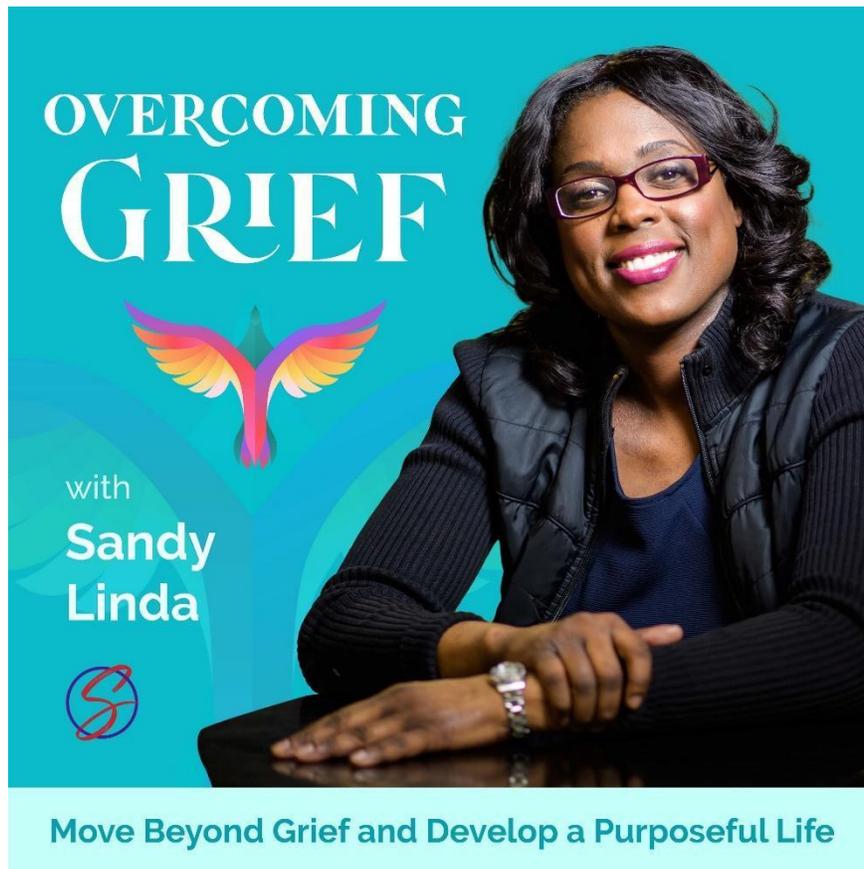


## Ep #19: How Grief Impacts Your Friendships



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Sandy Linda**

## Ep #19: How Grief Impacts Your Friendships

Have you ever felt like grief became a silent barrier causing friendships to fade away? You're not alone. The deep complex emotions that come with loss often leave those around us at a loss for words or actions. They mean well, but the awkward dance of trying to show support can sometimes end up in a friendship fade out.

I've been there, navigating the confusion of friends who weren't sure how to be there for me after the profound losses in my life. It led to a few disappearing acts, the classic ghosting scenario. Let's dive into this uncharted territory together. Join me as we uncover the unspoken challenges of maintaining connections in the face of grief. Are you ready to explore how we can bridge those gaps and foster understanding in our friendships? Let's go.

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.

Hello, amazing listeners across the globe. How are we all doing today? I hope you are finding this show insightful. Have you signed up to receive weekly updates about the podcast shows and exclusive behind the scenes content that I only share through email?

If you join our community, you will receive a free gift, a morning journaling workbook that can help you unlock healing and transformation. So what you will gain from gaming this free workbook is the permission to grieve openly and genuinely, guidance on processing complex emotions, and practical exercise to cultivate positivity.

The tools become a courageous leader of your own life. So ready to begin? Claim your free book now. Your path to healing and personal growth starts here. Simply enter your name and email address, and we'll send your free guide immediately. I will have the information on the show notes.

So today, I did receive an email from a fellow subscriber, and thank you for joining. Today's question from an email subscriber asked, "Sandy, how do I

## Ep #19: How Grief Impacts Your Friendships

navigate friendships during my grief?" I thought this was an opportunity to provide insights that you can turn into actions on fostering those high quality friendships during your grieving process.

On today's show, this episode does dive deep into the often complex and changing dynamics of friendships during grief. I will explore how grief can impact our relationship, how to navigate these changes, and how to find support and understanding within your circles.

So how common is it for grief to impact friendships? It's incredibly common. Again, everyone grieves differently. Some friends may feel comfortable talking about your loss while others may not know how to handle it. This can create distance and misunderstandings.

