

Ep #139: How To Worry Less



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With Your Host

Krista St-Germain

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 139, How To Worry Less.

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. We're going to talk about worrying today and how to worry less. Because I know a lot of you are worrying more than you want to, and you don't really know what to do about it. You don't like it. So, we're going to talk about it. I have a pretty simple process, to be honest, that will help you, and I want to tell you about it today.

I personally have also been worrying. Just so you know, I'm human. Our dogs are fighting, I might have mentioned this before, but our dogs are fighting. So, Hugh and I got a dog. Let's see, we got Sadie in January. He died in August. So, Hugo, my daughter, and I picked Sadie out from the humane society, and later we were curious, so we had her doggie DNA done. Which is kind of fun.

They told us at the humane society that she was part Rottweiler and part lab. And I was curious, so I had her doggie DNA done, and it only goes back three generations, but what came back is 25% unknown, meaning they can't go back that far, 25% Pitbull or American Stafford Charterer, I think is the official name, and then, 12% German Sheppard, 12% Doberman, 12% Rottweiler, and 12%, what's the other one, lab.

So, she's a hot mix, and she's been very friendly for most of her life, never really had any conflicts. And when I met the boyfriend, uh, let's see, February of 2020, right before COVID. We introduced his dog, which is soft coated wheaten, very small, white, fluffy, little terrier, introduced the two

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dogs, and they became best friends. For the last almost two years, they have just hung out, wrestled, and all has been well.

Then, when we moved in together in June last summer, all good, right? Everybody's friends, everybody's getting along, lot's of running around the house and chasing each other, and all seemed to be well. And then, it wasn't. Then, they started fighting, and, so, we're working with a dog trainer to try and remedy this situation and break the pattern. But this has been something that I have noticed my brain worrying a lot about.

So, I also notice a lot of my clients worrying, and of course, I notice my brain worrying. And I've done a lot of work on my own worrying. I want to talk about how you can actually worry less because I know if it's something that helps me then, it's going to help you too, right? So, that's what I want to talk about today, and that's a little bit of background about what's going on in my life and what I've been thinking and worrying about or noticing my brain worrying about.

I also have been worrying about my daughter. So, she rolled her ankle really badly in December at a volleyball practice, and we've still got another CT scan left to go. It looks like we're not going to have to have surgery. I don't think, but it's like, the end of her volleyball career because she was just going to play one more season of club. She graduates from high school in the spring, and such a bummer. So, I have just been worried about that too.

So, my brain has been worrying, and I bet your brain is worrying. So, let's get into how to worry less, shall we? I want to share with you three steps. It really is this simple, okay? Just these three steps. And before I get into them, what you need to know is that worrying is natural. Our brain was designed to worry. There is a primitive wiring that still exists in our brain, right? That hyper focuses on what is negative in the world as a means to protect us.

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Our brain prioritizes scary things over happy things because happy things don't kill us and scary things do. So, we have brains with built-in negativity biases and a built-in predisposition to worry. Okay? So, worrying is natural. So, step one of how to worry less is to stop worrying about worrying. Okay? Don't make it mean anything about you or your future or what's possible for you or you. Don't make it mean anything.

It's just your brain doing its thing. It's just your brain doing what brains do. One of my friends says it's your brain, braining. Whenever our brain is doing what it's designed to do, it's just our brain, braining. This is just the part where our brain worries because it was designed to do that. So, stop worrying about worrying. That is step one.

I just coached someone inside Mom Goes On about this exact same thing. It was really the worry about her worry that was her problem because she was making her worry mean there was something wrong with her. She was making her worry mean that she wasn't doing it right, and that's not helpful. That just actually creates more of what we don't want, instead of less.

So, stop worrying about worrying. Okay, step two, write down what you're worried about, really and truly take the time to write it down. This is what I have done many times. Write it down. What am I worried about? And then, make a whole list, dump it out, all the worries, right, get it all out. Give yourself the relief of knowing that every worry you have is written down on the page.

