

Ep #160: Widows Like Us: An Interview with Jane Grondin



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Krista St-Germain

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 160, Widows Like Us: An Interview with Jane Grondin.

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. What's going on? How you doing? Are you doing okay? Are you hanging in there? Is life good, looking up? I have no idea, but I love you, whatever's going on. I'm always thinking of you, thinking of what will be helpful to you, what episodes I can do that will help you get where you want to get. And that's why I love doing these episodes on Widows Like Us interviews because I just remember not having anyone I could relate to, not having any optimistic stories about what is possible for widows.

And so, I'm excited to introduce you to Jane Grondin today. Jane is one of my Mom Goes On graduates. Jane showed up for herself during our six months together like a freaking rockstar. She did everything I gave her to do. And you don't have to do everything I give you in the program. But my thought is, if you're going to invest that much in yourself and in your life, why not do everything that I give you? Why not show up for yourself in that way? And question it all and be curious.

And don't just swallow it like a lemming, actually challenge the tools and put them to use and put them through their paces and make them work for you so that by the time you come out of the program you've changed what you came to change and you know how to coach yourself going forward. You know how to solve your own problems going forward. You understand how your brain works. You've changed your relationship with your feelings.

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You've changed your relationship with your thoughts. You see yourself as more than those two things. You can use your thoughts and feelings as tools to create the future that you want so that your future is actually better than your past if you want it to be and you believe that's possible for you. And I watched Jane do that and I want you to hear from her and learn from her. And so, we're just going to get started in just a second. Before we do that I do want to read a couple of listener reviews because I haven't in a while.

And so, there were a couple that – one from MT Girl 1, I always wish I could see the names of who writes these because I know they're people in Mom Goes On but I don't know what their names are. So, MT Girl 1 wrote, "Must listen podcast for widowed moms. Krista's podcast has helped me so much and led to her Mom Goes On coaching program for widowed moms. If you haven't listened to one of her podcasts yet, be sure to. If you have and are considering her program, don't wait, it's lifechanging. I wish I would have found her sooner.

And I'm grateful for the work she's doing to help widowed moms like myself, navigate the many challenges we face." So, MT Girl, I'm sure that I know you, I just don't know who wrote that. But thank you so much for that review. And then another one comes from a listener that calls themselves Learnings All The Time, Learnings LL The Time, Learnings 2 The Time, I'm not sure. And the title is, you don't know what you don't know.

And she wrote, "Krista's podcast has been so helpful after my husband's death. She provides references that everyone can relate to during this time. She provides information needed to process grief in a loving and caring way. And her podcast led me to the Mom Goes On program and I'm so glad I invested in myself to keep living life the best way I can. You will not regret listening and taking time to care for yourself." So, thank you so much for that review.

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I really do appreciate it when you all leave reviews, it does matter. I actually just invited someone to come on my podcast and I won't mention who it is but I'm very excited. That'll happen probably not until August but even when I want to bring to you, people are checking how many ratings and reviews does a podcast have. Do I want to come on this podcast? And so, the more ratings and reviews we get the more widows we reach, and the more clout we have in the world of podcast guests.

So, I'm very excited that this author has agreed to come on the podcast because her book is absolutely fantastic. And I'll save that until later. But really ratings and reviews make a difference. They help me get the podcast in front of more widows and they help me get better guests and make the podcast better for you.

So, thank you for those who have taken time to write a review or rate the podcast. For those of you that haven't, it's super simple and I would love, love, love it if you did. I know you get sick of hearing that on podcasts probably but it really does make a difference which is why I will just keep thanking you and asking you to do it.

Okay, and then two more things before we turn it over to my interview with Jane which is reminder on the advanced certification that I am working on for coaches who are Life Coach School coaches. They are already certified and in good standing. And they want to become really confident coaching grief and coaching posttraumatic growth, which is what I do. We're just not going to settle anymore for coaches not being comfortable coaching grief. We're just not going to do that because grief is part of being human.

Even if you're not a widow, even if you're coaching clients and they didn't come to you for coaching on grief, I guarantee you that every human at some point in their lives goes through a grief experience. We all have grief. And we just need to get comfortable at coaching it. I know that I can help

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with that. So, if that's something you are interested in learning more about then email us at support@coachingwithkrista.com and we will get you on the interest list and make sure that you don't miss a thing when that certification is announced and ready to rock.

And then another little reminder, I don't exactly have a date yet but a price increase is coming for Mom Goes On. So, if you've been on the fence, sometimes what happens too I've noticed is that we say, "Well, I'm too busy during the summer." I don't believe that at all. This is actually the best time to get started for most of us, even though the kids might be home because the holiday drama has not come to our brains yet. We are not scurrying around getting the kids back to school and doing all the things in the fall.

