

## Ep #143: Beliefs and Your Smartphone



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

## Ep #143: Beliefs and Your Smartphone

Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 143, Beliefs, and Your Smartphone

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 are you doing? What's going on in your world? We're having a snow day. We're actually having snow day number two as I record this, which is really rare. In Kansas, we don't have a lot of snow days, but nonetheless, there's snow on the ground, and it's kind of pretty and bright outside of my office.

So, let's talk about beliefs and your smartphone. This has come up a couple of times when I'm coaching, and I think, ah, I need to record a podcast episode on this because it would be helpful, and so here it is. Today, beliefs in your smartphones, so this is a lesson in cognitive diffusion, and I know that sounds super exciting, cognitive diffusion, woohoo. It's a party, right?

What that is, is just a fancy phrase for something that really really matters if you find yourself in a position which most of you listening to this podcast do where you want to love life again, but you don't know how to do it, or something is in your way, and you don't know what that is, or you're feeling stuck, you're feeling empty and hollow, and you don't want to feel that way anymore. Right? You don't believe you love your life.

So, we have to understand we don't have to use the term cognitive infusion, but we need to understand what it is. Most of us are just so busy thinking our own thoughts, our own cognitions, that we haven't even considered the idea that the thoughts aren't true. We are so immersed in our own thoughts that we don't see that they are optional.

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We're just swimming in them, right? We're experiencing them as our truth, and when we talk about our thoughts, it's not like we're talking about things that are optional. It just feels like we're talking about observations about the way we are or about the truth of our lives. We're so enmeshed in our thoughts that we can't see that we are the thinker of those thoughts, not the thoughts themselves.

So let me give you an example before we get too deep into this episode. So, earlier this week, I was coaching someone inside of Mom Goes On, and her thought which absolutely felt like truth to her, it did not feel like an optional thought, is that she used to have a good life, and now her life was tragic. This felt really, really true to her. Like, her life was tragic. It used to be good, and now it was a tragedy, and it was never going to be good, basically.

So, I didn't try to change her thought. What I tried to show her was that there was a difference between her as the thinker of the thought and the actual thought itself. Because if we are so enmeshed with our thoughts that we can't see them as optional, then we can never change any of our thoughts, and if we don't change our thoughts, we can't change our beliefs, right? Beliefs are just thoughts we thought long enough that we don't have to think about them anymore.

I used to believe that I wasn't good at podcasting, and I had to practice the belief that I'm good at podcasting. Even as I was recording podcasts consistently, I still didn't actually believe I was good at it, and I had to practice that belief. Now, I just believe it. I've practiced it enough that I believe it. The same thing with I love my life. I didn't believe that for a long time, but now I do.

Now it's a belief, I have thought enough times and found enough evidence for it and changed things also in my life, but I just genuinely believe that I love my life. That doesn't mean that it's perfect. It doesn't mean it doesn't

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have a lot of, you know, negative emotion in it because all human lives do, but I see it differently now. At first, I had to realize that I had a belief that my best days were behind me.

I just thought that was like the kind of icky truth that I didn't really want to talk about. I didn't realize it was a story in my mind. So, we can really only love life again when we change our relationships with our thoughts and our beliefs. We have to be able to diffuse ourselves from those thoughts and beliefs, and if you've heard me talk about it before, you know that thoughts cause feelings, feelings drive actions, actions produce results, right?

But if we think our beliefs, our thoughts are just subjective truth, and we don't think that we have the agency to change them. Then we just keep recycling the same old same old. Our brain will always be creating results that align with our beliefs. We will always be proving our own beliefs true. We just live the same life on repeat, which if you are happy with the way things are going and you love your life, then great, right?

You don't even want to change anything, but if you're wanting something different, especially after your person dies, then we need the skill of cognitive diffusion, and we need it like, pronto. Right? So, what do beliefs in smartphones have in common? What does this have to do with cognitive diffusion? I'm so glad you asked. Okay, I'm so glad you asked. Look at your phone. Right now. Just look at your phone.

If you're like me, it's not far away. So, look at your phone and notice there's your phone and there are apps on your phone. Right? If you turn your phone on, you see all the apps on your phone. Your phone has apps just like you have beliefs, but you are not your beliefs. You are the awareness behind your beliefs. You are not the belief itself. You are the being who believes. You are the believer.

