

## Ep #144: The Two Most Important Relationships for Widows



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Krista St-Germain**

[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 144, The Two Most Important Relationships For Widows.

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. There's no one in my house right now. It's just me, so I'm taking advantage of this time to record a podcast episode for you. My boyfriend is working out. My kids are with their grandparents. My dad has been teaching them to weld, and so they love going over there and welding with grandpa. So, that's what they're doing today.

So, okay, before we jump into the episode today. I want to tell you a couple of things. One is I just want to say thank you so much to a few of you who left podcast reviews recently. I hadn't looked in a while, and I looked, and oh my goodness, I was just so, you don't know how much podcast reviews mean to me, so to see so many nice ones. It just warmed my heart.

So, Carrie Bunn, thank you. Hickorynut21 grief and art, which is Linda Mcave, Jacie from Texas, not the worst listener, and Jenny scoob or scooby. I'm not sure but thank you so much for your kind words. I know I've said this a billion times, but it really is so strange to sit at your desk in an office and record something into a microphone and not interact with the people that are listening.

So, when you leave a review, it just warms my heart, and also that's what makes it so much easier for other widows to find because you know, I don't know why the podcast apps care about ratings, but they do, and that's what makes them easier to find, so thank you for taking time to do that. The

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other thing I want to tell you is that I just recorded a brand new training that is free, and it's called how to navigate grief as a widowed mom. I've been thinking about doing it for a while, and it took a while to record, but it's amazing, and I really want you to do it.

So, if you haven't done it, go take it. It is free. There's nothing you can buy at the end of it. Go to [coachingwithkrista.com](http://coachingwithkrista.com) and then click on the homepage and scroll down to the bottom and you can put in your name and email address, and that will get you the course. It's 75 minutes long. I tried to make it an hour, but I just couldn't fit in everything that I wanted to teach you in 75.

What I wanted to do was to get one comprehensive free class that you could take that would give you the basics of what you need to know because so much of what we're taught about grief is inaccurate, misguided, and not at all helpful. There's just no reason that you need to read the gazillion grief books that I've read. You just don't need to do it, and if your widow fog is intense, you're not going to be able to do it anyway.

So, just go and take that class and I hope it's really helpful for you and once you take it, let me know what you think it is. So, go to [coachingwithkrista.com](http://coachingwithkrista.com), scroll all the way down, put your name and email in there, and you will be sent the class automatically. For free because I love you.

Okay, so let's get into this episode. What I have learned is that the longer I do this work, the better I get at teaching in ways that are simpler and easier for those I'm teaching to apply. I have been coaching widows now since 2018, gosh. Yeah, 2018, got certified in 2017, started coaching in 2018. And so, I've been thinking about really what I teach inside of Mom Goes On and how to explain it simply so that you can use it, and that's what I want to do with today's episode.

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Because what I know is that if you change these two relationships, it's like knocking down the first two dominos in a whole train, right? When you knock down these first two dominos, all the other dominos, all the other things that are in the way of you loving your life again have no choice but to fall, right? These two relationships, when you change them, are the foundation for everything else that you want to change. I want you to love your life again. Right?

I know you want to love your life again; that's why you're listening to this podcast. So, these are the two relationships that if you want to love your life again, you must change. You just must change them. It's not negotiable, you must, alright? And this is a huge part of what I teach clients inside of my Mom Goes On program, but I want to give you the outline. Okay? Some of you are going to come inside of Mom Goes On, and you're going to work with me, and some of you aren't, and I want to help everyone.

So, here we go, alright. So, the first relationship that you must change if you want to love your life again is your relationship with your feelings. Now, I know that probably what you're expecting me to tell you is like, you know, you're thinking of relationships when you think about relationships with people, right? But that's not what we're going to talk about at all today. Although, if you change these two relationships that I'm going to tell you about, your relationship with people will change. Absolutely it will change. It will almost feel magical.

So, you must change your relationship with your feelings. And I'm going to tell you three things that people usually believe that don't help them about feelings and what they need to believe instead, right? So, you're going to leave this episode knowing that this is gold. Okay, so, most people, when we show up in widowhood, we believe that our feelings happen to us, and this matters because if we think things outside of us are causing our feelings, then we always need things outside of us to change.

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We're always at the mercy of other people's actions. We're always at the mercy of the events of life that are in our past that we no longer can even influence, right? When we believe that feelings happen to us, it's like being a plastic bag being thrown around by the wind in the Walmart parking lot, right? It is unnecessary, and it makes you feel powerless and out of control, and it's not true.