When faced with grief, those around you can often feel unsure of how to comfort you or what to say. It can be difficult for them to know how to show up and support you through the struggle. So for me, up until my 40s, I was a self-proclaimed extrovert. I've always been outgoing, mixing and socializing, throwing parties, and jet setting to every corner of the globe. Friendships were my jam. Fun, vulnerable, and blissfully drama free. Maybe sometimes. Well, you know. But life has a way of shaking things up.

In 2015, I faced a series of losses that would redefine my connections. It was a surprise, to say the least. As my father passed away, the outpouring of support was heartwarming. Friends, colleagues, and acquaintances rallied around me. Messages, gifts, and a strong sense of connection flooded my life.

Yet, as the months rolled on the buzz faded, and the profound silence of grief settled in. Turns out sustaining support through the long haul wasn't as common as I thought. Have you ever been there? Let's talk about it.

Grief can really mess up our friendships. You may think that some of your friends will support us no matter what, but they end up being dismissive of our pain. Then there are those friends you never thought will be there for us, but they turn out to be our rock and never leave our side. You never know who's going to stick around and who's going to bail. But one thing's for sure, grief messes with your relationships.

## Ep #19: How Grief Impacts Your Friendships

So allow me to provide you some discussion about the weirdness of friendships and how they can shift unexpectedly. So today, I'm going to share some journal entries from my early days of grief, and it's called the grief chronicles. Now, the words I wrote during that time were raw and often filled with anger. I just want to let you know though I'm not as angry now as I was in those early days, I still wanted to share my experience with those experiencing a similar situation where their friendship has been shattered, and they are forced to start a new life.

So journal entry one was written back in 2016. It said the great Facebook exodus. Relationships are turning out to be more complicated than I thought. Why did a former friend say I don't know how to be a friend? Apparently, she forgot the whole being a friend manual. She took the effortless road to excommunicate me from Facebook and blocked me from further contact.

I recall that in a past friendship, she said to me that I should be lucky to be her friend. Well note to self, losing a friend through Facebook blocking is the 21st century equivalent of a dramatic exit. How lucky I was a friend to her when I hit rock bottom? However, she did not know how to be a friend when the flooded tears poured out of my eyes. In the end, she vanished into thin air and gave me a kick in the ass when support was much needed.

Some of it is raw. This is the first entry, but I'm just giving you some experts. Here's another journal entry. Part two, holiday gatherings. I'm hurting. I feel vulnerable. My emotions are all over the place. I was invited to a Christmas gathering in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. I was told that I should not be alone for Christmas. Why not spend it with folks who are sure of my safety? It was a grand gesture as my grief was fresh and new.

I did attend. It turns out that friends at the party weren't mind readers. So I ended up having the emotional roller coasters of highs and lows at that event. Who knew grief didn't come with a neon sign during the holidays?

The last journal entry I wanted to share happened in 2020. Grief is exhausting, resulting in limited emotional capacity on my part. I know this might sound harsh. At the same time, it's sometimes the reality. During the pandemic grief impacted me much more in physical ways that I was desperate for help.

## Ep #19: How Grief Impacts Your Friendships

I was first diagnosed with stage one breast cancer, and I tried to connect with one person I thought was a friend but left to be a one person audience waiting for the host to grace me with her presence on a zoom call. Left me hanging, emails and texts floating in the digital void, left me to dry out in the desert. I'm not going to lie, that stung. Another friend, so I thought, had chosen to look away when I needed them the most. Oh well. Another one bites the dust. Who can I truly depend on in the face of medical challenges?

There you have it. A glimpse into the raw pages of my early grief chronicles. If you're resonating with the madness and sadness that fresh grief can bring, remember, you're not alone. Losing loved ones is heart wrenching enough. When those you counted on for support take a dramatic exit, it adds another layer to the storm.

Lesson learned. Most people don't have a clue what to do with grief. Throughout this adventure, I've accepted that not everyone is cut out to be part of the elite grief squad, and that's okay. As you are grieving, losing a friend feels like a punch in the gut right? Learning to cope with that loss involves facing the grief that comes with it. It's embarrassing to admit, but there's been a grieving process attached to losing many of my friends.

Letting go of people is hard, and here's a secret. It's okay to feel that. Studies even point out that the loss of friendships may also be a time to work on being okay by yourself. You may find that some friendships fade during grief while others become stronger. Don't be afraid to let go of relationships that are no longer serving you.