I think summer is a brilliant time to get going and also it's a brilliant time because often the holidays are the hardest emotionally for us. And so, to have this done so that you are ready for the holidays makes the summer, I think an amazing time to start. So, if you have been thinking about it now would be a really good time to apply. Go to coachingwithkrista.com and click on Work With Me. And that's where you can fill out the application and we'll see if it's a good fit. And you can get in not only before the holidays start but also before the price goes up.

Alright, let's get into my interview with Jane.

Krista: Alright, so welcome, Jane, I'm excited you're here.

Jane: Me too.

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Krista: It feels like forever since you graduated the program and also simultaneously yesterday.

Jane: I know, I feel the same. I miss you guys.

Krista: We miss you too. For people who are listening and are not in the program, they don't know this. But inside of our program we use a Slack channel for our online community. And I always encourage people who once they've graduated to keep coming in and posting victories. And so, it's been really nice to see some of your victories lately.

Jane: Thank you. And I have another one, I was just, when I was waiting for you, I have another one ready to post from last week.

Krista: Yeah, okay. Well, maybe you can tell us about it in the interview today, well, we'll see. We'll see if it unfolds, okay. So, okay, I want to just give you the opportunity to introduce yourself, tell us a little about who you are, how you became a widow, all of that sort of stuff.

Jane: Sure. So, my name is Jane. And I am 65 years old now. I was 22 when I met my husband and I was 23 when we got married. So, we were together and then he died almost five years ago. I was 60 years old when he died. So, we were together for almost 38 years. And we have two grown sons. And we were just starting – we had just reached that point in our lives where we were starting to look forward to having some more time together, a little more free time. He wasn't really looking at retiring. I mean that wasn't really part of – he loved working.

But we were definitely able to take more time off and we were looking forward to doing some traveling and stuff. And then just one night while we were asleep he died without any warning or expectation. It was very out of the blue and I was just absolutely devastated. It was really, really, really, he

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was my best friend for sure. So, it was really very rough on me when that happened.

Krista: Yeah. It's such a challenging – I mean there's like different intersections that I think make it more challenging. So not to say it's any less challenging if you weren't with them for 38 years because it still has its challenges. But being with someone so long, having that convergence of the empty nester thing where you're already kind of trying to figure out who you are when you've probably identified for so long as a mom. And then this vision of what life is going to be like when it's just going to be the two of you. And then having that kind of ripped away.

Jane: Yeah. And having – I don't know what's more difficult, I mean having been in this group with all these other moms, you've seen all the various ways that these women have lost their husbands and some of them through long illnesses, and some of them, just almost every imaginable way. And I don't know what's more difficult. But I can say as you know that losing someone, you go to bed one night and you've had a completely normal day and then the next day your life has just completely blown up. It's very surreal, very disorienting, very hard to get used to that.

Krista: Yeah. So, what were those early days like for you?

Jane: They were really terrible. I mean I was able to function and I mean fortunately and unfortunately our younger son was home visiting us at the time. So, he was with me when this all happened. I was very sorry that he had to go through the whole drama of the paramedics there and just all of that. But I'm really thankful that I wasn't alone. And we, you know, my husband's family, especially which is where we were living at the time, they're all local. We all really rallied and they really helped me in those early days put the service together and just get all of that stuff done.

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And then my kids, we were living on the East Coast and they're on the West Coast. And they kind of thank God, my kids are amazing, they worked it out where they could kind of spell each other and be with me for the most of those first few months. And so, we kind of made a plan. Right away I decided that within those first couple of months I decided I was going to sell our home there in New Hampshire and then move out to the West Coast to be close to them.

Krista: Was that decision hard for you to make?

Jane: I mean my husband and I had been spending more and more time out there. We also have a few, you know, we have some investment property out here with some friends. And so, we had been taking more and more time away from the East Coast so that we could be with our kids. And so, we was a little bit heading in that direction already. And we were also thinking of downsizing because we have a large home and it was just the two of us. And we wanted to make our lifestyle a little more simple.

But his father was still living and we were not making any big changes about until he passed away, which he did last year. He outlived his son, so we had sort of just, you know, we were kind of in a holding pattern. So, it wasn't super hard to make that decision. I mean I did worry a little bit about, I had heard that in the first year, don't make any major decisions. And that was a pretty major decision. But it just seemed like the right thing to do and I didn't really overthink it. I just decided, that's what I'm going to do. If it turns out it's the wrong decision and I really hate it I can always make a new one.

Krista: Yeah, you can always move back. Yeah.

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Jane: Yeah. So, I didn't worry about it overly much. And I'm still getting used to the West Coast here. And I do go back and forth a bit. But I'm happy that I'm here. I mean I feel like I'm getting grounded here now.

Krista: Yeah. So, knowing what you know now, if you could go back and give yourself some advice, share your own wisdom with yourself back in those maybe earlier more difficult days of grief, what kind of wisdom would you offer yourself?

