

## Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Krista St-Germain**

[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 137, Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard.

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. I'm excited for you to meet Pam Stoddard, today ladies. I don't think we ever get enough examples of widowed moms doing amazing things in the world and loving life, and, you know, truly being happy. So, I am just going to keep bringing them to you. Pam is someone who I'm trying to remember how we actually met, and I don't, but I remember. We will talk about this in the interview, but Pam came to me for a one-on-one coaching way back in the day when I did one-on-one coaching, which I don't do anymore. But we coached one on one together, which was a really powerful experience for Pam.

So much so that she like, me and many of my clients, got the coaching bug and decided she wanted to become a life coach. And she went and completed life coach certification. Then she actually came back, and at that point in time, I started Mom Goes On, which is my group coaching program that's been going for over a couple of years. She did Mom Goes On as a group client with us. So, I've worked with Pam individually and as part of the group, and I have really had the pleasure of watching her in those earlier acute days of grief go all the way from there to now very powerfully changing her career deciding to become a coach for other people that are struggling with grief. I'm just so proud of her. I'm excited for her to be on the podcast and for her to be able to tell her story. So, I will stop talking and let you listen to my interview with Pan Stoddard. Enjoy.

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

Krista: Welcome Pam, super excited to have you on the podcast so everyone can hear your story!

Pam: I'm excited to be here.

Krista: Yay, it feels like it has been a while.

Pam: It has been a while since we've talked one-on-one, anyway.

Krista: I know. Yeah, before, just so people know, before I hit record, just even looking at your background, usually when I've been working for a while, I kind of feel like I know their house. I kind of feel like I know the rooms they're speaking to me from, and I was like, what room are you in, Pam? I don't recognize that room. Because now you have an office and things have changed, anyway. Let me have you start just by introducing yourself and telling the world a little bit about Pam.

Pam: Hi, I am Pam Stoddard. I am a fellow widow like you. My husband passed away in January of 2019 suddenly. Kind of throwing me into obviously the spin of the world of widow head. And I think prior to that, I am a mom, I have two daughters. I have five grandchildren now. I think I had four when I was working with you.

Krista: Yeah.

Pam: We lost a couple of grandbabies along the way there, too. Yeah, so I was in corporate America, I was a salesperson, and I am no longer in corporate America, so there's been some changes there as well. It's kind of who I am in a general nutshell, I guess.

Krista: Yeah, yeah. So, okay, trying to kind of backtrack in my brain, so your husband passed in January 2019, which I almost can't even believe

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

that it's been that long. Still, when I sit back and do the math, I guess that makes a little bit of sense. So, we coached one on one first.

Pam: Correct.

Krista: And then, later you came into the group, and a whole lot of things have changed for you. So, that's what I really want listeners to hear is kind of the progression for you. So, let's kind of go back to the beginning. So, thinking about what life was like when you decided to reach out to me. Do you remember?

Pam: Yeah, I think a little bit. It's, you know, kind of back to the widow fog. There's a lot of stuff that's very foggy. But I had been through or tried free share, and I think it's a great program, but it really wasn't for me. I think one of the things emphasized for me was at that time, I was going into a room alone. It just emphasized the aloneness a lot. You know, but I was also dealing with the PTSD from trying to save Randy, and that was big. And I know that my neurological system was very touchy and very much on edge.

Krista: Yeah, and maybe that would be a good time. We don't have to go into huge details, but just to kind of back up. Because some women that I work with had a long-drawn illness that they supported their spouse through and then, sometimes it's, you know, something that was sudden and caught us off guard, and that was really more the case with you, right? Where it was totally sudden and caught you off guard.

Pam: Yeah. Yeah, we actually head down to our cabin. It was a beautiful weekend in January. I mean, normally, it should be close to zero when it was high 50s and 60s. We had a little cabin on Paper Rock Lake. We decided to get away for the weekend, and we were actually doing some yard work, some tree work, and stuff. Things were going great, and we had

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

just had water and had a drink, and he said I'm going to do those few over there, and we'll finish and go down by the lake, and it sounds great. In probably two minutes, I have no clue, just a few minutes had passed, and he kind of made a bad comment about you know him being done.

