

Ep #1: Game On!



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With Your Host

Krista St-Germain

[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode one, Game On.

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 actually look forward to. Here's your host, certified life coach, grief expert, widow, and mom, Krista St-Germain.

Hello out there and welcome to the podcast. I'm your host, Krista St-Germain, and I'm so glad our paths have crossed. I'm recording this podcast on a Sunday afternoon in my home office. My kids are gone and it's just me and my dog, Sadie, in the house. And my goal for this first episode is to tell you what *The Widowed Mom Podcast* is and isn't, a little bit about how I got here, and also one of my favorite stories that I hope will be an inspiration to you and a taste of what's to come on this podcast.

But before we get into that, I want to teach you something that you can use right now. And it's on my mind because even though it's something I teach my *Widowed Mom* life coaching clients all the time and it's something I have coached myself through on numerous occasions and I clearly understand it in principle, it's fresh on my mind because I've been struggling with it. And so I know that if I've been struggling with it, then chances are you have too. And that is, what to do when you think you don't know what to do.

So I've had the intention of creating this podcast for a while now, and yet, when I sat down to prepare, I didn't know what to say. I want you to think for a second about where in your life you're telling yourself that you don't know. Maybe it's something that your husband used to handle that is now left to you and you're telling yourself you don't know how. Maybe you're thinking about a new job or a new career and you're telling yourself you don't know if that's the right decision.

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Maybe it has to do with something financial and you're telling yourself that you don't know how to handle it or you don't know where to go from here. Maybe there's a decision that you need to make and you're telling yourself that you don't know what the best decision is. Maybe you're telling yourself you don't know whether you should still be wearing your wedding ring or not. Or maybe you don't know whether you should be dating again.

A lot of my clients tell me they want to be happy again and they don't know how, or they want to find their purpose and figure out who they are now that their husband has gone, but they have the thought that they don't know. So, where in your life is this happening to you? Where do you notice those three words, "I don't know," showing up in your self-talk?

I pretty much bet that if you're a human, which you are, or you wouldn't be listening, that those three words are showing up somewhere in your life. And when they show up – and this is why they are so tricky – "I don't know," doesn't feel optional. "I don't know," feels like you're telling me that the grass is green, that the sky is blue. It seems like we're making an observation when we think the thought, "I don't know." Which is why it's so difficult to coach ourselves out of it when we're in it, because when we're thinking, "I don't know," we really genuinely believe that we don't.

And until we recognize that, "I don't know," is optional, we're going to stay stuck in, "I don't know." And even as someone who coaches people on this subject and who has done so much work on it myself, I still found myself preparing this podcast thinking and believing and generating evidence and staying stuck because of the thought, "I don't know," and a whole bunch of others; I'm going to do it wrong, there's a right or a wrong way, I don't know where to start, I don't know how to start, I don't know how to say it in a way that you'll hear it.

But it's not true. "I don't know," is optional. Every time we think, "I don't know," it's going to create confusion. It's going to keep us stuck. And, "I

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don't know," is just an optional sentence in our mind. "I don't know," is no less or more true than, "I do know," or, "I'm figuring it out," or, "I'm becoming a person who knows."

So whenever you notice yourself "I don't know," I want you to kind of put a little Post-It note, a little red flag on that thought and bring your attention to it and realize that it's optional. It's just a sentence. It feels believable. Your brain will have lots of evidence. But what if it isn't true? What if there are other ways to think about whatever it is that you're dealing with that won't keep you stuck in confusion, that will lead to productive action?

And choose to manage your mind in such a way that notices "I don't know," as an optional sentence and replaces it with either, "I do know," or, "I'm figuring it out." In fact, I actually never allow my clients to say the phrase "I don't know," or if they say it, I always call them on it. And my coach has always done this for me because "I don't know," is only true if we continue to allow it. So here I am, doing this podcast knowing exactly what to say next, which is certainly better than spinning and staying stuck and not giving you the information that you need, which is the whole point of this podcast.

I want this podcast to be a place that is practical for you. I want it to be what I wish I would have had after my husband died. I want it to be the podcast that, when I realized that more therapy wasn't what I needed to build the next chapter of my life, I want it to be that for you.

I want you to come here and feel hopeful, inspired, and uplifted. But I also don't want to be unrealistic. I don't want this podcast to be kittens and unicorns and fairies and daisies and silver linings and pulling yourself up by your bootstraps and any of that other cliché ick that you hear in so many places. Because having been a widowed mom now for, gosh, almost three years, what we don't need and what I promise I will never give is, are clichés and platitudes.

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We do not need to be told how we should be handling our grief. It's your grief. You get to do with it what you want. There is no right or wrong. But there are so many helpful tools that I have learned as I have studied grief and healing and loss and trauma and educated myself and been a life coaching client and then certified as a life coach.

