

## Ep #133: Difficult Family Members



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

## Ep #133: Difficult Family Members

Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 133, Difficult Family Members.

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. How about we talk about some difficult family members today. Is anybody struggling with family members? I thought this would be a good episode to release near the holidays because that's when we tend to be around our family members more often, and that's when you know if we're having challenging relationships, that's when they kind of flare up a little bit. So, hopefully, this episode will help you. As of the time I am recording this, I am not ready for Christmas at all. This might be the most behind I have been.

I have been so focused on doing that live private training and really giving that everything I had, and I still have a lot of Christmas shopping left to do, but that's okay. We're going to get there. Also, doing a fun event, my daughters playing on a new club volleyball team this year, and so we're having her volleyball team over on Saturday to do cookie decorating and a little white elephant gift exchange, so that should be fun too. So, good things are happening over here.

Alright, let's talk about difficult family members. Okay? I know you know that person. I know you have one. Maybe you have multiple people that you consider difficult in your family, people that you struggle to get along with, you kind of dread being around them. That's who I want to help you with today. Before we jump into this episode, I just want to remind you if you need more support around this issue, of course, number one, you should join Mom Goes On, because we spend an entire month talking about challenging relationships because everyone has them.

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Number two, I also have a couple of other podcast episodes that you might find useful. One is called put down your manuals, and that's episode 69. The other is called dealing with toxic people, and that's episode 32.

So, today what I want to give you are ten different tips, mindset shifts, different things that you can do to help navigate a relationship with a family member that feels difficult for you. Okay, I am going to help you with these ten different tips/suggestions/whatever we want to call them, teachings, alright? So, we're just going to go, so number one, nobody believes me when I say this initially, but I promise you that it's true, what makes a person difficult isn't actually the person. It's not what they say, not what they do. It really doesn't have anything to do with them. And this is the best news ever.

What makes a person difficult is what we think about what they say and do. What makes them difficult for us is actually happening inside of our own minds. It's our thoughts about who they are, how they show up, and the words that come out of their mouths, and the things that they do. It's our thought that they're difficult. It's our thought that they should be doing things differently than they are that creates a difficult experience of them for us.

I say this is the best news ever because we can't control that other person's behaviors. We can't control what they say or what they do. So, knowing that we don't have to change them could be very freeing to us. If all we have to do is look at what's going on in our own minds, then we can create a completely different experience without that person ever having to change. Make sense? Okay. That's number one. What makes a person difficult isn't actually the person. It's not even what they say or do. It's what we think about them.

Number two, we can feel love for anyone we choose, and they can't take that away from us. This is one of those teachings that I adore because I

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love what it feels like to love someone. And when I think that someone has to change in order for me to feel love towards them, that's really frustrating for me because I know I can't change them, but I want to feel love most often, not always, most often. But really love, just like all the other feelings, is a product of our thinking. Right, we can generate love with our brain regardless of what another person does. I used to tell my kids all of the time that you know there's nothing they can do to make me not love them. Absolutely nothing. I may not like their behavior. I may wish they behaved differently, but there's nothing they could ever do to make me not love them.

And that's not because they are genetically related to me. It's not because they are my offspring. It's because I have made a choice that I will always love them, no matter how they behave. I will always feel love for them, even if I don't like them in that moment. So, no one can take away your ability to love if love is what you choose. That's number two.

Number three, give yourself permission to feel however you want to feel about this family member that you are thinking of and own your feelings 100%. Knowing that our thoughts cause our feelings, knowing that we can change our thoughts and decide which ones we want to listen to and which ones we don't, means that how we feel about someone is caused by how we think about someone. But thoughts and feelings aren't right or wrong, or good or bad, or moral or immoral. They're just choices that we get to make.

And when you learn this, you might be inclined to think that means that you are supposed to feel positively toward everyone, that you should feel loving toward everyone. And I want you to hear that's not what I am saying. Right? It's not a matter of how you should feel. It's a matter of how you choose to feel, how you want to feel, which is a choice. And you might not always choose to feel positive emotions about someone. That's your right. That's your choice.

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So, give yourself permission to feel however you want to feel about someone in your family who you find difficult. But own that you are the creator of the emotion you are experiencing. Own your feelings 100%.

Number four, don't make their models about you. If you have been following me for a while, you know I teach a tool the thought model, the self-coaching model, the CTFR model, but basically, you know, the model says the thoughts cause our feelings, our feelings drive our behaviors, and our behaviors produce our results, right. The only thing in the five lines of the model that we can't control are our circumstances; things that have happened in the past, other people's behavior, things other people say and do, right. We can't control those things.

But we do get to decide what we want to make those things mean, and what we make those things mean creates our emotional experience, and our emotional experience drives our actions, our inactions, our behaviors, and those actions and inactions behaviors produce results for us in our lives. So, we want to own our own models for sure. We want to always own our own thoughts, and our own feelings, and our own actions, and 100% responsibility for that.

But we don't want to make other people's models about us. The way they think and feel about you actually has nothing to do with you. If it was about, you then everyone would think and feel the same way about you, but they don't, do they? Who knows what someone has been through in the past that you are triggering them? Who knows what someone's past trauma history is, right, or past life experience is? We have no idea.

We have no idea which needs were met for them as children, which needs weren't. We have no idea how they are thinking and feeling and no ability to control how they are thinking and feeling about us. So, notice your brain will want to take things personally and make their behavior mean

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something about you, but you don't have to let it. You don't have to make their models mean anything about you.