Jane: I've thought a lot about that. Yeah, I knew you were going to ask me that question and I've thought a lot about it. And I think that I had never been through. I had experienced some losses. My father died about 12 years ago and I lost a childhood friend when I was actually a little girl. So, I had been through some stuff before. But this was for sure the biggest lost that I was having to experience. And so, I was pretty – I was kind of a novice in how to navigate it. And I don't think in hindsight, I know that our culture in particular does not really do grief very well.

People seem to be very uncomfortable with it. They don't want to talk about it. They want you just to go back to being, you know, they just want everything to go back the way that it was before which as you know will never happen to us. So, I would say, I would tell myself that my own unique experience of grief is perfectly fine, that I can take as long as I need, as long as I want, it's my own timeline. It's not a linear thing.

There's going to be forward progress and then you're going to slide backwards for a while and you're going to move ahead again and then you're going to feel terrible again. It's just, that's going to be the way of it. And I would also tell myself that it's okay that other people don't really get it, that that does not mean, that has a lot more to do with them than it does with you. And that you just need to have your own certainty that what

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you're doing is fine. And you don't need anyone else's agreement or understanding. Even though that adds to your loneliness for sure.

Krista: Yeah. But there's so much gold in what you just said. If we can let other people have their opinions, even when they're different from ours about the choices that we're making, or what grief is or isn't like. We would save ourselves so much suffering.

Jane: How we should be feeling. I can't tell you how many friends were just so anxious to have me be happy again.

Krista: How did you know, how was that showing up?

Jane: They would say that to me.

Krista: They were just telling you, "Be happy again?"

Jane: They were just telling me. And I had someone, I had a very good friend tell me, oh, gosh, maybe six or seven months in, "Alan would want me to be happy again." That really, that actually really angered me. And I just let her know, "Well, I think he would still be pretty upset. I mean I would be upset if he were not still upset if this had happened to him."

Krista: It's just to your point earlier about we're not very good at grief in this culture. We're also just not very good at feelings. And if we don't have the capacity to be okay when our friends are not okay then we start trying to fix them. We start trying to make them feel better. And I think we do it with best of intentions because we just genuinely don't understand that where they are is okay. It is not a problem to feel sad, or lonely, or grief, but we just don't have the capacity or the practice of being with people in that.

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Jane: No. And that was very unsettling for me. But I'm okay with it now because I really understand. And I do have a couple of my best friends who were just fantastic. They were very comfortable just sitting with me and not trying to fix it.

Krista: Totally unrelated but yet also related. I was watching on the news about the Uvalde, Texas school shooting, and the people who were taking service dogs down. And one of the women interviewed said, "We don't really say much." Did you hear that interview? Yeah, she's like, "We don't really say much."

Jane: Well, I actually, I listen to a lot of podcasts and I heard a Fresh Air podcast with a woman who – maybe it was This American Life. I can't remember now but it's a woman who is – it's a couple that lost a child in the Sandy Hook shootings. And this is what they do now, this is their mission, is they go out, they go in all of these mass shootings, they show up and they just offer themselves to sit with these people in their grief.

Krista: Yeah. And none of them, what I took from that was just so refreshing to me, that they just get it. Their job isn't to change or cheer up, your loved one would want you to be happy. None of that minimizing stuff but just to be with. Just to be with. Yeah, I saw another one from a couple of women who were students in Columbine that also do the same thing. And they said, "We really remember the people who came for us and so that's what we do too." And they were just there holding space for people which is so different than, Alan would want you to be happy.

Jane: I know.

Krista: Yeah. So, tell me about, where were you when you found me? How did you find Mom Goes On and all of that?

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Jane: Okay. Well, so I was maybe about four years out and one of Alan's cousins who was very sweet was telling me, her friend had lost her husband a couple of years ago. And she had discovered this whole life coaching program. And so, she had created – she became a life coach and she's doing actually what you're doing.

Krista: I love it.

Jane: She's coaching other widows. So, I got her name, I went to her website. I kind of was like, "I don't know." I found out through her website who her mentor was. And I found some of her podcasts. And I started listening to those. And I liked them okay but I didn't totally resonate with this woman. She was a little airy fairy for me. But now that I knew about this whole world I just did a search and I found you and I started listening.

Krista: Oh, fascinating.

Jane: Yeah, I started listening to your podcast. And your podcast I absolutely loved. And so, I started at the beginning and I was just listening. This was during the pandemic even still. So, I was out in my neighborhood walking all the time. And sometimes I would actually take notes. When I started listening to a few of yours I was like, "I need to take some notes on this because she's giving us a lot of stuff to do." A big part of your program is the now feelings, feeling your feelings.

And I've actually really always been pretty good at that. I've been a songwriter since I was about 16 years old. So, I've had a lot of practice being pretty raw, and examining my feelings through song, and writing, and performing, singing for others about this. So that was something where I was like, "Okay, well, I think I'm pretty good at that already. That's good." But the one thing that I was really struggling with was anxiety. My husband, we were each other's confidants and our sounding boards.