He was just done. He came off, he actually said F it, I'm done. And came off, and he was down. I turned back—I heard the dog kind of barking at him, and I turned around and said his name and said, what's going on? Are you alright? And no response, and you know, I went over, and it was obvious he wasn't okay. So, yeah, he had a sudden heart—He had a heart attack followed by a sudden cardiac arrest. So, from there I spent—

Krista: —Out in the middle of nowhere. In a cabin in a remote location?

Pam: Yeah, and it's January, so nobody is really around that is normally down there, you know, the guest cabins were all empty, and the rescue workers who are basically living in that area in the summer weren't there. You know, so it's a good 20 minutes down our lake road, so you know, you can't go fast because it's curvy. So, from the time I got 911 on the phone, and they got somebody dispatched, I don't know how long it took. It felt like two hours, of course. I'm going to say 25 to 30 minutes probably of trying to perform CPR.

I did start yelling for help in addition to talking to the 911 operator. A gentleman did hear me out behind us, and he did come down, so he helped. He basically did most of the CPR himself, and we tried to save him from that time. When they got there, they were able to shock him and get a heartbeat. They had to shock him seven times before they got him to the hospital by the time they flew him in. And he actually did—I mean, he didn't pass away for eight days. We didn't lose him until the 14th, but he never came back to us.

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

Krista: Yeah.

Pam: He never woke up and came back to us.

Krista: Yeah, now what do you in retrospect, what do you kind of remember from those acute days of grief? What was that like for you? Those early weeks, early months?

Pam: No sleep, you know, just the PTSD part of it or the other trauma part of it comes to my eyes and just seeing him on the ground and just kind of not being able to sleep. The confusion was scary to me, actually. I mean, I remember being scared by the confusion. So, then, and with anxiety, the heart rate is going. Everything is going, and I truly felt like something physically was wrong with me, like, I am losing my mind or having a heart attack myself. Whatever, I remember being scared.

Krista: Yeah.

Pam: I remember other things where you know, losing Randy. I am also scared to be alone. I always have been, anyway. I remember saying I will never be able to do this, you know? Stay by myself, be by myself, or anything. That was on my mind heavy, which turned out not to be true.

Krista: Low and behold.

Pam: Low and behold, it turned out to be not true. I think you know the— It's scary that little fog is scary. I will say that's one of the things I got very early from free share was listening to the video and very quickly somebody saying, explaining widow fog, and the things they were going through, and saying you are okay. I think every widow needs to hear right off the bat, you're okay.

## Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard

Krista: Yeah.

Pam: So, that—

Krista: —You're not crazy

Pam: —you're not nuts, you haven't lost your mind, and you're not dying.

Krista: Yeah, so true. What was your kind of plan at that point in life before Randy died? You were still working?

Pam: Yes, I had Randy retired. So, my thought was I would work for about another four to five years and then we would just, I mean we were going to stay in our home the one that, you know, our home, and then we had our cabin. That was kind of—Our cabin was our little dream getaway. That was what we had purchased for, so, because it was right on the lake and we had been fixing it up, and we had just finished a whole bunch of cedar work and did cedar on the inside and new lighting on the, you know, to get it looking more like an updated cabin, and not a 40s fisherman's cabin.

Krista: Yeah, yeah.

Pam: So, that was supposed to be our dream. That was supposed to be a place to get away and to start doing a lot more traveling. We had done quite a bit of traveling the last five years. We hit all of the national parks.

Krista: You hadn't hit them all; you wanted to?

Pam: Right, we had only hit maybe five. Yeah, so we wanted to.

Krista: So, then, eight days later, Randy's gone, acute grief fog thinking you're crazy. Grief share helped, but not really loving the experience of

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

being so kind of anxious and being alone in the house. When did you go back to work?

Pam: I took about a month. I was answering stuff because sales are a little different, you know, and I was able to start talking to my boss here and there and helping him through things, but about a month, I went back. My company was amazing, so I had, even though I went back, I had so much freedom in that return. I could work at home. If I didn't have to be on the road all of the time. It was much more different than going to an office.

