

Ep #199: When You Feel Stuck



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With Your Host

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[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 199, When You Feel Stuck. Have you ever felt stuck, you want to make progress with something but it just feels impossible, maybe it's a decision you want to make or a goal you want to accomplish and it just isn't happening? We've all been there. And in today's episode I'm going to tell you why this happens and exactly what you can do to get yourself unstuck.

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. If you're new to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, welcome. I haven't said that in a while but I know new listeners are tuning in all the time. I know some of you start from the very beginning and refuse to listen to them out of order. So maybe it just took you a while to get to this episode, I don't know but regardless, welcome. I also wanted to read a couple of listener reviews because I haven't done that in a while and there are a couple I wanted to share with you.

So the first one is from the HDL6891 and the title is 'Thank You'. It says, "Hi, Krista. I'm a former student now a year and half into widowhood. I continue to practice what I learned and I'm so grateful that I joined early on. I look forward to your podcast as much now as I did in the first few months. Thank you for the work you do and for these podcasts." I so wish I knew who that was. I was trying to figure out what those initials are, HDL. But regardless, thank you for the kind review. And I'm glad that our work together helped you and that the podcast is still helping you, that's why I do it, so I love hearing that, thank you.

And then the second one is from Kit's Mom, 2002. And it says, "So helpful." And reads, "Thank you so much for what you're doing. I lost my husband unexpectedly on November 3rd and it rocked my world. He was going to be

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50 six days after he died. I was in shock, lost without him then angry for so long. I'm on episode 20. Since I started listening, my anger has decreased, my thoughts have changed and I'm finally starting to feel some peace for the first time since Tim died. You're saying out loud just what I've been thinking. I'm so grateful to have found your podcast."

So it may take you a while to get to episode 199 but Kit's Mom, I'm really glad that the podcast is helping you. That's exactly why I do it. It's a labor of love but I absolutely love doing it. So thank you for those kind reviews. And if you haven't left a review of the podcast and the podcast is helping you, it would really mean a lot to me if you did because leaving reviews is actually what makes the podcast more discoverable. I don't understand how the algorithms work but that's how they work. So your ratings and your reviews are very much appreciated. And if the podcast has helped you in any way if you would leave a review it would be appreciated.

Okay, let's jump into the topic. I coach a lot on this subject. People bring this to me a lot inside of *Mom Goes On*, that they're feeling stuck around something and I too have felt stuck so many times and have had to get coaching on that subject and have had to coach myself on that subject. So I'm hoping that in talking about it we can just save you a little bit of pain and suffering here. Because this really isn't as difficult of a fix as it seems but I know that when I have felt stuck in the past it hasn't seemed like an easy fix.

It kind of can feel like an impossible task actually. You kind of don't know what to do. You feel maybe frustrated. You might feel powerless. You might feel helpless or hopeless or angry even when you are having that stuck experience. So if this is you, I get it. And I want to talk briefly about why it happens and then what you can do about it without me. Not that I don't want to help you but I want to help you on this podcast too.

So first of all you've heard me talk about thoughts causing feelings and this is no exception. In the moment when we are feeling stuck or when we are

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thinking of our situation as something we are stuck with or stuck in or we're telling ourselves, I am stuck, it will seem like it is factual. It will seem like we are just describing the reality of what is happening in our world. But what's really powerful to know is that the idea of being stuck isn't actually a real thing that exists outside of our mind. And I don't tell you that so you will question your sanity or make yourself feel bad.

I tell you that to empower you. Stuck is something that only exists in our thoughts in our brain inside of us. Stuck is not a fact. It can't be proven in a court of law. It's not a place on a map. It's not a thing that exists that we all universally agree on which means it's an idea in our mind and that's good news. When it's happening to us, when we are experiencing it, it won't feel like it's an idea in our mind. It will feel like it's just the truth but really I'm stuck, it's just a thought, it's a sentence in your mind.

And when you think it and when I think it, it doesn't make you feel good, probably makes you feel frustrated, maybe powerless, helpless, scared. We all feel probably slightly differently when we think it, but thoughts cause feelings and when we're thinking, I'm stuck, we don't feel good. We feel icky, stuck. I would argue that stuck is not an emotion, it's actually just an idea. It's just a thought, it's not a feeling. But you know what I'm talking about. When you're thinking that you're stuck, it's easy to believe that it's a fact but stuck is not a thing. It only exists in our mind.

And we don't have to believe thoughts just because they show up. Many, many thoughts show up that are completely useless to us. And if I'm stuck is one of those thoughts that you're believing and it is in your way, you don't have to believe it just because it shows up. One of the things that we work on in *Mom Goes On* is what's called cognitive diffusion which simply means you are not your thoughts. There's you and there are the cognitions in your mind, they're different.

