

Ep #3: Grieving Alone: How to Grow in Grief



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sandy Linda

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Ever wonder about turning aloneness into empowerment? As someone who navigated grief's solitary path, I know the transformation it brings. Join me on a journey from loss to growth as we uncover five powerful steps to heal and conquer loneliness.

Welcome to *Overcoming Grief*, a show for women experiencing profound grief and looking for support in healing and transforming their lives. If you are ready to heal after loss, create a new self-identity, take responsibility to do the hard things, and get massive results in your life, this show is for you. Now, here's your host, Master Grief and Life Coach, Sandy Linda.

Have you ever turned a period of aloneness in an opportunity for self-improvement? As someone who transitioned from being an extrovert to an introvert, I can confidently say that learning to be alone after significant life changes has been an incredible journey towards enhancing my personal growth.

Though at times challenging, I came out stronger and more self-assured. As I coach many clients, the question arises how to deal with grief alone? Experiencing the loss of a loved one through a death or divorce can lead to overwhelming feelings of grief and loneliness, especially if you shared a close bond with them.

It's common to feel an intense sense of loneliness after a death or a divorce of a loved one, even in the presence of others. The void left by their departure can manifest both as physical absence and an emotional ache, making the journey to healing a tough one. So let me explain the difference between being alone and feeling lonely. It's fascinating how these concepts often get tangled up, but they're quite distinct. Let's unravel it together.

Imagine this, you're in your favorite cozy corner with a good book, a cup of ginger tea, and some soothing music playing in the background. That's being alone, and it can be downright delightful. Being alone is about physical solitude, intentionally carving out time for yourself, your thoughts, and your interests. It's a space where you can recharge, reflect, and do things that light you up.

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Now let's talk about feeling lonely. It's that pang in your heart when you're surrounded by people, yet you still feel a sense of disconnection, you ever felt like that? It's that longing for deeper connection and meaningful interactions. Feeling lonely doesn't necessarily involve physical company. You can be in a crowded room and still experience that emotional ache.

According to research, loneliness can hurt health and mortality rates. In fact, some studies suggest that the effects of loneliness are comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Discovering that research gave me a chance to confront the burden in my heart and have some space to cope with my sorrow.

At the show's beginning, I briefly discuss my transitioning from being an extrovert to becoming more introverted. I used to be very outgoing and worked in the travel industry before transitioning to the meetings and events industry. In this line of work, being social and coming up with creative solutions to challenging problems is a must.

It had variety, which I thrive on, because each day was different and fast pace. I had the opportunity to work in various aspects of the events industry. I had a short experience at Condé Nast to explore the fashion industry, but decided to leave after six months. After that, I moved on to pharmaceutical and financial sectors where I organized successful events that these industries were happy to spend lavishly.

Those are my days of being a social butterfly. However, after the devastating events in my life, the death of my parents and sister, friends dropping out, and job loss, I could not bring myself to be social again. Losing one parent was already difficult, but losing another parent and a sibling made it even harder. Learning to be alone was a challenging journey.

It was lonely for a while, and I fell into negative influences that made it even harder to navigate my grief alone. I was emotionally eating and drinking away my sorrows, leaving me with cloudy judgment of loneliness. At that moment, I decided to sit alone with my grief and recognize the feelings I was experiencing.

Do I need to eat that cold pizza? No. Do I need to drink that bottle of brown liquor? Nope. I started to close my eyes and sat silently for about two hours.

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Thoughts were running around my mind. However, after about 10 minutes of shutting off that false chatter, I experienced a sudden shift from loneliness to being alone. I began to accept that it's okay to grieve alone as long as my solitude is helping me and not causing more pain or emotional madness.

I'm not expecting you to sit alone for two hours. It was just a skill set that I've learned at a Tony Robbins event called the Unleash Your Power. He walked us through this meditation technique, which was odd because I haven't done meditation. I didn't know what it means until I got to that event. But I sat there for 20 minutes honoring myself with loving kindness.

Stay tuned. I'm going to share some tips and strategy shortly. I want to discuss the power and the pitfalls of using social media while coping with grief. I hosted a holiday event workshop where I had the pleasure of meeting Angela, an attendee, who had the emotional vulnerability to share about the loss of her father to sudden illness.

Angela was heartbroken, and she was trying to navigate the waves of grief that crashed over like a storm, which I'm familiar with. In the midst of her sorrow, she turned to social media as a lifeline. She began sharing her thoughts and feelings on her various social platforms. She posted heartfelt tributes to her father, accompanied by old photos, and cherish memories, and something unique happened.

Friends and family, and even acquaintances from distant corners, I mean strangers of her life, rallied around her. The notification kept pouring in. Comments, likes, messages of support. Strangers who had faced similar losses share their stories and offered kind words. It seemed like the virtual world had embraced her in a warm hug of understanding.

But as days turned into weeks, Angela spent more and more time on social media. She was craving that instant gratification that came from likes and comments. It was as if the external validation was filling a void left by her father's absence. Yet deep down, she couldn't shake off the nagging feeling that something was missing.

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One evening as she scrolled through the sea of notification, she paused to look around her room, and she felt the silence in her room. She realized she didn't have a real conversation in days. Can you imagine? She missed the sound of her father's voice, his advice, and the simple comfort of being in his presence. It struck her then.

While social media offer a way to share her pain and connect with others, it couldn't replace her loss deep connection. It couldn't replace the sound of a loved one's laughter. The warmth of the hug, or how a shared look could convey a world of emotions.