Krista: Right? Yeah, having a supportive employer. I had one too, but, man, some people don't. It makes all the difference in the world when somebody actually gives you space.

Pam: I have talked to people who had to be back and had to be back in two weeks, or whatever. And my company's face they were like, are you sure even at a month, you know. Are you sure? I'm like, you know, I won't be doing full-time heavy-duty work, but yeah.

Krista: Okay, so then, at what point did you find me? Because surely that was probably before I even had a podcast, wasn't it?

Pam: You had a podcast, but not very many episodes.

Krista: Okay.

Pam: And I'm trying to remember when did we start? Did we start in like, May?

Krista: We should've gone back and looked. I don't really remember. It felt pretty early after everything.

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

Pam: I know I was looking for—I found you because I was looking for actual PTSD and anxiety broadcasts or podcasts. And I found Brooke; I found the life coach school podcast. Then, I'm folding clothes one day listening to some podcasts, and she interviewed you. Brooke interviewed you.

Krista: Wow, okay. Yeah, I did that episode with her on grief.

Pam: And that was like—For me, it was like, ding, ding, ding, and I think I reached out that same day. I don't remember if I. I think I just sent something to your email that you mentioned on the podcast.

Krista: Okay, it always—It feels like you have been in my orbit for so long I don't really remember the beginning of it.

Pam: It's funny because you know, I know your daughter was turned 18. I listened to that podcast the other day, and I believe it was three years ago, so I was thinking she wasn't quite 15. If I remember right.

Krista: So, then, when you reached out, what were you hoping to get out of it?

Pam: I think, to be honest, the biggest thing, what I knew, was what I didn't want. I don't know if I knew what I wanted at all. Backup, I did not know what I wanted. But I just knew what I didn't want. And what I didn't want was to just be so sad all of the time. And not feel like I had a life, and not feel like I had any hope for a life that I could love. You had talked about, you know, your loss when you talked to Brooke. You had talked about making a choice. Since you knew that you wanted to have a life, and it's just like okay, so somebody has already maybe paved the path a little bit. And I had been listening to Brooke's podcast; I'd say two to three weeks,

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

maybe because when I found her, I was just listening every day on the way to work and stuff. It's about an hour's drive for me for work.

Krista: You would get two to three episodes done.

Pam: Yeah, and I do it on 1.5 speed. You can get a lot done.

Krista: That's what I do too. Sometimes even 2x speed. Yeah, me too.

Pam: There are a few people; well, there is a particular coach that I listen to off and on, and I cannot listen to her on x2.

Krista: Because she talks too fast, yeah.

Pam: Well, she sounds like Mickey Mouse. Her little voice is high anyway.

Krista: That's funny. That's awesome. Yeah, okay, so then you were kind of learning from her and then coaching with me. So, what kind of shifted for you in those first, because what, I think we did like a three-month coaching package.

Pam: I think it was three or four months, yeah.

Krista: Yeah, and just so—In case anybody is listening to this right now, and they're like, I thought she doesn't do one-on-ones. I don't do one-on-one so, we're just going back in time and telling the story of Pam, so.

Pam: For me, I know a couple of things. Obviously, you introduced me to tapping pretty early because of the anxiety with my nervous system. And that was brilliant for me to be able to calm my system a lot and just slow me down. You know? So, I think that we did a lot of feeling work early on, which was, you know, feeling the emotions, allowing them to be there,

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

instead of battling them. And that was definitely life-changing. The work made sense to me. You know, I can think back, you know, Bible Study stuff.

You know, we talk about what you put in yourself, you know, what you fill yourself up with is not going to come out, and you know so it's not like that was rocket science to me that thoughts create your feelings and actions of your life but seeing your own mind. Being able to go back and have somebody else challenge for me was—You kept saying especially giving myself some grace and giving myself a little bit of compassion. I think it was something because I didn't really judge being sad, but it's like I think I wanted it then. You know, you slowed me down and kind of showed me compassion to get back up. It wasn't really get over because I never believed in the get over. But yet, you know, I don't want to feel this way. It's get over the feeling, not a loss.