And now, after having coached so many widowed moms, I have a lot to teach you, and that's what I want this podcast to be about. I also don't want it to be about advice. And that may seem a little strange, but I really don't believe in giving my coaching clients advice because I can't possibly know what is best for your life. And what is best for your life may not be what is best for my life or another of my client's life.

But what I know is that, on some level somewhere, you know the next best step for your life. And so what I can help you do is get the obstacles out of the way. I can help you get out of your own way, unblock yourself so that you can create the future that you want. And I want this podcast to be something that is practical, something that is usable and tangible because understanding theory, understanding things conceptually is nice, but it doesn't really add much value to your life until you figure out how to apply something to your life. So I want this podcast to be practical, to be usable, to be tactical for you.

I'm going to use the term husband and the pronoun him because that's my experience. But I want you to know that you're welcome here no matter what term or what pronouns you use to describe your person. So, whether you were married, engaged, partners, co-parents, opposite sex, same sex, the terminology really isn't relevant. What matters is that you are a human who is grieving the loss of their partner and you're doing your best to regain your footing, to rebuild your life, to move forward, to figure out who you are now and to create that next chapter.

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And I'm going to share my experiences as a mom. I'm going to assume that most of you are also moms, but even if you aren't, whether you have no children, or maybe you have young children, or maybe your children are grown or adopted or fostered, or maybe you have fur-children, it doesn't matter. I want this to be a place where you are welcome and benefit.

So, how did I get here – I imagine you might be wondering. I kind of discovered life coaching by accident really. I wasn't looking for a coach. I wasn't aware of what one did. I live in the Midwest, so unlike the coast, life coaching wasn't really a thing here. So I was simply trying to figure out why I wasn't happier and what to do about it.

And thankfully, somehow, a Google search led me to, at the time, a brand new podcast called The Life Coach School Podcast with Brooke Castillo, and even though I had no interest in becoming a life coach, I became hooked on the podcast and I listened to every episode as it came out each week.

Fast forward a few years and I had survived a divorce and the challenges of single parenting and I had remarried the man of my dreams. Hugo St-Germain, he was dark haired and brilliant, very funny, smart, engineer, kind of sarcastic, quite ornery, and he had what I think is the most beautiful Québécois French accent. He was the man of my dreams, the man that I thought didn't exist.

And I know we often have a tendency to elevate people after they died, but our life together sincerely felt perfect to me and my family adored him, my children adored him, and I just loved what we had together. And we were on the way home from a weekend volunteering at Heather's Camp, which you'll probably hear me talk about in upcoming episodes because it's one of my passions. But it's a summer camp program for kids who are blind or visually impaired.

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And we were driving home. We had driven separately. And my tire went flat; my passenger-side front tire. And I pulled over and I sent him a message and said, “Hey, my tire is flat.” He said, “Don’t worry, I’m right behind you.” And he pulled up behind me. And even though we had AAA and we could have easily made the call and had the tire changed; he didn’t want to use it.

He said, you know, “Baby, it’ll take them forever to get here, let me just change it and then we can go home and we can have a glass of wine and cuddle and talk about the weekend.” And so I agreed and I was standing off on the side of the road texting my daughter to tell her that we were going to be late because of the flat tire.

And without warning, no brakes, I heard the most awful noise and a driver, who I later learned had both meth and alcohol in his system, had crashed into Hugo’s car and trapped him in between his car and mine. And it was less than 24 hours and he was gone.

And if you’re listening to this podcast, you probably have a story that, maybe it’s a little bit different, but I imagine you know the feeling of just losing all of the dreams that you had together with someone. And it was just surreal and it was pretty much a nightmare.

So as soon as I got through the funeral, I saw my former therapist who had been really helpful to me during my divorce. And it was a really good experience for me, so it allowed me to tell the story and process what had happened so I could just get back to the world of functioning and get back to work. And it allowed me to talk through all of what I was remembering from the accident and just really find my footing again.

But what truly helped me change the trajectory of my life, what really helped me create the next chapter of my life, go from surviving to thriving – even though that’s a cliché that I hate – was life coaching. And the coach

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whose podcast that I had been following, she launched a new program. And even though it had nothing to do with grief, I enrolled in her program.

And in that program, I learned how to really manage the rollercoaster of emotions that I was still experiencing and do it in a way that served me. And I learned to manage my mind and figure out how to start dreaming again and figure out how to mourn the loss, but not let it limit what I could create in the future.