The truth isn't that feelings happen to us. The truth is that we create feelings with our thinking. The stories that we tell ourselves determine how we feel. I'll give you an example. Let's say someone in your life, your mother-in-law, your sister-in-law, your boss, someone says something to you in a particular tone and with a particular facial expression right words come out of the hole in their face as humans do and everything in your being, right? All signs appear to be pointing toward can't be happy until this person changes, right?

All signs point toward the words that came out of that person's mouth are the reason I feel angry or hurt or upset or self-conscious or whatever. Right? Insert feeling here. When we think that, and we do because nobody taught us any different, then we're always going to be railing against the way that person is. We're always going to be wanting them to change their behavior. We'll always be spending our energy wishing they were different or trying to change their behavior or resisting the way that we know that person to be.

And the more important truth is that's not what we need to do with our energy because it won't work. It never works. If we think that they have to change in order for us to feel happy, then we give them all the power, and then we're dependent on them to change. But the truth is we can stay calm, grounded, and loving no matter what they say. Right? And from that calm and grounded place, then we can decide how we want to handle the

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situation, then we can decide how much energy we want to give the relationship.

Then we can decide what boundaries do we want to set? Do we even want to maintain a relationship with this person, or do we want to consider it complete? We can even get curious if we want and try to understand where the person's coming from, but as long as we think we are at the expense of something outside of us, then we'll always be trying to change and control things that we can't.

So, feelings don't happen to us. We create them with our thinking. Furthermore, this matters because our actions, our behaviors, the things we do and don't do in life are fueled by emotion, how we feel. If we want to take different actions so that we can create different outcomes, then we have to be able to get ourselves into that feeling state that supports the actions we want to take, right?

So, if you want to ask for a raise, you need to feel proud of yourself before you ask, not after. If you want to be calm instead of yelling at your kids, you need to be able to generate your own calm and patience, even if your kids are screaming at each other. And if you want to change any behavior pattern, any pattern of action, you have to understand the emotion that's fueling it, which p.s. is created by your thoughts.

You change your thoughts; you change your feeling's state; you change your feeling state; you change how you behave. So, this matters. So, feelings don't happen to us. We create them with our thoughts. That's the first part of changing our relationship with our feelings. The second part is this idea which we're taught from everywhere, which is feelings are problems to solve. This is what we think, right?

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We think feelings are problems to solve. We think when we feel a negative emotion that something has gone wrong, and we're supposed to feel something else, something better and that we need to fix it. When we think feelings are problems, we start resisting them, usually, or avoiding them. And we know that what we resist actually persists, right? What we give energy to gets stronger, and resistance means we're giving our energy to it. Instead of just allowing it to pass through. Right?

This is why when you lost your spouse, and people said stupid stuff to you, which I know they did because they did it to me too. And I know they mean well; they do. They mean so well. The reason they say that stuff is because they think that your feelings are problems and you need to solve them. They have no capacity to be with you in negative emotion because they think negative emotion is a problem.

So that's when they say those clichés and platitudes and tell you that there's more fish in the sea, and oh, you're young and don't worry, and they're in a better place, at least they're not suffering anymore, and you're so lucky that at least you had children together, and whatever. They say those kinds of things because they are trying to make you feel better because they think your emotions are problems.

And when oftentimes, not always, but oftentimes when they ghost, that's also because they think feelings are problems. And they're worried that they're going to remind us of our loss and remind us of our pain. So, they just stop talking about it because they think that our emotions, negative emotions are a problem. But the truth is that feelings aren't problems to solve. They're just experiences to allow. When we change that relationship with our feelings, and we really do truly in our bones believe that feelings are experiences to allow and not problems to solve, we spend our energy completely differently.

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We don't need to use shopping, social media and alcohol, business, travel, and whatever to get away from our negative emotions. We can just allow it to pass through. We don't need to try to fix our kids' feelings by buying them things because they've already been through so much. We can be with them as they feel how they feel. We can teach them how to process their emotions.

So, feelings aren't problems to solve. They're just experiences to allow. The third thing that we're taught that we need to change if we want to love life again is that we're taught that happiness is the goal. We're literally sold this nonsense that happiness is the goal, right? How many things are on the TV that you can buy that will make you feel happy? That's what the commercials say that happiness is the goal.

Before I knew this, gosh, I wish I'd known this earlier, but I remember my mid-30s just kind of looking around at my life and thinking, what's wrong? Like, I'm not happy; I'm supposed to be happy. I'm supposed to be happier. I was happy, but I believed that I was supposed to be happier. I did all the things I thought I was supposed to do. I went to school, got married, got a job, had some kids, and bought a house. You know? I had the things, saving for retirement, taking vacations, traveling, being a mom, successful career, you're supposed to be happy all of the time.