Krista: Right, right, right. I don't want to feel how I'm feeling. Yeah. Which is the surest way to actually make how you feel harder. But it's so hard to know that when you're in the middle of it.

Pam: Yeah, it really is. You don't recognize it. Sometimes you don't recognize the reasons why, you know? It's, I think, learning to question why and just asking myself why a lot of times. Why do you feel this way, and then, answering that and asking myself why again? Well, why that? Well, why that? And getting, you know, kind of getting to the point that was very helpful as well.

Krista: I remember, and I've seen it so much since we started coaching, and I don't remember honestly when it came up, but I remember that choose joy has always been an important thing to you. I would love for you to talk about why and how you use that in your life now, but sometimes I think we struggle in those early days when we're wanting to feel better. We

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

kind of struggle with honoring how we actually do feel, allowing ourselves to feel, you know, sad, or whatever negative emotion is kind of most present for us, but then also still at the same time, you know, being able to choose how we want to feel and finding the balance can be a little bit of a challenge. Not invalidating how you currently feel and also making space for yourself to feel differently. How did you end up with that philosophy or motto?

Pam: Well, you know, there's so many you start looking for—You're just looking for anything to grasp onto kind of at the time, you know, the whole just breathe, choose joy, you know, whatever little life saying is going around you know, and I had a couple of bracelets that said just breathe and I—But, joy has always been—I have always felt like joy was something that's a part of me. And Randy always used to say that you're always joyful. You're always up, you're always upbeat, you're always joyful. Keegan Country had their song joy, and that was, you know what I really liked. I don't know. It was just, like, I know I lost him, but I still want joy. And I just knew that's what I wanted. It kept resonating more than anything else. And I also knew it was going to be a choice. You know, I had to choose that. I remember several times you questioning me on that. Be really careful that you're not [inaudible].

We need to feel this. You know, because I don't want you to just joy it away, you know, and it made me stop and think. That's where we did a lot of feeling work, but later, you know, in one of the pieces of work that I've heard from you and some of the other life coaches around is, now I live by, and I love the idea of and. You know, like, so I can be sad, or I can miss him, and I can have a life, and I can be joyful, and I can find joy. You know that, and it is, I think, life-changing work.

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

Krista: Yes, so do I. I totally agree because—So, did you kind of come into it thinking it was black or white, kind of all or nothing? You could either have joy or something else.

Pam: Or yeah. That's what I had been seeing. And I didn't have very many—I didn't have really any friends. Well, I shouldn't say that, but I didn't have very many friends who had lost their spouse. I had older friends, my mother-in-law, my mother, but I didn't really have friends that had. And one of the examples in a friend that I had was not having any joy in their life, and I knew that's how I didn't want to be. So, I knew there was a choice, you know, I think that is what I think I remember telling you is I want to miss him, I want to love him, I want to honor him, but I want joy.

Krista: Yeah. So, it's joy and whatever else. Yeah, it can all peacefully co-exist. It doesn't have to be all or nothing or black and white. I love that.

Pam: Now, that and is... it's just huge. I use it not only with people I work with, but I use it on myself all the time. And, what else? We got this, we can have this, and.

Krista: So, I also I am just kind of remembering didn't Randy have a saying about eating dessert first?

Pam: Yeah. You know, if we were going out especially like a teenager or a young kid or whatever or maybe even an older person—We'd be going to eat or something, and he would say be sure to eat your dessert first, you know the best stuff first. You've got to have room for it.

Krista: I love it.

Pam: So, that's how we celebrated for his death anniversary. We had a eat dessert first party here at the house. The first year and invited everybody

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

over. We had all of his favorite desserts and just asked them to bring theirs, and we had chili on the stove too. But it was come, eat your dessert. Come as you are in this window of time.

Krista: So, if you could go back, knowing what you know now, right, and p.s. we should say, and I do want you to tell people this story, you're now a certified coach who coaches other widows, right? Well, not just widows, right? You're doing grief in general.

Pam: Grief in general, yeah.