And once we can separate ourselves from the thoughts we think then we can get leverage over those thoughts. I love what Byron Katie is famous for

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asking which is, can you absolutely know that it's true, I'm stuck? If you've ever thought that, can you absolutely know that it's true? And your first answer might be yes which is why she always asks the question twice. Can you absolutely know that it's true? No, you can't, how could you? You may have evidence for it because brains are great at coming up with evidence for thoughts. That doesn't make it factual, doesn't make it true.

And then it can be useful to imagine what would the same situation be like without that thought, I'm stuck? What would it be like to not believe the thought, I'm stuck? What would open up for you if you could get some space from that thought, if you could pull back from it, if you could zoom out, if you could see it as just a sentence, if you could actually not believe that it was true? How is it possible that you are not stuck? Can you find evidence for the opposite? Because what the brain is looking for is what the brain finds.

So if we continue to think I'm stuck, the filtering system in our brain will continue to show us evidence of how we are stuck. And how we feel determines how we act. So when we're feeling frustrated or powerless or helpless or scared, we don't take productive action. We're not able to problem solve from that space so what do we do? We reinforce this idea that we're stuck. We believe it even more. And then we can't solve our own problems because we don't realize the solution is actually in the mind, that's where the problem started is this idea that we're stuck and it's not actually true.

When I was preparing for this episode I was thinking about times in my life where I have believed that I was stuck and what that created for me when I couldn't see that that was just a thought in my mind. And when I was in my mid 20s I started a couple of fitness centers. And then I had my babies. And when I was probably, let's see, sometimes I feel like I'm in a time warp. I was in my early 30s, I guess. And initially those businesses were really successful, they did great and I was having so much fun. And I loved that I had these businesses where I was helping women.

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And also I was able to have the lifestyle that I wanted. I got to take a lot of time with my kids when I had them. But also I worked a lot too. But there came a point where the businesses weren't doing as well as I wanted them to do. And I began to believe that I was stuck. And I began to believe that I didn't know what to do. And at that time I didn't know that my thoughts caused my feelings. I didn't have a coach. I didn't know anything about the tools that I now teach, I just didn't know.

And I also put all of this pressure on myself to solve these problems. I didn't want to talk about them. I didn't want to open up to people. I put the pressure of the people that I was employing on my own shoulders. I made the success and failure of that business or those businesses mean something about me, that it didn't need to mean. And I remember feeling just so scared that I wasn't going to be able to save the businesses, that I wasn't going to be able to make it work. And I remember feeling embarrassed because I didn't know how to get the businesses back on track.

And I genuinely believed that thought. I didn't see any possibility for how I could really get myself unstuck. And of course the truth was that I wasn't actually stuck. I just didn't realize the power of my mind at that point in time. And I also hadn't learned to be kind to myself. I hadn't learned that you can learn from failure and that sometimes things don't work and then that's okay. But bigger than anything was that I didn't realize that I am stuck was a thought. And so I went about solving it in the best way that I could at the time but in a way that ultimately really didn't get me where I wanted to be.

First of all, I got another job. I went and I got a full-time job so that I could pay my bills. And I tried different things but the main thoughts I had about my business at the time was I don't know what to do and I don't know how to fix this. I am stuck. Those were the kinds of thoughts that were running in my mind all the time. And from that place I felt a lot of fear and I wasn't able to solve problems from fear. Humans don't solve problems from fear. We're

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not very good at it. When we're feeling afraid we just don't even have access to be able to think in creative ways.

And so try as I may, ultimately I ended up selling one of the businesses for a steal because I couldn't figure out how to make it work and the other one I ended up closing. That was a really painful thing for me to go through. In retrospect I'm glad I went through it because there were many things that I learned and I wouldn't change that experience because here I am. And also I always wonder what would have happened if I had had these tools then? What would have happened if I had known that for sure I could have talked to other people and let other people in on my struggle and let them help me.

And for sure I didn't have to make things mean anything about me. I didn't have to make the business mean anything about me as a human. I didn't have to feel embarrassed about where the business was. But if I had just known that I didn't have to believe the thought, I'm stuck, that that was an optional thought, I wonder what solutions my brain could have come up with. So whatever it is that you're going through, what would it be like if you didn't believe that you were stuck?