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And to lose that suddenly and having to make all the decisions alone about things and about stuff that I didn't even know about, that was very anxiety inducing for me. Whereas before I'd always felt so safe. I had never really particularly struggled with anxiety. So, when I listened to, there were two episodes that really grabbed me. One of them was, I'll just stay on topic, it was the, when we don't know the how before doing. And the how is only going to be revealed to us through action. And then you went over the four C's.

Krista: Imperfect action until, maybe.

Jane: Imperfect action until, and then the four C's was the one that really grabbed me, the commit, courage, capability and then you develop the confidence. I had been sort of stalled because I didn't have the confidence to go into these new uncharted waters. So, when I listened to that one I was like, "Oh, wow, this is exactly what I need to hear." But I still didn't call you. And the other one that really grabbed me was, for those who love us. That's the one where I was like, "Wow, she really gets it. She really understands."

I had actually written a song about seven or eight months in and it's called No One Knows Me Anymore. And it was just on that subject of I am forever changed, I'm not the same person and I never will be. And no one gets that. They don't really know me anymore. And when I heard that episode I just was like, "Wow. She's a stranger and she knows me."

Krista: And she knows me and I've gotten a lot of feedback on that episode and I genuinely just hoped people will – not only I wanted the listeners to feel understood. But I wanted to give them a way to give other people a resource that would help their loved ones understand a little bit more about what you really can't understand until you go through it. And even when

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you go through it you don't exactly understand what it's like for another person even then. But I'm glad that resonated with you.

Jane: Totally. And I did send it to a few friends and asked them to listen to it. But that's when I called you. That's when I reached out to you. And I was like, "Okay, tell me more about this program."

Krista: Yeah, I love it. Okay, so then what were kind of some of your big takeaways from doing the program and what did you get out of it?

Jane: So that one that I said, the steps to learn how to get into action on things that you don't really know that much about. That was really valuable for me. The gap versus gain was very, very valuable because when you get thrown into this you have so much of your attention on all that you've lost. And it just honestly feels like – I mean you say this a lot, that you don't want anyone to settle for the idea that your best days are behind you now. And I'm honestly not, I can't say, Krista, that I'm 100% yay, but I'm getting there.

And my future is not ever going to be the same but it doesn't mean that it doesn't have to be something that I can't really love. So many months ago, I started keeping, on your suggestion, I have a little journal, in fact I was just writing in it while I was waiting for you. The three wins every day and then what are three that I want to experience tomorrow. And then I started adding to that. Every week I sit down and I kind of plan my next week ahead. And so, I started incorporating in the same book, I write down five achievements.

I just look back over what were five things that I achieved this week. And I make myself put down five even if it's a tiny, little, teeny, tiny, little achievement. And then I set five new goals for the coming week. And then every once in a while in that same book I write a letter to my husband. And I just do this pretty much every day. I miss a day here and there. And then

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it's great to look back through that once in a while and kind of read through. You kind of go like, "Wow, yay me."

Krista: Yeah. For those who aren't familiar, and we'll link to these episodes that you're mentioning in the show notes so people can find them easily. But we do have a brain that is focused for survival purposes on really bringing to our attention what is negative, what is scary. And so, if we aren't purposefully trying to find what we want to see, the gain, our brain will focus on the gap. And so, what Jane's talking about is we did a monthly challenge where everyday people who wanted to participate focused on the gain.

So, three things, what are three gains that I saw in my life today and what are three anticipated gains, victories that could potentially happen to me tomorrow. Not because it's all about ignoring anything that's bad or scary. But because we have a brain that's preprogrammed to focus on the bad and scary things. And if we want it to focus on the stuff that we actually want to see more of, we've got to train it to do that, so yeah. I'm glad that you took that exercise to heart and kept going.

Jane: And my husband was really honestly, he was kind of naturally that way. He worded it a little bit differently. He was someone who really liked to recognize all the rightness's in others rather than focusing on their imperfections. And he was a great dad. And that was really kind of – parenting is sort of this balance between bringing out the best in your children. But you also have to correct them at times. But he was really good at that. So that was very, very helpful for me that gap versus the gain.

And then just the soft coaching model is the other tool that is so, so, so, so helpful because – I don't know if you want to take a minute to explain it. But just getting that perspective of the things that happen to you in life like the death of your husband for example, is not something you can change. You

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can't go back in time as much as you want to, and manufacture any other circumstance about that. So now you have that circumstance and so now going forward you have to decide how you want to think about that and how you want to feel about that.

And then what is that feeling, what actions is that feeling going to drive? And what's the result that you're going to get? And sometimes I do want to feel sad about it and I let myself feel sad and just roll with it.

Krista: How does using that tool help you?

Jane: Well, it gets me out of the mindset that anyone else is responsible for how I'm doing and how I'm thinking and feeling. Because when I'm thinking that my thoughts are ruled by this other thing over here that's already happened or that someone is saying, or that someone is doing, I can't do anything about that. That's not anything that I can change. And that just does not feel good to be in a situation where you're now susceptible to not steering your own ship. So, it just kind of gives you the tools to really put yourself back in the driver's seat.