And because of that and because of the research that I did, because I've always been a self-help junkie, I read everything I could find about healing and trauma and loss and post-traumatic stress and post traumatic growth and just absorbed all of it, I started to become stronger, to become more resilient and more intentional in the way that I lived and really just, finally, excited about the next chapter instead of dreading it. And knowing, on a deeper level than I had ever known before, that life was short and unpredictable, I decided to change careers.

So I actually first enrolled myself in a marriage and family therapy Master's degree. My therapist and I had discussed it and she told me I would be a great therapist. And having always been the person that people seem to come to, to share their problems with, I thought, maybe that would be a good fit for me.

So I enrolled in that program. I took another undergraduate credit that I needed in abnormal psychology and was waiting, there was about nine months before that program began. But while I was waiting, I kept having life coaching experiences that were blowing my mind. And it took a while. It took a lot of coaching, it took a lot of self-coaching, but finally, I decided that therapy wasn't really where my heart was.

I knew I could be helpful to people in therapy, but because life coaching had really been what helped me change my life, I wanted to help other

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people change their lives and not just listen to them talk about the problems. And that's how therapy was feeling to me. It was feeling empathetic and helpful, but it felt so much more limited than life coaching.

Life coaching felt so much more practical to me, so much more usable, so much more tangible. And so I decided to drop out of the marriage and family therapy program that I had enrolled in. It hadn't actually started yet. So I removed myself before it started and I enrolled in a life coaching certification program.

And I took the program while I was still working in my job, finished my certification, and then mustered up the courage to leave the comfortable corporate job that I'd been doing for almost 10 years. Hugo and I actually worked there together, so it was lovely to be supported by so many people in the work environment.

I think everyone thought I was a little bit crazy because most of them had no idea what life coaching even was. And fast forward to today, and a lot of hard work later I have built a successful life coaching practice helping other widowed moms navigate the pain of losing their husbands and come out stronger on the other side. And it was what felt to me like the natural byproduct of a lifelong interest in self-help, a journey through my own loss, and just a strong desire to help others. And it's by far the most meaningful and important work that I've ever done.

So, the story that I promised to tell you at the beginning of this episode – it's from Sheryl Sandberg's book *Option B: Facing Adversity, Building Resilience, And Finding Joy*, which I'll link to in the show notes. And Sheryl is the COO of Facebook and she's pretty well known for her number one New York Times Bestseller *Lean In*.

But in 2015, Sheryl and her husband Dave were vacationing in Mexico and he collapsed while he was exercising in the fitness center of the hotel and

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he later died. And because I want this podcast to be kid-friendly, I won't use the exact words Sheryl used.

But basically, in her book she wrote, "I was talking to one of these friends about a father-child activity that Dave is not here to do. We came up with a plan to fill in for Dave and I cried to him, but I want Dave. I want option-A. he put his arm around me and said, option A is not available, so let's just kick the you-know-what out of option-B."

And I love this story because, of course, we all mourn for option-A. None of us ask to be here and yet here we are. And we can't go backward and change anything that's already happened, but we can live forward. And it might not seem believable, and to some of you, it might even seem a little off-putting, but I promise that you can be happy again. And in fact, you can use this loss to tune into your values, to find a deeper understanding of who you are, to figure out what's really important to you and to become a more resilient more alive version of you.

And that's what I want for you. So whatever you've been through and wherever you are in your journey, welcome to the podcast. You know, more than most people, that we can't control the cards that we're dealt, but honestly, I hope this podcast will show you that the cards that we're dealt aren't nearly as important as how we choose to play them and that because we can't control them, when we spend our time and energy focusing on what we can't control, we will create less of what we want in life instead of more.

So, I hope you will join me in building the next chapter of life, building something that you love. Let's turn our attention toward how we're going to play the cards that we've been dealt. Let's turn our attention to kicking the you-know-what out of option-B.

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In that spirit, I hope you will join me in saying game on; game on to the podcast, game on to the next chapter of life, game on, beautiful ladies. Let's go do this.

If you like what you're hearing so far and you think others would benefit from *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, it would be amazing if you'd take a couple of minutes to rate and review it. Ratings and especially reviews are vital in helping a podcast become discoverable. I'd love it if you'd give me your honest opinion, and of course, a five-star review would also be lovely.

To give you a little incentive so we can get this podcast started off right, I'll be giving away five \$100 Amazon gift cards over the next few weeks. And for all the details about how to win, you can go to coachingwithkrista.com/podcastlaunch. And of course, click the subscribe button. You'll automatically receive weekly episodes without adding another item to your to-do list. And if you feel called to share it with others you think would benefit, then you will have done your good deed for the week and I will be eternally grateful.

I hope you have an amazing day, and until next time, I love you, you've got this. See you in episode two.

Thank you for listening to this week's episode of *The Widowed Mom Podcast*. If you like what you've heard and want to learn more, head over to coachingwithkrista.com.