

# Ep #126: Why Lasts Sometimes Feel Harder Than Firsts



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

## Ep #126: Why Lasts Sometimes Feel Harder Than Firsts

Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 126, Why Lasts Sometimes Feel Harder than Firsts.

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. Fall is in full effect over here at my house. I counted the number of mums that we have planted, and it's over 30. Ahh. At least I've been told they're perennial, and so, yeah. There are a lot of mums at my house. I really do love fall.

It's been kind of nuts around here, but we got my house ready for my daughter's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday party. She had a friend party and she had her dear friend, Hannah, from elementary school—they have birthdays right around the same time—and she and Hannah both had a big friend party at our house, which was amazing.

And then, the day after that, we had a party for just our family. And then the day after that, we had the entire volleyball team over for dinner as a team bonding thing. So, it's been a little bit crazy around here. But crazy in a good way.

It's nice to be able to have a house that's large enough to have people over, and I've always wanted to have the house that my kids wanted to bring their friends to. She also brought a bunch of friends over after Homecoming a couple of weeks ago, and that was really cool too. So, it's been pretty busy around here. And I'm loving fall and looking out my window and looking at my mums.

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Okay, so. Let's get into this episode. One of my Mom Goes On clients brought up this subject in our private group, and it really got me thinking. So, I want to talk about, today, why the lasts can sometimes feel harder than the firsts.

So, for me, using the last of Hugo's Irish Spring soap was really, really hard. I made that bottle stretch for the longest time. It was in the shower. And I just... I would use a little bit of it, and then not, and just have it there. And I just didn't want it to go away.

Now, buying soap without him for the first time was nothing compared to using the last few precious drops of that Irish Spring soap that was his. And this probably isn't a universal experience, because we're all individuals and we all think about things differently. But in a grief culture where we do focus a lot on surviving the firsts, I think it's also time that we normalize our struggle with the lasts.

So, we all know the firsts. Right? Anything we do without them for the first time qualifies as a first. So, the first holidays without them. The first milestone moments for our children. Maybe the first movie we go to without them. Or the first time we go back to our church or house of worship. Or the first time we go back to that favorite date night restaurant. Maybe the first time you go back to the place that they died. We know these firsts very well.

But what about the lasts? Let's talk about those. So, here are some of mine, and then I'm gonna tell you some of what I've seen other people struggle with in terms of their lasts, and then I'm gonna tell you why I think the lasts can feel so hard.

So, for me, using the last of his shampoo was very hard. The last of his shaving cream. Anything consumable. I remember using the last of his

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muscle relaxers. When he would go to Quebec, which is where he was from, he could buy these muscle relaxers that were available over the counter there.

But here in the states, they required a prescription, so he couldn't get them. And he didn't take them very often, but sometimes when he was having trouble sleeping or when his back was really hurting, he would take these muscle relaxers. And I made that bottle of muscle relaxers last until they were way past their expiration because I just couldn't part with the last one.

I remember finishing the last bag of pistachios. He loved to eat pistachios. And finishing that last bag was so much harder than buying another bag—the first bag without him.

I remember how hard it was to do that last load of laundry. Doing the first load of laundry without him? I don't even remember that. But doing his last load of laundry? Brutal. There was some laundry I didn't even do because I just wanted it to smell like him.

I remember that closing the estate account felt way harder than opening it. I don't even remember opening it. It was such a haze, right?

So, for others, maybe it was using the last of their art supplies. Using the last of the venison from the hunting trip. Using their last bottle of barbecue sauce that they loved. Using the last frozen chicken noodle soup, for one of my clients, that her husband had made and it was in the freezer. The death of the last pet that you had together.

All of these things just feel like additional losses in and of themselves. Filing the last tax return with their name on it. The last game of the season— maybe it was baseball, or football, or basketball—and they

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started that season with you, but then they didn't get to finish it. And you watched the last game of that season without them. So hard.

And I think there's a couple of things at play here that make it so hard. For one, I think a lot of the firsts happen during acute grief, where many of us are just kind of numb zombies and we're going through the motions. At least, that's what it was like for me.