What's interesting about this for me is that sometimes when I go to do this, it feels like I have all of these things to be worried about and when I allow myself to write down all of my worries, what I notice is that there's actually a lot less of them than I thought. It's a smaller list than I thought, but it doesn't really matter how long the list is. Just write them down. Okay?

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Now, once you've written them down, ask yourself, is there anything I can do about this worry? Go through the list one by one. Is there any productive action I could take to influence the outcome? Because the act of worrying itself doesn't actually help us, right? It doesn't help us problem solve. It doesn't help us do anything productive. It doesn't help us influence the outcome. It just kind of keeps us spinning and confused and doubting and like, right? It's just not productive at all.

My teacher Brooke Castillo is famous for saying that worry only pretends to be necessary, and I think she is right; pretends to be necessary. But it isn't actually useful. So, once you've written down everything that you're worried about, ask yourself, could I take a productive action here to influence the outcome? Because if you are worried that the airplane that you're already on is going to crash, there's probably not much you can do about it, right?

Worrying isn't helping you, but say for me, I'm worried about my dogs fighting. I can take some action. I can follow the steps that my trainer has given us, right. I can work with the dogs. He's actually written down instructions. I can follow those instructions, and I can do that at home training. That's the productive action I can take. With my daughter and her foot, I can make sure that the CT scan gets scheduled, right. When the doctor didn't call me, I called them. I could take some action.

So, write everything that you're worried about down. Ask yourself if there's a productive action you can take and where there are opportunities for you to contribute to a solution take action. Write the action down and take it. Alright, and then, notice when there isn't an opportunity for you to actually take action when it's outside of your ability to influence that's when we want to let it go.

That's when we want to notice that it's just our brain braining. Just our brain is doing its thing, and we don't have to pay so much attention to it. We don't have to take it so seriously. So, step one is to stop worrying about your

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worrying. Step two is to write down what you're worried about and ask yourself if there's a productive action you can take, and if so, take it. And step three is a little bit counterintuitive but go with me because it's very helpful. Identify the worst-case scenario. What is the worst possible outcome here?

I know if you've never done this before, you're probably like, what? Why would you do that? Aren't you supposed to think positively? Okay. No. What is the worst thing that could happen, and the reason we do this is because it's not really the thing that could happen that we dread so much as it is the feeling that we would likely feel if it happened? So, what's the worst thing that could possibly happen here?

So, in my mind, just going back to my dog's issue, the worst thing that could possibly happen would be that I have to rehome one of the dogs. Alright? So, that's the worst thing that could probably happen. Or that I have to put down a dog; maybe it could even come to that. Okay, so, that's the worst thing, and then, ask yourself if it happened, if the worst-case scenario really did come true, what's the feeling you might have to feel?

So, for me, that feeling would be sadness. I would have to be willing to feel sad. And this is helpful because once you have written down the worst-case scenario and you understand that the worst part of it will be the feeling and then you remind yourself that feeling can't hurt you. You might not like it, you might not want it, but that feeling is just a vibration in your body.

This is why the very first thing you learn inside of Mom Goes On, my coaching program, for widowed moms. The very first thing you learn is how to feel a feeling all the way through so that you get good at it. Because once you get good at feelings and you're confident that you can allow any feeling to pass through you, then feelings become less scary. They become less dreadful.

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You will have less dread around the possibility of a feeling happening to you in the future. That doesn't mean you're going to look forward to feeling sad, but that means you're going to stop living your life to avoid feeling sad. You're going to stop being so preoccupied with not feeling sad or any other negative emotion because you actually start to believe that you're good at feelings.

So, that's a game-changer, right? Nobody ever wants to do it, but it's a big, big deal when we do. So, when you identify the worst-case scenario, you understand the feeling that might happen in that scenario, and you start to consider that it can't hurt you, right? What would it be like for you to feel sad, or whatever the emotion is that you're kind of not wanting to feel, and could you handle it? Because that's the worst of it. That's the worst of it.