What if when that thought showed up you just didn't believe it and you instead asked yourself, how could it be true that I'm not stuck, what would it feel like if I actually didn't believe I was stuck? What would it feel like if I believed that I'm not stuck, that I can totally solve this problem or whatever it is, that I'm making great progress? How would that feel in your body? And how would you approach whatever the issue is differently when you've created that opening for yourself? So different.

So just because thoughts show up in our mind doesn't mean we have to believe them. Ask yourself what it would be like to not have that thought, to not believe it. Let the thought show up but see the thought as something different from you because there is you and then there's your thinking and

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they're not the same. And you get to choose which thoughts you believe and which thoughts you don't right now.

If that feels inaccessible for you, if it's really hard for you to not believe that thought when it appears or if you feel so afraid that you can't even think clearly, you feel kind of frozen perhaps, then I want to suggest that you try tapping. I've done a few different episodes on tapping, also called emotional freedom technique. You can learn it on YouTube. You can listen to the podcast episodes that I've done. You can get the Tapping Solution app. But create safety in your nervous system using tapping. And it can be super simple. We don't have to complicate this.

You can literally start tapping on the side of your hand and it can be even though I feel so stuck it's okay for me to love and accept myself, three times. Even though I feel so stuck it's okay for me to love and accept myself. Set it up, state the truth, even though I feel so stuck. And then you follow it with a grounding statement that feels true to you. So if it's okay to love and accept myself doesn't feel true to you then tap with something else right here and right now I'm safe, or this is the truth of how I feel. But we acknowledge the truth and then we ground ourselves.

And then we just tap through the points. I feel so stuck. This stuck feeling, if you have an emotion, name it, all this fear, so powerless. Whatever it is you just have to tap through the points and you state what feels true to you until it shifts. And it will shift if you keep with it long enough. You don't have to believe tapping will work for it to work. You just have to do it and let it be weird if you haven't done it before.

And then when the emotion isn't so intense, when you actually do feel safe and you kind of notice your shoulders drop and it feels like you can breathe again and you can think again. Then you can choose a different thought. Then you can consider the alternative of what if I actually didn't believe I was stuck, what would it be like in this moment to decide that I am not stuck? How would I feel? What would that be like? Can I spend some time

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in that place? Can I imagine my way into that thought feeling combination so that new possibilities show themselves to me?

And then lastly what I want to tell you is please don't criticize yourself for believing that you're stuck. We have wonderfully protective primitive software in a very old part of our brain that associates new things with death, new things with risk. That primitive software, that primitive brain is designed to keep us safe. And personally I believe there is a positive intention behind every behavior. Anything that's going on for us, it's just a part of us trying to keep us safe, whether it makes conscious sense to us or not there's always an unconscious positive intention behind every behavior even if it is inaction.

So if you're inclined to hear what I'm telling you, notice that you're thinking that you're stuck and then judge yourself for thinking that, I just want to offer that you don't have to do that. Stop and consider what could be the positive intention behind me not taking action here or believing that I'm stuck? What could be the positive intention? Is this a part of me trying to keep me safe because it associates something new that I might try with danger?

Or the unknown is so much more unfamiliar and uncomfortable that a part of me would just rather stay with the known even though I don't like that either, at least it's familiar. And then be kind to yourself because if you're judging yourself for the way you're handling the situation or the way that you're thinking about it, it's actually going to create more suffering. And I don't want that for you. And you don't want that for you. So just instead of criticizing yourself consider the positive intention behind not taking action. And then maybe cut yourself a break like oh yeah, this is the part where my primitive brain tries to keep me safe.

This is the part where I haven't done this before so of course a part of me thinks that it's dangerous and scary. And that part of me doesn't want me to get hurt. I get it. That makes total sense to me. I don't have to be mad

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about that. It's not a character flaw. It doesn't mean anything about me. It's not a weakness, all behaviors make sense and all of them have some sort of positive intention behind them. And also I can create calm in my nervous system with tapping. And I can choose which thoughts I want to listen to even if I'm just gently pivoting my brain.

Even if I can't go from I'm stuck to I'm not stuck, I can go from I'm stuck to maybe I'm not as stuck as I thought. Or I'm stuck to I'm becoming unstuck, I'm on my way to getting unstuck. You don't have to go from zero to 10. We can just gradually up our way there.

Okay, that's what I have for you today. If you have been feeling stuck I hear you, you've done nothing wrong, create some calm in your nervous system with tapping. Look for the positive intention behind not taking action and don't believe thoughts just because they show up in your brain. You're not your thoughts. You're so much more powerful than that. You get to decide of those thoughts which ones you want to keep giving your energy to. I love you. Whatever you've got going on, truly tell yourself, you've got this because you do. Alright, take care, 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 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.