Krista: So, you've had additional—You went through my coaching, you went through the life coach school's training, you came back and did Mom Goes On as a group right, so, lots of things have happened. You have learned a lot about yourself. You've learned a lot about coaching. You've learned a lot about the way you know the brain works. So, knowing what you know now, with all of that, if you could go back and give yourself some wisdom, like, early grief days, right? What would you tell yourself?

Pam: I think the biggest thing is I would tell myself not to worry. That it's going to be okay. Because worry just equals judgment, doubt, questioning, you know, opened up so many questions and just left me spinning. I think that would be one of the biggest things is just trusting my instincts, but just not to worry, that it is all going to work out, and it's going to be okay. That you will be okay. Probably, I don't know, that's probably, I think because the worry was my biggest concern. I really was afraid. I was afraid for me. I thought something was wrong with me.

Krista: Yeah, and you think about it, okay, if we don't understand that widow fog is a real thing, then we're going to worry about that and make that mean something about us. If we don't understand that anxiety is something that we just don't typically associate that with grief, right?

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

Pam: And I hadn't really ever dealt with it. Like, anxiety was 100% new to me.

Krista: Yeah, so then you can worry about that, right? Then, plus, you've got a situation that's truly traumatic in terms of the way that you lost him and all that you went through. So, then you've got other things popping out that is, of course, you know, not anything that with hindsight we have to worry about, but at the moment are really probably very easy to spin out about. There's a lot of opportunities for unnecessary worry, but it feels pretty—

Pam: —Well, then you add in, especially if you have financial situations with it. I didn't, but a lot do. So, if you have financial, and even though you don't, you still judge it all. You don't want to spend any money. You don't want to, you know, making decisions is hard. And I think that is maybe another small piece; is decisions are just decisions. They're not right or wrong. Again, it follows into that it's going to be okay.

Krista: Yeah, and you made a pretty big decision to make too, right? Because you had drawn out plans for a house, right?

Pam: Yeah, so I bought a lot in Ozark and had plans drawn up. I actually cleared the lot and got a lot of pre-work done to the lot. So, I was going to build a home, have my plans 100% done like the contractor was already involved. I mean, I already had the contractor, etc., and then I just decided not to, kind of last-minute in a sense.

Well, actually, wood prices went up. I was in no hurry so, I decided to just wait it out and in the waiting it out, of course, I finished the coaching school, and things changed. I knew I was going to be able to quit working in corporate America. The main reason I didn't want to be in this house, really the only reason was I have 5 acres to go with it, and I just don't want to

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

care for it. And with having more time and I found a little neighbor boy behind who's a big help. You know, I was able to work those issues out. So, that is not an issue for me now. And I just decided to go ahead and sell the lot. I have plans for a really nice house if anybody wants them.

Krista: Sell them to you cheap.

Pam: They're all ready to go. They're not cheap.

Krista: I love it, I love it. So, tell us about your transition from, you know, deciding to be in your old job to then, certifying as a coach. What made you decide to do that?

Pam: I mean, I knew I wanted out of my job in some way, shape, or form. It had changed so much in sales, and used to be I felt like I was providing—I provided some service to somebody I could consult with my buyers, and offered some special fee, and it could really become like an oddity, you know, it's just a who could feed who? So, there was no fulfillment there, and I had changed employers. It ended up being great to me, and they were great people, but I didn't like the job as well. Not the people, not the bosses of the job and the location, so I wasn't happy there already. Then, after losing Randy, to be honest, you know it's all the stuff that, all that drama and all that stuff around work just doesn't matter anymore. Like it just didn't mean anything in the grand scheme of life, right?

Krista: Yeah.

Pam: And so, I just—I wanted out. I mean, I knew I had to find a way out, and we worked on that quite a—We actually, that's part of the reason I came back to the group coaching too. Because I needed some more work on that. And I have to tell you I did not meet my goals there. My goal was to get happy with the job, and leave, had I left before I got completely there;

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

however, I had done a lot of work. I was in a much better place for myself about it.