And if you're really struggling with something it allows you the opportunity to get it all out on paper and kind of step back from it a little bit and figure it out. You can work these models backwards too so that you start with this is the result that I want.

Krista: Sometimes in the early days when I'm teaching people that tool it feels a bit to me, I joke about it, but it's just how it feels to me, it's Karate Kid the movie. Where Daniel's son is just learning a lot of wax on wax off. But he doesn't really understand how it all connects. And I'm always telling people, "Just stay with me, trust me." It does seem weird and foreign when we're learning it but at some point a light is going to go on for you.

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And if you actually practice this tool, by the end of six months then you're going to know and you're going to understand it. And you're going to be able to help yourself when I'm not around anymore. And using it, we're not creating a dependency on the coach. We're actually empowering the client and that's such a better long term solution. So, I love hearing that you love the tool.

Jane: I love it. I love it. And it also has helped me better confront some issues with other people. Because relationships are tricky and people, I do and say things all the time that I regret. People do that all the time and it's kind of like it gives you the ability to like, "Well, you know what, I don't really like that person handling me this way. So, I'm either going to have to be willing to experience it or not have this relationship anymore or do something about it."

And so, it's sort of gotten up my, and then it gives me the time and space if I decide that I want to do something about it. Then I can really come up with a plan and rather than just reacting out of anger, or upset, or whatever, I'm like, "Okay, here's how I want to go about it." And then it ends up being so much more effective.

Krista: I love it. Yeah, it seems like a lot of the coaching that we did with you or that a lot of your coaching requests to me were relationship oriented.

Jane: Yes. And that's the other thing about this, everything that we've learned in your program, it's of course very applicable to what we're going through as widows and the grief experience in losing our husbands and losing our person. And all that stuff that we now have to do everything ourselves, all the things. But it's so applicable to anything in life. It's not confined to just that subject, anything that you're having trouble with.

Krista: Did that surprise you?

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Jane: Yeah. It wasn't something I expected. I mean I didn't really know what, I mean, well, I mean I'd listened to enough podcasts by the time I came in where I had an idea of what you were going to be teaching us. But, no, I was pretty tunnel vision on the grief experience.

Krista: What did you hope to get out of the program? When you say you were tunneled in on the grief experience, what were you hoping would shift for you? And how did that compare to what actually shifted?

Jane: I was hoping that I could deal with my anxiety better, which I can. I mean I still don't have everything figured out for sure.

Krista: Me either. If you do figure it all out, please let me know.

Jane: Well, you know what? I don't think I ever will. I think life is an unfolding experience of new things to figure out. So that's the game of life. So, because of that, I'm enjoying life more. I'm able to get through the uncomfortableness of it a little easier. And then I think the other thing that I wanted to get out of it was just to not feel so sad all the time. And so how this program helped me in that regard, well, a couple of ways. Just being able to getting a little bit better at creating my own experiences and emotions through the self-coaching model.

So more causatively choosing how I wanted to feel about something. And then practicing that, it actually takes some practice. And then just getting more comfortable with, okay, I feel sad. Great, let's bring it on. I'm going to really feel sad.

Krista: Yeah. Maybe it's not as much of a problem as my mind is wanting to make it.

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Jane: Exactly. Then the other total bonus which I never even thought about was just meeting all these other women. I hadn't done anything like this. I considered joining a grief group early on. And their schedule didn't match mine. And I had pretty much been doing this whole thing solo. So, it was so nice to have this connection with all these other women who are going through everything that I'm going through. That really was just so comforting.

And we've actually, my little new member group, there's about five of us that regularly, about every four to six weeks we have our own little Zoom.

Krista: I love it.

Jane: And just yack.

Krista: I love it. I love it. And that's one of the things that I found too so frustrating for me is just it just felt so isolating. I just couldn't find people who had any similar life experience. And then when you do find it, you're like, "I'm not alone. It's not just me." And all those problems that you think are uniquely yours or flaws that are inherent in you, you see them in other people and it's just so freeing and refreshing.

Jane: It really is, yeah. I mean I would say that most of the other women in the program are younger than me. And sadly, they've lost their husbands earlier in their lives than I did. But I was still, I was only 60 which is not that old. I had no other friends or even family members that had lost their spouses, so I was it.

Krista: Yeah. And that community makes a big difference. I also think it makes a big difference in terms of coaching. So, when I coached so long just one-on-one, it just seemed like I was having so many of the same conversations over, and over, and over. And I can tell someone that it's not

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just them. And I can tell them this is a common experience in grief. I don't think they believe me until they see someone else on a coaching call make a request to get coached on something that they're struggling with and they see themselves in that person.