Isn't that what we're supposed to be? I was so mythed. I started reading all the books about happiness, how to be happier, and why wasn't I happy? Because I didn't know that the goal wasn't to be happy all of the time. Did you know this? Maybe you do because maybe you've been listening to the podcast. Happiness is not the goal. You know what the goal is?

This is when life gets easier. The goal is being willing to feel all the feelings. The goal isn't just to be willing to be happy and to limit ourselves to happiness. The goal is being willing to feel it all because all of it is a part of

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being human. All of it is valuable, including all of the negative emotions, right? Without negative emotion, positive emotions lack context. We only know that joy is joyful because we know its opposite is despair.

We have to be reminded that because we have a part of our most primitive brain's wiring, right? We have this negativity bias that's built-in. This over sensitivity to danger as a survival mechanism that's not going away, right? So, in the times when it mattered, our brain was hyper-alert to tigers, dangerous animals in the brush, right? Because we needed to pay attention to that stuff, but now, most of the tigers aren't actually real tigers anymore, right? We call them paper tigers now.

But, the biased still exists. The brain is still wired to look for danger. So anytime we want to do something new, our primitive brains probably going to think it's scary. If we aren't willing to feel the feelings that require of us, we won't do anything new. So, imagine how much easier life would be if we stop telling ourselves that happiness was the goal and that we're just willing to feel all of the feelings.

What if when we wanted to create a new feeling, we were equally willing to experience its opposite. What if we decided that what we want to create is directly correlated to our willingness to feel its opposite? What if we saw the icky feeling we think we don't want to feel as the way to the thing that we want, and we were just that willing and open to emotions flowing through us. I just coached someone on this inside of Mom Goes On, and she's dating again, and she basically told me, you know, I like feeling excited at the idea that I might have a connection with someone.

She's, you know, using the dating apps, but I don't want to feel disappointed. Well, why not? Right? What if, instead of not wanting to feel disappointed, we decided that our willingness to feel disappointed is directly correlated to our opportunities to feel excited. If we want to feel

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excited about the possibility of a new relationship, then what if we just decide to be willing to feel disappointed if it doesn't work out? Because those are opposite sides of the same coin.

If you want to learn a new skill, which many of us do, right? Many of us want to expand, we want to grow, we want to change careers or learn something new, and we find ourselves in that place. If we want to do that and feel proud of ourselves for learning that new thing, then what if we were just willing to be terrible at it until we practiced enough that we got good at it, right? What if we were just willing to feel dumb so that we could feel smart? You see how it's opposite?

It would be so much easier if we were just willing to feel because we believed that being willing to feel all the feelings is the goal, right? If you have a past trauma in your life and want to heal from it, wouldn't it be easier if you were just willing to slog through the stuff that makes you think you're broken? Even though you're not, by the way. But of course, feeling from something that's from our past, we don't need to look forward to doing that. We just need to be willing to do it. And you need to be willing to feel the ick that requires of us.

If we want a rich, full life, which I think you do, and by the way, it's not right or wrong. It's not good or bad. If you don't, probably okay. Disregard what I'm saying, but if you want a rich, full life that includes both the highs and the lows, then we have to be willing to feel it all; otherwise, we get stuck, right. I call it the stagnation zone. It's that narrow band in the middle, that band where nothing is terrible, but nothing's great. It's just kind of meh.

That narrow band where we're using behaviors to avoid our feelings. We're ensuring that the lows aren't too low. We're pushing the lows away, but we're also repelling the highs. We're guaranteeing our spot on the merry go round, round, round, and round. No real ups, no real downs, just round,

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and I don't think that's what most of us want. We don't want the meh in the middle. We want all of it, which means stop telling yourself that happiness is the goal. It is not your goal.

Start telling yourself that being willing to feel all of the feelings is your goal, and if you do those three things, then you will change your relationship with your feelings. Right? You start to acknowledge, ah, feelings don't happen to me. I create them with my thoughts. Feelings aren't problems to solve. They're just experiences to allow, and happiness isn't my goal. Being willing to feel all the feelings is my goal.

So, that's the first relationship. That's the first domino. We knock that one down; here we go. Alright, second one relationship with your thoughts that's the second domino. If you listen to the episode I did on beliefs in your smartphone; this is what I'm talking about. Go back and listen to that one if you haven't. And also, in that one, I mention several other episodes that are related because it's such a huge part of what I teach, but we've got to change our relationship with our thoughts.