I don't remember setting up the estate account. Couldn't tell ya. Don't remember. I think I had a journal entry about doing it, but I really don't remember it.

I know I did it. But I was still in that really foggy place where it seemed like a nightmare that I would wake up from. And so, I know it wasn't easy for me to do, but my cognitive functioning was definitely compromised. Widow fog was just raging.

And by the time I actually closed the account, I was much more clear-headed. And so, a lot of those firsts, I think, didn't feel so bad because when they happened, I was in a haze.

And when our brains feel like they're full of fluff and we're just a little bit number, it's not that it isn't painful. It's just that we are experiencing it so differently. So, I think a lot of the firsts feel easier because when they happen, we're numb zombies.

And then, a lot of the lasts seem to happen when we don't yet believe that our future can be as good or better than our past. We are still fighting for what we had. We're still clinging to it in some cases. And part of us is still arguing with the reality that the loss actually happened.

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And I don't think that's something to feel bad about. I think it's normal and natural for us to not want to let go of what we had. And at a point, wishing for the life we had prevents us from being present in the life we have. And so, at a point, it creates less suffering and more joy when we want what we have instead of spending a lot of time wanting what we had.

But that's a hard sell in the beginning. And sometimes that takes a long time before we're ready to choose to let ourselves stop wishing for what we had because it's making us suffer. But that's when a lot of the lasts seem to happen.

And if you know that I teach "thoughts cause feelings," of course, the lasts themselves don't actually determine our experience of them. Our thoughts about them do. And we know this because what stings for me might not be what stings for you, and vice versa.

And this don't mean that I'm wrong and you're right, or I'm right and you're wrong. You know? It just means that we're different humans and we interpret things differently, and that's totally okay.

So, what are some of the thoughts that make the lasts emotionally intense? Maybe some of these thoughts will feel familiar to you. Maybe you will have noticed some of them in your mind.

"I'm losing them." That's definitely one that I thought. "This is really happening." When you don't want it to be happening, and your thought is "This is really happening," that's a painful thought. Maybe it's just the little more of them gone.

One of my Mom Goes On members was telling me that she poured a bottle of spices—like, the last of the bottle of the spice—and had a total

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breakdown because of that thought. “Just a little more of them gone.” I know you can relate to that.

Or maybe the thought is, you know, “They’re never coming back.” And you want them to come back. And that little last is just one more piece of evidence for your thought that they’re never coming back.

So, all of our thoughts about these lasts are what create our pain about these lasts. And I’m not gonna tell you to not think these thoughts. I am not gonna tell you to stop thinking these thoughts. I’m not even gonna suggest that you count your blessings or find a silver lining. Because I don’t think that’s useful at all, actually. In fact, I think it can be harmful.

But what I do want to suggest is that you add an “and.” You add something to the end of these thoughts. You remind yourself, “Yes, I’m losing them *and* I’m willing to let it hurt.” “This is really happening *and* I choose to support myself through it.” “Just a little more of them gone *and* I can let the pain flow through me.” “They’re never coming back *and* I’m figuring out how to accept that.”

We acknowledge the sucky truth that we don’t really want *and* we choose to support ourselves through it, *and* we acknowledge that we can take care of ourselves, *and* we’re willing to be with the pain that is so real instead of trying to bury it with gratitude and silver linings.

So, do we need to change our experience of the lasts? No. Let’s just let them be hard. Let’s let the firsts be hard. Let’s let the lasts be hard. But let’s just normalize that it is hard.

Because what I find so often is that because we don’t have a group of other widows to talk about this stuff with, and because we don’t really want to talk

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about it with our friends, then we think we're the only one. We think, "It's just us." We think there's something wrong with us.

And if you've been struggling with the lasts, I just want you to know, yes. So did I. So did almost every widow I've ever worked with.

That doesn't mean there's anything wrong with you, and that doesn't mean that you can't go on to love your life. That doesn't mean that your future can't be as good, if not better, than your past, if that's what you choose for yourself. And that doesn't mean that any of it has to be easy in order for you to handle it. Because you can do hard things. Clearly. You're doing them.

All right. That's what I have for you this week. Remember, 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. 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.