And then there's just something about that that is so much more convincing than your coach just telling you, "This is just part of grief." You go, "Oh, no, actually I don't even need coaching anymore because that conversation I just witnessed was everything that I needed to hear. And I feel like I got the help that I needed and also I feel so validated because I see that I wasn't alone."

Jane: Right. And there's another piece to that too, to the group coaching for me anyway. It really raised my feeling of empathy and my sense of responsibility for the wellbeing of others. Do you know what I mean? I mean it's a little bit like...

Krista: And it sounds like in a useful way, not in a burdensome way.

Jane: Right. Part of my reaction was like, oh wow, I mean my experience was actually, I should – I don't know. I don't even know how to say this exactly without sounding kind of like a jerk. But I think I just saw that there are other women who are going through harder things than I'm going through. They have their circumstances of the loss of their person are very tragic.

Krista: It gave you some perspective it sounds like.

Jane: It gave me some perspective and some, a little bit like, pull yourself up by your bootstraps. Stop feeling so sorry for yourself.

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Krista: Yeah. And there can be value in that as long as we don't then turn that into a weapon against ourselves or as long as we don't use that as a way to say, "Hey, your pain isn't valid because their circumstances were somehow worse."

Jane: No, I totally agree with you on that. But for me it was valuable to go like, "Okay, get your big girl pants on, girl."

Krista: I used to say that all the time too, "Put your big girl panties on, Krista." Yeah.

Jane: I mean look at what all these women are having to go through. You can do it. So, it was helpful for me. It raised my necessity level to get it together.

Krista: Yeah. What was it actually like being coached compared to maybe what you expected it would be like?

Jane: I loved it. I mean okay, so it was a lot of things. Sometimes it was really fun. Sometimes it was mildly embarrassing. It was uncomfortable sometimes. It made me feel vulnerable. But I'll tell you, I really never ever felt judged, or the space is very safe. I mean you can literally say absolutely anything that you want in that format and with those people. And so, it was really good. It was really – I mean sometimes I felt if I had just been coached, I didn't want to be greedy about the coaching. Anyway, I knew that you had some judgment on that too.

Krista: You know that I'm always saying, "There's no such thing as being greedy. There's no such thing as being coached too much."

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Jane: Yeah. So, I signed up for coaching often, even if I didn't even have a particular, well, what am I going to get coached about now? I was like, I don't know, I'll figure it out. I'll come up with something.

Krista: Yeah, you'll figure it out. And that, and honestly I think – I mean I don't know what it was like in your world as you were in the program. I'm not in your living room watching you complete worksheets and consume the content. But my impression was that you did the program. You showed up for yourself. You were on most every call, if you weren't getting coached, you were watching, and participating, and figuring out how the coaching was relevant to you. And you were in it.

And it's always so exciting to me to see somebody just really take their own future so seriously and show up for themselves in that way. Not because it's easy to do that, it's hard like you said. Sometimes you really do have to be willing to feel vulnerable and maybe be embarrassed. Because people are watching you get coached and our primitive brain associates that with death. That's like misery. But when you do it, that's when you're able to shift things for yourself.

Jane: Exactly.

Krista: Yeah. So, I hope you applaud yourself for that. And I want you to know I so appreciate that because it's such a great example that it sets for others, not only does it get you what you want but it's modeling exactly how to show up in the program so that the other people can change too.

Jane: Thank you. Yeah. I think I only missed a couple of coaching calls and it was strictly because of a scheduling conflict. And so, I always watched them later in the day or the next day. I mean and then I – I know that you always say, "Don't worry, you're never behind." But I really wanted to stay on the lesson. And I did sign up, if you remember, after you and I initially

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talked, I didn't sign up right away because I felt, it was at the beginning of a summer.

And I was like, "This is going to be a lot of work." And I was just about to head back to New England and I was going to be with the band. And I just kind of wanted to take the summer off from – I kind of wanted to unplug from all my misery. So, I was like, "This is probably not a good time to dive in." And when I got back in the fall is when I did that.

Krista: Yeah. So, it sounds like that was a good choice for you.

Jane: Yeah, I really picked a time, okay, I'm ready to really dive in. I'm going to really devote my energy to taking full advantage of this.

Krista: Yeah, that's how it's done. That's how it's done. And I do say, "You're never behind", because that's just a complete garbage thought. It doesn't help any of us if we believe we're behind because then we just feel stressed. And then when we feel stressed we disengage or we beat ourselves up. And it's just not a productive way of thinking about anything. But the material will still always be there for you. And I hope too that what will happen is that you continue to come back to it.

Jane: I have.

Krista: Already?

Jane: Yeah.

Krista: I love it.

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Jane: Yeah. You sent us your new self-coaching workbook. And I right away got it printed and bound. It's in a little – because I love little organized little workbooks and stuff.

Krista: Me too, yeah.

Jane: So, I have, I don't know if you can see this. So, do you see this little notebook?

Krista: I see it. It's like a composition notebook?

Jane: Yeah. It says MGO self-coaching work. Started 16 May 22.