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So, you're not your thoughts either, right? You're the consciousness who has the thoughts. You're the thinker of the thoughts. And beliefs are just thoughts we thought long enough that we don't have to think anymore, right? They are just on autopilot in our brain, and they're just like apps on our phones. Where there's you, the phone, and there's all these apps that are installed on your phone.

Some of them you love, some of them don't serve you at all, some of them function really well in your life, some of them are glitchy, some of the apps came already installed on your phone when you got the phone they were already there. Right? Just like we picked up beliefs in childhood. We pick up beliefs from our parents, grandparents, and our faith traditions and the way we were socialized, right? The norms of our culture.

We didn't choose them on purpose. They were just already there. They were pre-installed. Think about all of the beliefs you didn't really choose for yourself; they were just installed, like apps on your phone. I'll give you some. See if any of these ring a bell? Early bird gets the worm. Takes money to make money. Did you believe—Here's one I believed; I literally believed if you stepped on a crack, you'd break your mother's back.

Like, this worried me as a child. I really did worry that if I stepped on a crack, I was going to get a phone call, and I was going to hear there's something terribly wrong with my mom. I know that's not true now, but at a point in my life, I really believed that. Have you ever heard, first comes love, then comes marriage next comes the baby in the baby carriage? That's what I heard a lot, right?

How many times did we hear that? It was like pre-installed when we got the phone. You're supposed to fall in love. Then you're supposed to get married, and then you're supposed to have the baby. That's what you're supposed to do. Right? Did you grow up believing that, you know, maybe widows should be in mourning for a year? Like widows wear black, they're

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old ladies, they should be in mourning for a year, they're damaged goods, like, don't get me started on what I thought about widows before I became one. Right.

Maybe you believed that the most important day of a woman's life was her wedding day? Maybe you were taught that there's only one soul mate? Maybe you were taught that single people aren't as happy as married people or single people are isolated and lonely and alone. Or maybe you were taught, as I think every woman in America is taught, thin people are beautiful, fat people are not. Thin people are happier, right?

Women are natural nurturers; men are natural leaders. We have all of these apps that came installed on our smartphones. We didn't choose them; somebody else put them there, but just like the phone is not the apps that are installed on it. You are not your beliefs. You are the believer, which means that just because a belief exists doesn't mean you have to keep it. Just because you believe something right now about your life or about your future, about what's possible for you, or about what your role is, or about what you should do or shouldn't do or are too old to do.

Just because that belief is there doesn't mean you have to keep it. You know when you hold on an app, at least I have an iPhone, you push down on the app, and it starts to wiggle, and then you can delete it? I want you to think about your beliefs the same way. You can literally not believe something anymore. I also used to believe, I saw this on Facebook the other day, and I was like, oh my gosh, I actually did believe this.

I also believed that it was illegal to drive with the overhead light on; my parents convinced me of that. If I wanted to have the overhead light on, they told me it was illegal. I believed them. I believed them so much that I actually told my kids that it was illegal. I really thought that was true, right? I also thought it was true that if you swallowed gum, it would stay in your stomach for seven years.

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At a point in my life, I literally believed that. I also believed, did you believe this one, that you couldn't go swimming until your food had digested for at least 30 minutes or you would get cramps, and my mother is a nurse. She believed that. Right? But we don't have to keep believing things at all. We decide we don't want to believe them; we don't have to.

If we decide we don't want to use an app anymore, that it's no longer useful to us, we can stop using that app. Right? If an app is glitchy, there's something wrong with it, we don't get mad at our phone. We don't throw the phone away. It doesn't mean there's anything wrong with the phone. We just see, oh, that app, no. I am not going to use that one anymore.

We get to be the boss of what apps we use on our phones. We get to be the boss of what thoughts we believe. If an app isn't serving us, we can stop using it. We can replace it with a new app. Do you see the difference? This is really important because when you can start to see in the moment, and this is what I do a lot when coaching, right?

Is helping people see the difference between what is actually happened in their lives and thoughts and beliefs they have formed as a result or are currently thinking or believing and what that's creating in their lives because we can't change anything if we don't understand it, and we can't understand it when we're too close to it. When we're fused with it, so this is really easy for me to do as a coach. It's really hard for you to do in your own brain, right? Because you're just so busy swimming around in your own thoughts, it's hard to see them as thoughts.

You're so busy believing your own beliefs it's hard to see them as optional beliefs. It just feels like truth until someone like me can come along and point it out to you and say, hey do you know this is a belief? Do you know it's not objectively true that your life was good? You just thought it was good. It's not objectively true that your life is a tragedy. That's just the story you're currently believing.