We live in a world of fixers who swoop in with evaluations and critiques. They mean well, right, but more often than not their fixes feel like a quick exit, leaving us feeling judged and a bit like emotional tumbleweeds. Who's been there? Raise me a hand, raise a hand to me, or send me an email.

So here are some suggestions I want to leave you with when you navigate these challenges and maintain healthy friendships during grief. Number one is focusing on quality over quantity. In today's world, where social media often paints a picture of vast friendship circles, it's easy to feel pressured to have a

## Ep #19: How Grief Impacts Your Friendships

large number of fronts. However, fostering genuine quality friendships is far more rewarding than getting a mere quantity of acquaintances.

Investing in high quality friendships means investing in yourself. It's about making time for people who matter, who support your goals and dreams, and who will be there for you through thick and thin. It's about building connections that go beyond the surface level. The kind of friendships that will be there for the next chapter and the next.

Don't be afraid to be selective about your friends. Your time and energy are precious. So make sure you spend them on people who make you feel good and who inspire you to be your best self. In reality, highlighting quality friendships over quantity is one of the most fulfilling approaches to nurturing connections in our lives.

Once you declutter your social circles and focus on high quality connections, the next step is identifying truly supportive friendship. This involves learning to discern friends who offer genuine empathy and support from those who may struggle to connect with your emotions during times of need.

Here are some key characteristics to look for in friends who can truly offer genuine empathy and support. Compassion and understanding, they offer emotional support and encouragement. Validating your pain and grief, they listen actively and attentively without judgment or interruption. Availability and support, they are flexible and understanding of your changing needs and emotional state. Shared values and interests, they share similar values and beliefs, offering a sense of connection and belonging.

Now, I need you to identify the red flags of unsupportive friendships. While some friends may unintentionally offer unhelpful or even hurtful behavior, it's important to recognize the patterns and strengthen your wellbeing. So here are some signs of unsupportive friendships.

They minimize your loss or dismiss your feelings. They offer unsolicited advice or try to fix your grief. They judge your coping mechanism or criticize your emotional state. They pressure you to move on before you're ready. They gossip about your loss or share your private information without consent.

## Ep #19: How Grief Impacts Your Friendships

Remember, identifying supportive friendships is a journey, not a destination. It's okay to reevaluate your social circle and prioritize your emotional health. By nurturing genuine and supportive connections, you can build a strong support system that helps you navigate the challenges of grief and rediscover joy.

Another crucial tip for navigating friendships after grief is to maintain open communication. This means sharing your feelings and needs honestly with your friends. Let them know how you're coping with your loss and what kind of support you need from them. The benefits of open communications are that it reduces misunderstandings, strengthens connections, and amplifies respectful communications.

Sharing your feelings can prevent your friends from making assumptions and feeling unsure how to best support you. They communicate openly and honestly avoiding criticism or minimizing your grief. Being open with your friends helps build deeper connections and allows them to truly understand your experiences.

Remember, when you're talking to your friends, you've got to give them a chance to speak too. Listen to their thoughts and concerns. It's important to have a place to be open and honest with each other. Doing this will help you maintain strong and supportive friendships, especially when dealing with the tough process of grieving.

So this episode describes my experience of many years ago, and it shifted now, but it was so valid at the time. In the comments, let me know how friendships have been for you, no matter where you are in your grief. So here I want to leave you with so remember, quality over quantity. Having a few close supportive friends is better than many superficial ones. Trust your gut. Pay attention to how you feel around different people. Do they uplift you and make you feel good about yourself? Or do they drain your energy and bring you down?

Focus on mutual exchange. Build friendships with people who are willing to invest in the relationship and offer support in return. Nurture supportive friendships. Once you identify your true friendships, nurture those relationships by investing time and effort in them.

## Ep #19: How Grief Impacts Your Friendships

By focusing on quality and identifying genuinely supportive friendships, you can create a strong support system to help you navigate life's challenges and bring you joy and fulfillment. Thank you so much for listening, and I'll catch you on the next one. Bye.

If you enjoyed today's show and don't want to worry about missing an episode, you can follow the show wherever you listen to your podcasts. If you haven't already, I would really appreciate it if you could share the podcast with others who you think would benefit from it and leave a rating and a review to let me know what you think.

It doesn't have to be a five star rating. Although I sure hope you love the show. I want your honest feedback so I can create an awesome podcast that provides tons of value on the show. Visit [www.sandy linda.com/podcastlaunch](http://www.sandy linda.com/podcastlaunch) for step by step instructions on how to follow rate and review.

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](http://www.sandy linda.com).