With newfound determination, Angela reach out to a close friend who had been trying to get in touch. They met for coffee as they sat across from each other sharing stories about her father and their lives. Angela felt a weight lift off her chest.

At that moment she realized the importance of real human connections. As she continued to grieve, Angela sought out comfort in both the virtual and physical worlds. She posted updates when she felt like it, but she also made an effort to spend time with friends, have face to face conversation, and immerse herself in the present moment.

Through her journey, Angela learned that social media could provide a temporary sense of connection, but couldn't replace the authenticity and the deep human connection. She found healing in sharing her grief, but she also found comfort in the presence of others. In smiles, shared tears, and unwavering support.

So Angela's story reminds us that while social media can be a valuable tool for expression and connection, it's essential to strike a balance. In times of grief, seeking out human contact, genuine conversation, and shared experiences can be a lifeline that brings comfort and healing in ways that a screen never can. This story highlights how using social media to cope with grief by seeking likes and comments can lead to feelings of loneliness. Grief is a journey that all of us at some point of our lives will experience.

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Okay, I gave you some real life examples. Now I want to provide you some tips and strategies to handle grief alone with grace and compassion for yourself. Here are the five ways that you can handle grief alone. Accept that your feelings are valid. There's no right way to feel when you're grieving. So give yourself the grace to experience your emotion, whatever they happen to be.

It's essential to allow yourself the space to express your feelings when experiencing grief. Whether it's yelling, crying, or any other feeling, accepting, and acknowledging it as a natural part of a grieving process is essential. Sit with these emotions and treat them as your closest companion during this difficult time.

Number two, create a supportive routine. Establish a daily routine can provide structure and stability during a difficult time. Plan your days with activities that nourish your physical, emotional, and mental well-being. This could be exercise, meditation, journaling, or engage in hobbies you enjoy. Get spiritually grounded. Okay, here you go.

Engage in loving kindness meditation for 15 minutes daily can make a significant impact. But for others, it's a journey for those who haven't started meditation, and I always request that people do five minutes, but find a quiet space. Take deep breaths and center yourself. Inhale love and positivity for yourself using affirming mantras like I am lovable. I am worthy of happiness.

Extend those feelings to others and situations around you with each exhale, cultivating a sense of connection and compassion. Through the practice of meditation, one can cultivate a strong sense of self, love, and compassion towards others, even amidst challenging circumstances such as heartbreaking losses.

Number three, connect with others. Even though you're navigating grief alone, reaching out to friends, family, or support groups when you're ready is important. Connecting with others who have experienced similar losses can provide a sense of understanding and empathy. Share your thoughts and feelings and allow yourself to receive comfort from those who care about you.

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Number four, engage in meaningful activities. Engage in activities with personal meaning can help you find purpose and connect with positive memories. This could involve volunteering, creating a memorial, or participating in activities that align with your values and interests.

The final one is use your digital interaction wisely and moderately. Be sure that when you went through a recent loss, do not use social media as a lifeline. Please go and try to connect with a human soul that understands, a trusted grief companion and advisor that can listen to your heart ache and your heart break and losses.

So those are the five tips and strategies on how to handle your grief journey. Now, everyone's grief journey is unique. So find the strategies that resonate most with you. It's okay to lean on the support of others and seek professional guidance when needed. Over time with patience and self-care, you can gradually find healing and learn to navigate grief while being alone.

So let's wrap up this episodes to just chat about some impactful ways to tackle loneliness and nurture meaningful connections in your life. First off, let's talk about creating supportive routine. When things get tough, having a daily routine can feed your body and mind and soul. It could be hitting a gym, taking a moment to meditate, jotting down your thoughts in a journal, or simply diving into those hobbies that light you up.

Speaking of nurturing your soul, ever tried loving kindness meditation? It's like soothing balm of your heart. Just find that quiet space to engage in healthy and embracing affirming mantras. Like I'm lovable. I'm worthy of happiness. Don't forget the power of connection. Even if you're sailing through the sea of grief solo, reach out to friends and family, or joining a support groups when you're ready that can make a world of difference.

Then dive into some meaningful activities, finding ways to engage that align with what matters to you can be a game changer. Whether it's volunteering, crafting a memorial, or just doing things that resonate with your values. These can lighten up the days and weaves a sense of purpose back into your life.

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Lastly, be wise and use social media moderately as you start to process your grief in a more compassion and grace of loving yourself. As always, remember, you're not alone in this journey. There are ways to wrap yourself in cocoon of positivity and connection, even when things seem tough. Thank you so much for listening. I hope you enjoy this episode and I look forward to the next one. Bye for now.

To celebrate the launch of the show, I'm going to be giving away three lucky listeners one to one coaching sessions who follow, rate, review the show. Now the one to one coaching spot is complimentary. It's just gathering data. I'm allowing you to take the guesswork out of gathering data about your loss and paying attention to the subtle shifts of how you think and feel about your heartbreaking losses in one session.

If you're craving a more validating experience with grief that sticks even when discomfort sets in then one of my coaching spots has your name on it. It doesn't have to be a five star review. Although I sure hope you love the show. I want your honest feedback so I can create an awesome show that provides tons of value. Visit www.SandyLinda.com/PodcastLaunch to learn more about the contest and how to enter. Be quick. You don't have long. I'll be announcing the winners on this show in an upcoming episode.

Thanks for listening to today's episode of *Overcoming Grief*. If you're ready to move into a new, rewarding life experience, and want more information about how to work with Sandy, visit www.sandy linda.com.