Number five, I want to offer that you neutralize the sea in a ridiculous fashion. And what I mean by that, again, if you know the self-coaching model, you know that the sea is the circumstance. The sea is that thing that is outside of you that you can't control. That thing is the words that come out of someone else's mouth. That sea is the thing someone else does. They roll their eyes at you, right? They give you that look. That is the circumstance. That is neutral, and it does not cause an emotional response until we have a thought about it.

So, if you are stuck in your self-coaching, neutralize that circumstance to the point that it seems ridiculous. And here's what I mean, if you can't see the words that your mother-in-law said to you as neutral, then don't just put the words your mother-in-law said in the circumstance line of your model. Take it to ridiculous neutralizing. Words uttered from the mouth of a human. Syllables came from an orifice in a human's face. Soundwaves immitted from a hole in mother-in-law's mouth, okay? Like, neutralize it so much, get it stripped down to the absolute bare bones facty-facts, such that you can see vividly the difference between what happened outside of you and what your brain is making it mean. Does that make sense? So, neutralize that sea in a ridiculous fashion.

Number six, imagine yourself in one of those giant hamster balls. Have you ever seen those? Sometimes you will see them at parks or amusement parks, and they're like, giant, see-through hamster balls that you can get inside and run around in, like bump into other people. So, if you're thinking about maybe, you have a holiday function coming up, right? I want you to imagine that you are in a hamster ball, and everyone else is in their own hamster ball. Inside your giant hamster ball is you and your feelings, you, and your emotional state.

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Their hamster ball has their emotions inside of it. Your hamster ball has yours. There is a difference. They are not contagious. Their emotions can't touch you. Your emotions can't touch them, right? Because if we think of everyone's emotions as contagious, if we think that people can rub off on us, that they are toxic, then we feel powerless, and we have to get away from them. But sometimes we don't want to be away from them because maybe we want to be around them. Say, for instance, at the holidays, and we choose that for ourselves.

I want to position you in such a way that you don't feel like you are at the effect of other people's behavior. When you know firmly that you create your own emotions based on your thoughts, then you will feel more powerful, and that's what I want for you. So, imagine yourself in one of those giant hamster balls, completely in control of your own emotional state. Alright, and somebody tell me how the holidays go. I want you to put this in practice and let me know.

Okay, number seven, I want you to get curious and see the opportunity in this other person that you find difficult. So, maybe it's your sister. I don't know who it is. But get curious, why is it that your sister brings up what it's bringing up in you—what she's bringing up in you. Why do you get so defensive around your sister? What can that teach you? What is there for you to learn?

I remember in college; I won't give you his actual name, I will call him Ed. But there was a student in college who was a returning adult student at the time. I was a traditional student in terms of age. And man, I found him challenging. He was just like fingernails on a chalkboard for me. And we were on a couple of volunteer committees together, and ugh, just drove me nuts. I didn't know it at the time, but he was my 100% greatest teacher.

In that, he taught me things about myself. He showed me where I could be more patient. He showed me, you know, what I really valued. He was an

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opportunity for me. It took me a long time to see that, but in hindsight, I am actually really grateful for him because he brought up all the ick in me, all of those yucky sides. Those judgmental sides, the things about myself that I really didn't have the opportunity to look at as much, but when he was there, it was right in front of me. So, can you see the opportunity in that person that you find to be difficult, that you are thinking of as difficult? Can you get curious? Can you ask yourself what is there for you to learn?

And then, number eight, ask yourself if you are showing up in the ways that you expect them to show up. Again, this can be an opportunity for you. Are you expecting them to be accepting or open-minded, but yet you are being judgmental of them? Are you expecting them to be loving toward others or you but, yet you aren't loving them? So, ask yourself are you expecting them to show up in ways that you want to show up? And if so, how can you show up in the way that you value regardless of how they show up?

Number nine, see the divine in them. Whatever your beliefs are, doesn't matter. Personally, I believe we all come from the same source, the same source energy, and you can call that source whatever feels comfortable to you, right. So, give it a name; I believe we are all that divine energy and human form. But I believe our human form is not the truth of who we are. It's just one expression of that divine energy. That at our core, we share our one-ness.

We were all made from that same, whether you call it creator, the universe, divine energy, you know, whatever you want to call it, but can you see that in this person? Can you see that at your core, and at their core, you share that one-ness? Personally, this helps me a lot when I am struggling and seeing someone as difficult.

And then, number ten, remind yourself that you still get to have boundaries even if you aren't upset with someone. You can still love someone and have boundaries, right? None of what I am talking about today means that

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you don't get to choose your boundaries. You might spend time with this person, and you might not spend time with this person. How you feel about someone is independent of whether you choose to spend time with them or not. So, if you want to love someone because love feels good to you, but yet you also don't want to spend time with them, or you also want to walk away when they treat you in certain ways or talk to you in certain ways, you can do that. You still get to have boundaries even if you aren't upset with someone, okay.

So, that's what I have for you today. If there's somebody you're experiencing that is difficult, you're not alone. I don't want you to feel bad about it. This is not about trying to make you feel guilty. This is about trying to show you that you are more powerful than you think you are and that they and their behavior and their words are less powerful than you think they are. So, step into that power for yourself. Choose your thoughts. Choose your feelings. Know that you don't have to change them. They don't have to be any different. Their models are not about you. Right? Imagine yourself in one of those giant hamster balls if it helps. See, is there an opportunity for me here? Am I expecting them to show up in ways that I want to show up? Are they an opportunity for me in that way? How are we connected? How are we the same? Then, if you need a boundary, you keep a boundary.

Alright, that's what I have for you this week. Remember, I love you. You've got this. I will see you next week, take care, everybody.

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.

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Go to [CoachingwithKrista.com](http://CoachingwithKrista.com) and click “Work with Me” for details and next steps. I can’t wait to meet you.