Krista: Definitely tell that story in a way that empowers you, right? As opposed to making it—So, you know, we talk a lot about changing our story about something such that, let's say, someone's listening and they're living in a house, and they think that if they move, they will feel better. Well, maybe, but also, it's good to know that the reason you feel bad in the house you're in is because of what's happening in your mind. And so, you take your mind with you when you move which means, you might be really disappointed to move and then find that because the same mind is there, the same thoughts are there, and then the same feelings are there, and it's just really frustrating. So, do you need to love your job before you leave it? No, not necessarily sometimes it's just like, hey, life is short; I am ready to go now.

Pam: Yeah, I think—That's why I said, I shouldn't say failure at all. Mostly because I knew I was just wanting something completely different. I wasn't trying to replace. I was ready to make a whole new, I started my own coaching business prior to leaving, and it was starting to build. And I wanted more time; it's time-consuming to get all that technical stuff all figured out.

But, and it just, you know, the opportunity kind of opened, a window kind of opened to be able to, you know, COVID kind of hit, and I was working from home more. Which worked out as an advantage. I was able to sneak in some coaching stuff at noon and give her things that I hadn't been able to do, and really just decided to take a chance on me and make believe, and just decided to give in my notice. I decided in early July to give my notice for the end of July. I gave them a month, and I left.

Krista: And you left. Good job, you!

## Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard

Pam: Yeah! Yay!

Krista: So, if somebody else is—Because sometimes we talk about these stories I know, especially now when I think back about leaving my old job. From where I sit now, I have to remind myself that it actually was a really hard thing to do, right? But at the time, it was terrifying. So, if somebody is thinking about a big change and thinking it should be easy because maybe the way that you just presented it in the way that I sometimes present it. It sounds like, oh, it should be easy to just change your career and do something different. Like, what were the feelings you had to be willing to feel in order to make that big shift?

Pam: Oh, wow. I mean, all on the negative realm really, I mean, doubt, and I mean, just general fear of the unknown, doubting whether I was capable, can I do this? Am I the right person? Am I even a good coach?

Krista: Yeah. Insecurities.

Pam: Like, am I able to pay the bills? Security? And really, even as a soul person, so now you know it's just me, nothing else to fall back on, and nobody else to kind of be the wind behind your, underneath your wings a little bit, you know. So, that loneliness a little bit, that—So, yeah, just a lot. It's not easy. So much doubt. Then, even after you do it, did I make the right decision? Maybe I didn't. And I even go through that still once in a while today and think maybe I should—

Krista: —No, I think it's really good too because if you hear that, your thoughts cause your feelings. And then, you think all I ever need to do now is think thoughts that make me feel good feelings. There is a lot of value in being able to create feelings on demand, and also, we do have human brains that associate growth and change with death. So, whatever the big change is that we go to make, right? Even if it's well thought out and well

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

planned, which yours absolutely was, but even then, we have human brains that are going to bring up the worst feelings, right, all of that insecurity and doubt and so.

Pam: Well, actually, I mean, even up until right before, like the week before you know, my boss called, and he's like, are you still sure you know? And I was like, I actually said, I've got some thoughts for you. I was like, well, and he's like do you want to hear them because I don't want to waste my time and whatever, and I said let me think about that. So, then, I messaged him, and I'm like, yeah, I'll, you know, let's talk.

So, he came down here. His office is three hours away, and he came down here, and we had lunch, and we chatted, and I really thought I was going to stay, and then I was like, I kind of pulled back all of my thought downloads and models around it. I was like, no, this is what I want. I really looked at the goals and what I was wanting, and I'm like, this doesn't fit this. You know, it's like, does this fit? Does this get me where I'm going? And the answer is no. So, I stayed with it.

Krista: Yeah, which is a brave and scary move.

Pam: Yeah, that was even scarier, I think, because I have and the doubts and lined out the doubts. But when I really looked, because I had done the work. I had really done the processes and had my goals laid out and when I just asked myself a simple question, does this move me toward my goal? And it was no, it doesn't at all. Because at that point, I had decided my why in life was to help. I mean, it really was to help widows, but it was like helping anybody. That was kind of like, am I helping anybody, and the answer was no.

Krista: I think that's so common too in this whole just coaching experience. I have seen it so many times; it's exactly what happened to me, too. Where

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

when something helps you so much, and you see how powerful it's been in your own life, then, of course, you want to help others and share it.