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It's not objectively true that single are less happy than married people. That's just a story. Then, the beautiful part about being diffused from our thoughts is that when we start to see them as separate from us, we can start to decide which thoughts we want to listen to and which thoughts we don't. We can ask ourselves does this thought move me closer to the life that I want. Does this belief create more of what I want in my life, or does this hold me back? Is this a move toward what I want, this belief, this app, or is this a move away from what I want?

We get to be the decider—the chooser. We get to be the one who makes the decision about which beliefs we keep believing and which ones we replace. Which apps we keep using and which ones we stop using. Sometimes I think when you get into this kind of work, it's easy to start thinking that the whole goal is to never think a thought that doesn't serve you again, and that's not the point at all.

The point is to separate yourself so that you see you are not your thoughts. They are separate from you so that then you can discern in the moment when that old pattern thought pops up again, which it will because that's how the brain works, you go, oh, I see you there. I see that I'm using this app that is glitchy and hasn't been updated in a while, and I used to think I liked it, but I don't anymore.

I'm not going to use that one. I'm going to go to this other app and use it, but you don't make it mean anything about you because thoughts show up, right? The quality of the phone had literally nothing to do with the quality of the apps on the phone. They are separate. Your quality, you as a human, your worth has nothing to do with what you think. They are separate; thoughts are not a commentary on your value.

They are not moral or good or bad or right or wrong. They just make you feel different things, and that matters because how you feel influences what you do, and what you do determines what you create, but it all goes back to

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what am I thinking? What am I believing? And is it in service of the life I want, or is it holding me back from the life I want? Some other ways to think about this there's a quote by Pema Chodron which I just, which I have always loved it. She says, you are the sky, and everything else is just the weather.

All of those stories in your mind are just the weather. You're the sky. If you imagine, I don't know what other brands there are, but I got one for Christmas. I got them for my parents last year, and then the boyfriend got me one this year because I wanted one. It's an electronic picture frame, mine is called a Nixplay, and you can load all kinds of electronic pictures onto the frame, right, and the pictures just constantly change.

So, as you're sitting there looking at the frame, you see old pictures and happy pictures and maybe some that are memories from way back and some that are just a couple of years ago and sad pictures and all the pictures. So, the pictures are your thoughts, and you are the frame. Right? You are the frame that the pictures roll through. I did another episode of the podcast, which you might go back and listen to, called Bot Colored Glasses; it's episode 100.

If you put a pair of blue-tinted glasses on your face, you will notice that they color the world. If you take them off and put on a pair of yellow-colored glasses, you will notice that they color the world. The glasses are just like your thoughts, just like your beliefs. You are not the glasses. Just like you are not your beliefs. You are the one looking through the glasses. Do you see the difference?

That's diffusion. There's you, and there are your beliefs. A couple of other episodes that might interest you if this is interesting to you The Stories We Tell episode 7. Which just shows you the power of being able to be the editor of your life, be the author of your life. Right? The thought feel and action connection episode 22 talks a little bit more about thoughts causing

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feelings and feelings driving action. Then the self-coaching model kind of wraps up the whole circumstances vs. thoughts, feelings, actions results; that's episode 70.

So, go check those out if you want to. I also want you to know so some of these thoughts that you picked up they were already on the phone when you got the phone. They were just pre-installed, some of them also maybe you picked up because, at the time, you thought they would be helpful, but they no longer serve you. Some of the beliefs that you had in early acute grief wouldn't serve you now.

So, maybe at some point, you believed that all you had to do was get through today. You believed that eventually, it wouldn't be so awful and that you'd get used to a new normal, and maybe in early grief in acute grief, those beliefs provided hope for you. Maybe they helped you survive; maybe they got you back to functioning?

But if you keep them now, they're going to block you from thriving, right? If your goal is a new normal that feels mediocre and meh, maybe that helped you in the early days, but guess what it's going to create now? It's going to recycle the same sameness that's happening right now, and if you don't like that, then we need to change that belief. If you genuinely want to love your life, you have to believe something else about you and what's possible for you and about what's possible for your future, and about what you're capable of, and about your worthiness, your life, and all of those things are choices you get to make.

Only when you see your beliefs as separate from you. Only when you see that you are the phone and your beliefs are just apps on the phone. They aren't you. Okay? I hope this helps you. Remember, I love you, and you've got this. Alright, take care, and I'll see you next week, bye-bye.

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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.