look very similar and only you know where you are. And again, it's not good or bad or right or wrong. But choose what you want and be honest with yourself. That will feel good to you. That will be aligned with this next chapter of life that you want to live into.

A short episode but that's what I have for you this week. Wherever you are, whatever's going on for you, I love you, and you've got this. Take care and have a good 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

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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.