Most of us do not show up pre-listening to this podcast, having given much thought to our thoughts. We don't think about our thoughts. We're just too busy thinking them. Because we're humans, and nobody taught us this. So, if you think, as most of us do, that you are your thoughts, then guess what's going to happen? You're just going to keep repeating the same old stuff. Right? You're going to be so busy believing the stuff in your head that you won't get to choose anything different for yourself. You won't get to create anything different for yourself.

But what's really true is that just like the apps on your smartphone are not your smartphone, you are also not your thoughts. You are the thinker of your thoughts. We have to pull ourselves away, remember cognitive diffusion? We have to pull ourselves away from our own thinking so that we

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can change our relationship with our thoughts and see ourselves as the watcher, the experiencer of the thoughts, not the thoughts themselves.

Then, we can get to the second part of this relationship which is most of us think our thoughts are true. That's why it's so hard to see them as thoughts. Think about some of the ways that you think about yourself for your life; what do you tell yourself? Do you tell yourself that you're a people pleaser? Do you tell yourself that like I did, your best days are behind you? I used to think that all of the time. Right? I probably better just get used to this new normal.

Do you tell yourself that you're not good at money? What do you think about yourself? Because most of us don't understand that those thoughts are only true because we've been thinking them long enough. They aren't objectively true. They aren't true, true. They are true because we've thought them long enough that our brain has gathered enough evidence for them that now we can't see it any other way, and it becomes our identity. It becomes a belief.

So, when you're trying to change your relationship with your thoughts and your thinking, but my thoughts are true, you're using the wrong litmus test. It took me so long to learn this, y'all. Learn from me. Do not do what I did. Truth is not the litmus test. Usefulness is the litmus test. Not is this thought true; is this thought useful? Based on your unique values, your unique goals, and your unique vision, right? On what you want for your life? Does that thought move you toward or away? Is it a towards move or an away move?

Does that thought help you create the outcomes you want in your life or make it less likely that you can create the outcomes you want in your life? That's it; if it's a toward thought, keep thinking it. If it's an away thought, put it down, you don't have to think it. Just because it shows up in your brain

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doesn't mean you have to hang out with it. Just because somebody knocks on your front door doesn't mean you have to let them in your house—the same thing.

It does not matter how many times a thought appears if we recognize it's a thought because once we recognize this, we get to decide do I want to keep seeing myself as a people pleaser? Do I want to keep believing that I'm bad at money? Do I want to keep believing that, whatever? Is this taking me toward the life I want or pulling me farther away from it because once you see your thought as an object because you no longer believe that you are your thoughts. You no longer believe that just because you're thinking it means it's true, then you can decide what you want to keep thinking.

And your relationship with your thoughts is so so important because it's not what happens to us that determines our outcomes in life. It's what we decide to think about what happens to us that determines our outcomes in life. Right? If what happened to us determined our outcomes, then every single one of us who lost a spouse would be forever sad. We would all have the exact same outcome. We would all live the same life.

Spouse dies, that happens outside of us, can't control it. It's in the past. Why are we all having different experiences of it? Not right or wrong. Not good or bad. Just different. We're all having different experiences of it because we're all having different responses to it. But what most of us are doing is not choosing those responses on purpose; we're just on autopilot. We're just responding and so busy thinking our thoughts on autopilot. We're not consciously choosing our response, which is why nothing changes.

So, it isn't what happens to us that determines our outcomes. Right? Event plus response equal outcomes. There are a lot of different ways to say it.

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Jeff Canfield says it one way. Steven Cubby says it another.  $E+R=O$ ,  $S+R=O$ , right, but the premise is there's what happens to you. That's out of your control, plus your response to it. How are you going to think about it? How are you going to feel about it? How are you going to behave? Right? Your thoughts, feelings, your actions that's what creates your outcome.

So, yes, we can't go back and change that our spouse died, but we can decide now who are we going to be? How are we going to think? What do we want to feel? What do you want to do? And that's what creates the rest of our lives. But if you're so busy believing your own thoughts because you think they're true and that truth means you don't have any say in the matter, then we can't do that, and that's not what I want for you.

So, these are the two dominos we have to knock down, alright? And essentially, this is what I help people do in Mom Goes On. The challenge is that it's easy to see when you're listening to the podcast. Right? It's easy to see. It's easy to see my thoughts. It's not so easy for me to see my own thoughts. It's easy for you to see my thoughts. It's easy for me to see your thoughts, but when you're so busy swimming in your thoughts, it's really hard to see the difference between what you can control and what you can't.