Krista: Love it. Love it.

Jane: I'm filling it up.

Krista: Love it. If you learn the tools, not only can you change whatever you came to change, your anxiety, whatever is going on with your grief. But then you can kind of build out this proactive way of managing your mind, managing your emotions, addressing stuff proactively so it doesn't become a mountain. So, I'm so glad to hear that, yeah.

Jane: Yeah. And it's also helping me take on some new ventures and get involved in taking some steps forward in some of these financial areas that I feel like I need to get some new stuff going.

Krista: One of my favorite victories, would you feel comfortable sharing a victory about your modeling?

Jane: Sure.

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Krista: I love it.

Jane: Krista, honestly, I have no idea if anything will come of this. It's not like I aspire to this at all. I don't have any aspirations to be a model. But I'm out here in LA which is such a youth obsessed culture, let me tell you. And such a hip youth obsessed culture, but I have a few friends that have production companies, meaning they do print and TV commercial work. And they had all told me when I moved out here, they're like, "Jane, you should", for those of you who can't see me, I have this long silver hair.

Krista: Beautiful.

Jane: I'm like an ex hippy so it's all natural. And they said, "There's really a niche for your age group." And I was like, "Oh God, pooh, pooh. Yeah, like right." But it was sort of in the back of my mind, well, I don't know if I'm – I am a performer, so I'm comfortable in front of a camera and blah, blah, blah. I have started paying attention and I don't watch television but I do get AARP. And I started noticing that, well, there really are like some older silver haired gals doing all these commercials and blah.

Anyway, so I decided to just do it. So, I just got the headshots done and they're cute, they came out great.

Krista: You'll have to post them, I want to see them.

Jane: Okay, I'll send you some.

Krista: I don't know how comfortable you would have been doing this before. But I just love the idea of leaning into who we are and showing up in the world as who we are without – in a very grounded authentic way, which it's exactly what you're doing, right?

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Jane: Yeah, totally. And I had to hire someone to do my make-up and hair. I know the girl now, I told her, I said, “Don’t make me look younger. My wrinkles and all are going to go onto these headshots.”

Krista: Yeah. Let’s redefine what beautiful is and not buy into this culture of younger is better.

Jane: Totally. Because newsflash, we’re all going to get old.

Krista: We’re all aging, hey. But isn’t it fascinating, this is a slight sidebar but I’m realizing more, and more, and more that so much of what I feel like we’re up against and what I am hoping to help people with is really intentionally deciding how we want to show up in the world when the world is a place that doesn’t understand grief, that believes younger is better and thinner is better, and being partnered is better and all of these things that we’ve just been bought and sold and never questioned.

We’re at a perfect time now when we go through an experience like losing a spouse to really go, “Wait a minute, wait, is this is what I believe is true? Is this what I want to keep buying into? Or is there another way that I want to live going forward? And what is that for each unique person?” And just questioning all of it.

Jane: Exactly, yeah. No, I’m 100% onboard with you on that. And in fact, I don’t know if you had a chance to see this today. One of the other moms posted an article about being single.

Krista: I did, I saw it. And you know what makes me so happy about that? We will not name that mom but she knows who she is. What’s so powerful is that she posted it. The article by itself is amazing. But what was more amazing, it was that she posted it because it wasn’t that long ago that her brain, I am convinced of this, the filtering system in our brain only finds

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what it looks for. And her brain was so convinced that you have to have a partner to be happy, that I don't even think her brain would have found that article, let alone brought it to the group and posted it. And so yeah, I haven't read it yet.

Jane: It's very good and I read it and responded to her right away.

Krista: I love it.

Jane: Because I'm almost five years into now and I have not, you know, I'm not saying that I won't change my mind or if something organic were to happen, I wouldn't rule it out. But I am not going, I'm not looking for another partner.

Krista: No, don't need to.

Jane: I don't think I really want to go down that road. I've got a lot going on and I have a lot of good stuff happening. And I have lots of time to devote to those things that I love doing. And I'm going to look for happiness there first.

Krista: Yeah. And to me that's the most empowering position to be in. It's not that having another relationship is good, or bad, or right, or wrong. It's that it's this idea that we have to have one, that we can't be happy without one. And then so if we can back up and go, "Wait a minute, no, my happiness comes from me no matter where I am, no matter where I live, no matter whether I'm partnered or not partnered, or what job I'm in. But I am the creator of the quality of my life experience." Then so many doors open and then we have all these choices in front of us that we can make.

And we do it from this place that says, I can be okay no matter what. Now what do I authentically desire? Which is so different than what our culture

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sells us which is you better get partnered and if you don't do it by middle age there's something wrong with you.

Jane: Right. And I also didn't want to go down that road of well, I can't be happy unless I have a partner. Having a partner is only what's going to make me fully happy. And I just was like, I'm not going to look for someone, I mean I've got to fill that need myself. I can't look for someone else to do that for me. That would be a really huge mistake.