And p.s. that's the worst of it with my daughter in volleyball, right. The worst of it is feeling sad for me. Like, me feeling sad for her, me feeling sad for me because I love watching and seeing her happy, and me feeling sad about her feeling sad. Sadness, that's the worst part of it for me. Am I willing to feel sad? Could I handle it? Do I know that I'm good at it? Yeah, actually, I do. I have a lot of experience with it.

Do I love it? No. But it's part of the human experience. It can't hurt me, and I don't have to get all you know wrapped around the axel avoiding sadness. And the other thing that's important to know is that the emotion that you don't want to feel if the worst-case scenario were to happen wouldn't actually be caused by what happened. And I know it sounds crazy, but really whatever it is that would happen in the future would be caused by a story in your brain.

It would be caused by what your mind makes what happened mean. Meaning that you actually get to choose how you want to think about anything. And here's the deal, this doesn't mean you wouldn't choose to feel the negative emotion. If I have to get rid of one of my dogs, I'm going to

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choose to feel sad. I'm not going to choose to feel happy about that. Sadness will feel very appropriate to me, and I wouldn't try to talk myself into happiness.

It's a great relief knowing that I'm the one that gets to make the choice. I'm the one that gets to choose how I want to think about what has happened and allow myself to feel how I feel about it. It didn't just happen to me. I'm not the powerless victim in the situation. Right? I could talk myself into thinking happy thoughts about it. That it's better because someone else gets to have my dog, my dog gets to have a happy home where she doesn't have to wear a mussel, you know, I don't know. Hopefully, a mussel is not going to be a long-term solution.

You get the point, right? I get to choose what I think about what happened. Therefore, I'm the one creating my emotional experience of it, and that's not to say I'm going to choose to think positively and feel happy about it, but that's to say I can recognize that I'm in more of a powerful position than most of us think we're in. And if you want to think differently about whatever it is, you can.

So, in review, step one, stop worrying about worrying. Don't make it mean anything about you, your future; it's just your brain doing what your brain was designed to do, to hyper-focus on the negative. Step two, write down what you're worried about. Ask yourself if there's a productive action you can take to influence the outcome, and if there is, take that action. Then, number three, if there isn't, identify the worst-case scenario. What's the feeling you might have to feel?

Remind yourself it's just a vibration in your body. You can handle it. And remind yourself that you get to choose how you want to think about anything. And even if you choose to think in a way that makes you feel a negative emotion, you are still choosing, and there's power in that. Alright, that's what I have for you.

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Oh, I want to remind you, too, in case you don't know, we've changed the enrollment process for Mom Goes On, and I'm really excited about it because it's so much better for you. It used to be that if you wanted to join Mom Goes On, you had to apply, and then you had to find a time on my calendar, and I was usually pretty backed up, which means you had to wait a couple of weeks, and I don't want you to have to wait a couple of weeks anymore.

So, now you still have to apply, and the reason for that is we're not going to be on the phone together anymore, and I don't want to offer you a position in Mom Goes On if I don't genuinely believe I can help you. So, the application is slightly different, but it's designed for me to make sure that you are ready for coaching. Because not everybody is ready yet. That's totally fine, but I only want to offer to help people who are genuinely ready for coaching. And so, the application tells us that, and right now, to give you an idea, about 70-75% of people who apply are accepted. About 25% aren't ready just yet.

So, once you're accepted then, all you have to do is go and watch the free private training that we created, which explains the four-part framework that I have used to now help hundreds of widows get the tools and support, right, and learn to love life again, you can just watch it. It's so easy and at your own convenience. Then, it also explains everything you need to know about how Mom Goes On works, and we're standing by to answer any question you have, and then you can just enroll. You can just go.

I don't want you to wait anymore, so that's the new process. You can learn more at coachingwithkrista.com and check out the work with me page. It explains everything. That's where the application is. I would love, love, love to be able to get to know you to coach you, and help you love your life again, too. Alright, no settling for a new normal, just I am not having it.

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Okay, that's what I have for you. I hope you have an amazing week. Remember, truly, I love you, and you've got this. Alright, take care. I will see you next week. Buh-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. Its small group coaching just for widowed moms like you 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.