That's why coaching is so powerful. So, what would it be like if you no longer believed feelings happen to you and you actually believed that you created them with your thoughts? What if you didn't think of feelings as problems to solve and you just considered them experiences to allow? What if you stopped telling yourself that happiness was the goal and started to believe that being willing to feel all the feelings was the goal. It would completely change your relationship with feelings.

They wouldn't be things you have to avoid anymore. They wouldn't be things you have to resist. They wouldn't be things you're scared of or

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worried about or trying to get away from. They would make your life better more meaningful. There would be tools you could use to get the next experience that you want. Right? You would see yourself as more powerful than the feeling. That's what opens up the doors for you. That's what I want for you.

This is why I've said it 37 million times. This is why in Mom Goes On, we start with feelings because I know you don't want to do this work. I didn't want to do it, but if you learn how to let a feeling flow through you. You do it so many times that you literally shift your belief through action, and you see that feelings aren't problems. You like know it in your bones, then the next time you want to do something new, you know that the only thing between you and that experience you want is a feeling you won't stop yourself.

You won't get in your own way. You'll be willing to just go feel the feeling and create the result that you want, and that's everything. That's what it takes to love your life again. And imagine if you changed your relationship with your thoughts if you stopped believing that your thoughts were who you were. If you stopped believing that your thoughts were just true, if you believe that you were the thinker of your thoughts, that you get to be the one that decides which thoughts to keep thinking and which thoughts to put down, right?

That you realized that no, thoughts were only true because we keep thinking them and our brain just keeps finding evidence and showing us what we're looking for. Thoughts become things. This is how, and then you just ask yourself does this thought move me toward or away, and you became the boss of your own brain. And you no longer bought into this idea that something terrible happened and therefore your life is going to be terrible. Or that things outside of you create your outcomes, and you see yourself as more powerful.

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You see yourself having agency, having the ability to choose. You stopped trying to control the things that are outside of you because you know you don't need to anymore because you can handle feelings, you're willing to feel them, and you can consciously choose your response and instead of just listening to the garbage thoughts that are in your brain. We all have garbage thoughts in our brains. We pick them up like bad pennies.

They aren't the truth of who you are, but they're going to keep creating the same life that you're living right now if you don't change them. If you don't see yourself as separate from them. If you don't start discerning toward or away. Okay? So, change your relationship with your feelings, change your relationship with your thoughts, and all the other dominos fall down. This is how I've structured Mom Goes On: I'm teaching you how to change your relationship with your feelings and then giving you exercises to do, right, and coaching as you do it. Then I'm teaching you how to change your relationship with your thoughts and giving you application exercises to do it, and coaching you as you do it.

Then, once you've learned the skill those two skills, then, we start uncovering all the different thoughts that you don't know are thoughts. We start systematically going through the areas of belief that most widows struggle with. Those thoughts and we start like pulling them to the surface so you can take a good hard look and go toward or away? Okay. Well, this one feels super true. How could that even possibly be just a thought?

It feels like fake and phony to switch to this new way of thinking. How do I do that? And we learn to do that. Then, once you have those two skills, you've changed those two relationships; that's what sets you up so well for success, no matter what happens in the rest of your life, even when we're not coaching together anymore, okay? So, hear it, some of you are going to come, and I'm going to get to work with you, and that's going to be

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amazing; some of you aren't. The ones of you who aren't you're going to be able to do this work too.

Do not believe the lie that you have to work with me to be able to change these two relationships. You don't. Okay? Being in Mom Goes On is like being on a Learjet. It just gets you there faster. It just gets you there faster and is a lot more fun, but you can still walk, you can still drive, you can still take the bus, you can still get there. You have what you need already inside of you. Right? Mom Goes On just gets you there faster.

Okay, whew, these last couple of episodes. I just get so fired up because I know what a difference these tools have made in my life. I know what it was like before I had these tools and how that compares to now what life is like that I have them, and I've watched the changes in so many of my clients, and I want that for you. I want that for you. There's no need for you to think your best days are behind you. There's no need for you to be in that meh space where you're on the merry go round of blah.

There's no need for you to believe the garbage in your brain. And I know there's a lot of garbage there. You didn't put it there, it's just there, but it's not the truth of who you are. So, alright, I love you. I really do, and whatever's going on in your world, keep telling yourself that you've got this. Okay? Alright, take care everybody, and I'll see you next week. Bye-bye.

If you like what you've been hearing on this podcast and want to create a future you can truly get excited about 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 that 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 the next steps. I can't wait to meet you.