Krista: Agreed, 100%. Well, was there anything else you wanted to share with listeners, anything you'd hoped we'd cover?

Jane: Gosh, we talked about so much. I think maybe just the last little thing is – and I think that other widows will find this helpful. One of my goals for myself is learning how to take the sadness, the loss, I mean I will never get to the point where I'll – I mean I will never stop missing my husband ever. And I don't want to.

Krista: The same.

Jane: But letting that sadness about that live very comfortably alongside all the other things in life. It's like finding the – I don't know what you would want to call it, maybe a delicate balance with the loss of your person and the sadness and all of that and the anxiety and everything, right alongside with carrying on and living a sort of ordinary productive good life. That's kind of the goal here for me.

Krista: I love it.

Jane: I feel like just the whole experience, everything that we just talked about in the program really helped me find that sweet spot of balancing all of that.

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Krista: Yeah. And that makes me really happy to hear. Yeah, because I think we're taught this kind of false binary that we're either going to be sad or we're going to be happy. And we aren't taught that actually happiness is in holding all of it. It's in making space for us to be human which of course is going to involve sadness, and loneliness, and anxiety, and all of the human things. And making space for that, the and as opposed to the either or is really what helps.

Jane: Don't you think, Krista that what really makes us happy is the getting there part?

Krista: Yeah.

Jane: It's not the achievement of it all, but it's all of the actions, the victories, the setbacks, the persistence, in reaching that. That's what makes us happy.

Krista: Yeah. And I totally agree with you and that's why it was so helpful for me because I just so distinctly remember. And this was before Hugo died, it was just kind of this midpoint in my life where I really had bought into the happiness is the goal culture. And I could not understand why I wasn't happier than I was. When all of the circumstances of my life pointed toward what society had told me would make me happy. And I really didn't at that point in my life understand the value of the other side, of the not being happy.

I didn't see, I thought the goal was to be happy as much as possible. And so, for me to learn even before grieving that no, the goal isn't to just feel the good stuff. The goal is to have the whole thing because it only works together. It only works together.

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Jane: It does, yeah. And as you've talked about a lot, it's, we really are sold that. It's a bill of goods that we're sold in this culture that it's like that toxic positivity and it's just not. Yuck.

Krista: It's so unreasonable. It's become another way that we weaponize it against ourselves. And you said you would never want to not miss him. I feel exactly the same way. I don't want to not miss him. I want to luxuriate in the idea that it was amazing enough that I miss him. And it's the totality of a love so amazing that I miss it, that makes the whole thing amazing in the first place. So why would I want that to go away? I don't. Do I want it to define or limit me? No. That's the difference. It's making space for it and choosing it consciously and also seeing it as valuable and amazing.

But it doesn't mean that I'm not happy or I don't love my life. It's just that's a part of my life and I love all of it, even the stuff that's not that toxic positivity part.

Jane: Exactly, yeah.

Krista: Well, thank you so much for coming onto the podcast. This is like a full circle moment for me. It always is, to meet people in the beginning and then watch them go through the coaching experience and see how they change and then talking about it afterwards and letting other people benefit is really such a gift for me.

Jane: Cool. Well, thank you for inviting me. It was completely my pleasure.

Krista: If people want to get in touch with you are you open to that? Is there a way they can do that?

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Jane: Yes, definitely. Gosh. I'm not a Facebook person. I mean the band that I'm in has a Facebook page and Instagram. So that's porchpartymamas.com.

Krista: Okay. We can link to that in the show notes too.

Jane: Okay, yeah, porchpartymamas.com. They can send a personal message to me through that.

Krista: Beautiful, okay.

Jane: Yeah, I guess that would be [crosstalk].

Krista: I love it, yeah. And they could probably also potentially listen to some of your music that way too.

Jane: They could, yes.

Krista: That would be fun, yeah.

Jane: Yeah. We have some videos out there. And there's one song in particular that we continue to record. We found a way to record remotely while we were all in isolation. And we put some videos together as well. And I do have one song that I wrote that's up there called Ready to Love. That is about, it started, I was actually writing during the protests over the murder of George Floyd. And I was in a very dark place. And it started as a personal lament that kind of expanded into something a little bit more broader and more hopeful by the time I got to the end of the song.

Krista: Yeah. Well, maybe we'll link directly to that then too. We'll find it on your Facebook page and link directly to that. So, people, so if you're listening to this, you go to the show notes at coachingwithkrista.com under

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the podcast section, that's where the show notes are. Or you can find it in Apple Podcasts too. But we'll make sure to put those links there. Well, thank you again so much. Keep in touch and keep celebrating your victories, keep letting me see them.

Jane: I definitely will. I'll have one to write up today.

Krista: Awesome. I'll look forward to it. Okay, thank you, Jane.

Jane: Bye.

Krista: Alright, bye bye.

Jane: Yes.

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 and click work with me for details and the next steps. I can't wait to meet you.