Pam: Yeah, you do. I think especially when you've seen, or you hear, or you talk to those who are suffering. Even like in your Facebook, my Facebook group, or any you know, I see so much hurt and judgment of themselves and judgment of everybody else, and I was just like, oh my gosh, there's so much help. I'm like, I think I told you at one point, I just want to tell everybody call Krista, set up an appointment, you know, back when I was looking through your stuff, and I was a member. So, having my own, it's tough because you don't want to really coach on there, but I like to show encouragement, at least. I try to say have fun, what if you look at it this way?

Krista: So, I found one of my biggest struggles as I became a coach was because you want to help everyone then, it's actually kind of hard to keep your mouth shut sometimes. One of the biggest rules that I was always taught early on, and I am grateful for, but I also felt challenged by it was no coaching without permission.

Pam: It's hard.

Krista: It's not well received when you just want to help so bad. It's hard to pull back and wait for people to come to you sometimes.

Pam: Yeah, I was sitting in Bible Study this week, and it is funny because one of the ladies in the group says something to the extent that she really dreads going to work. She works with all these imbeciles, and you know, she's just calling them dummies, and then she's like, I don't know why I don't want to go to work?

Krista: Dummies, I don't know why I don't want to go to work.

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

Pam: And I'm just like, oh gosh, shut up Pam, shut up Pam.

Krista: Shut up, Pam, shut up, Pam. So, quit your job, certified coach, mostly you said mostly doing grief, but tell me, what do you have in mind next? Like, what's next for Pam?

Pam: So, right now, I am venturing into adding men into the program. Kind of as a pilot program to test the waters to see what I think about it.

Krista: And is that widowers or is that just men who are grieving?

Pam: I think at this point, widowers.

Krista: Yeah, I think that's so needed.

Pam: I don't know that there's anyone coaching them, you know, and I have had several people ask me, and I really went through what my drawback to it was, and really you know, it was kind of the whole fear of the spamming, you know? Because everybody has that with them trying to spam widowers, or whatever, but I think that I can definitely go through a process to illuminate a lot of that, and then you know, with coaching, I have worked a little bit already on my mind and will continue to coach myself if that happens you know, it's not a group, it would be single-y and so, you know, I wouldn't be putting them with any other women, and I can just stop coaching them. You know, that's my choice, and I can be okay with that.

Krista: Yeah, I think that's a great experiment to do, and I'll just tell you based on the number of emails that I have gotten, I get asked regularly, and even on Facebook, you know I get asked regularly who can I send people to that will coach widowers, and I don't have anybody, so.

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

Pam: I mean, it's my goal is to help, and you know I have my private Facebook group it's for women, and then I have just the one you have to have a business account, and that's just Pam Stoddard life coach. There are men in that. So, they've asked and sent me messages and different things. Some you can tell are, you know, I'm going to do this as a pilot and see how it goes.

Krista: Yeah.

Pam: You know, I figure they go through 80% of what we go through, and 20% of it is different, but with coaching, it doesn't really matter. You know.

Krista: You have the tools.

Pam: Yeah, I have the tools to help either way, so.

Krista: Yeah, I love that for you. What a shift.

Pam: Yeah, so, it's going to be interesting, you know, and I don't know if I'm going to try to operate at a certain time or just take them as they come? Like I said, I worked on an ad to change some of the wording a little bit, so it includes, it's a little bit broader. So, I haven't decided completely how the—I haven't set out all the steps yet. I haven't defined it yet. Then I also want to do—

Krista: —If we could just take a second to go back and say, okay, you lost your spouse in January of 2019. And really, even though it feels like I have known you for a long time in the grand scheme of things, it's really not that long that you have done so much work on yourself, right, completely changed your career, your focus, your direction. I hope that's something that you're proud of.

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

Pam: I am. Thank you, yeah. I really am. And it's so hard to even say that like to say that. Like, you know? And I think too that you know it's a matter of being an example to other women in this case. But you know, you can have grief and have a life and have joy and find some happiness. It's not the same, you know, and I think we have a lot of beliefs. I think that's one of the things when your belief system about grief was my, no we're not going to get there. I don't want to get there. I don't want it to be over. I don't want it to be done. So, if somebody said that to me, that's where I am like, yeah, no more, I'm not interested. I want to always be sad when I think I miss him, but I know what to do with sad now. I am comfortable with it.

Krista: Right, and I think that's the biggest difference. I know from you when I look back, and I remember so clearly hearing or at least receiving this idea that if I was going to love my life again in the future, that meant that somehow, I would have to be happy about what had happened. That I was going to have to be grateful for it, or blessed by it, or something, and of course, that didn't rub me the right way.

Pam: No, I still very much say it is what it is. I mean, I still live in that world. It is what it is. And I can.

Krista: And here's what I've chosen to do after.

Pam: After and with, after and with. You know, like, because it doesn't go away, and I mean, I know a lot of people know who Brooke is when we refer to Brooke but talking about taking your—

Krista: —Brooke Castillo for those of you who don't know.

Pam: —purse and take them with you.

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

Krista: Yeah, but when you don't know how to deal with emotions, and you think that negative emotions are bad things, then, of course, it makes sense that we would want to get to this, you know, a magical place where we only experience happiness when we think about what has happened in our lives, and it's not helpful. It's not realistic. It's not the way it works. It doesn't have to be that way. It really can be just like you were saying and how I feel all the time which is, I actually like missing Jugo. I don't want to not miss him. But I also don't let that define me or limit me. I just make it part of my life experience, and I think that's the sweet spot that you seem to have reached and that I definitely feel like I have experienced.

Pam: Yeah, I feel like I'm there. I knew that's where I wanted to be. There were times I felt like I was there, I mean it's—And I think it's important to say, I feel like I'm there, and yet, still have grief bombs that surprise me. I still have—

Krista: —Totally, yeah. Here I am five years later and still having them.

Pam: Yeah, and say wait a minute, where'd those come from?

Krista: Right, but if people hear us and they're not as far along as we are and we're normalizing those experiences just like someone in grief share normalized widow fog for you and helped you realize you weren't crazy, right? We can then say, listen, it's okay if you're still having, I call them grief grenades if you're still having grief grenades or, you know, experiences like that, that also doesn't mean anything.

It doesn't mean you're stalled or stuck, or not doing it right, or you know, you can't love your life, it doesn't mean any of that stuff, but sometimes we just don't hear that so. Well, Pam, thank you so much for coming onto the podcast. How can people reach you if they want to get in touch with you? What's the best way to do that?

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

Pam: Oh, awesome, so, I have a website, and it is [mstoddard.com](http://mstoddard.com)

Krista: We will put a link to that in the show notes.

Pam: Email is [coaching@pamstoddard.com](mailto:coaching@pamstoddard.com), and then I also have a podcast it's called Choosing Joy After Grief and Loss, so.

Krista: And do you have a favorite social platform?

Pam: Pretty much just use Facebook and a little bit. I do have a women's group there. I haven't broadcast into the man's group, though. But it's Choosing Joy After Grief and Loss, and it's a private women's group for support, and the women are wonderful at supporting each other.

Krista: Amazing, yeah, okay, so if you want to connect with Pam, I'm going to put that all in the show notes, you can go to [coachingwithkrista.com](http://coachingwithkrista.com) and look at the show notes, and all that will be there. And I just love you.

Pam: Well, thank you. I love you.

Krista: I really do.

Pam: And I just think the work was amazing. You know, I think that everybody who's dealing with any grief should do a little bit of the work for sure. It's life-changing for anybody, grief or not.

Krista: I agree, and also, I think it's important that we recognize that the reason you have created what you have, is not because of me or any program. It's because of what you did to advocate for yourself to get the tools that you needed and then to apply those tools. So, as much as whenever I do an interview, my ego really wants to be like, yeah, that was all me. It was I just showed up and gave the stuff, and you did it, right?

## **Ep# 137: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Pam Stoddard**

Pam: I appreciate that. And it is true, but sometimes somebody else has to prod your mind a little bit and make you open your eyes.

Krista: I know. I Know. Alright, bye to all of my friends.

Pam: Alright, take care.

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 will 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 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.