

Ep #22: The Hidden Cost of People Pleasing in Grief



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sandy Linda

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Have you ever found yourself playing emotional hide and seek burning your anger deep within, fearing it might erupt and shatter the delicate dance of your relationships? Well, you're not alone. Today we're diving into the shadows where people pleasing and suppressed emotions dance tango. Are you ready to cut through the fog of approval seeking patterns and let the sunshine in?

Join me as we explore the detailed dance between grief, people pleasing, and the transformative power of breaking free. Get ready to experience various emotions together as we gracefully dance through this delicate performance. Let's embark on this journey of self-discovery and growth. Navigating the twists and turns of our inner landscapes. Stay tuned for the adventure is about to unfold.

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, wonderful listeners. How are you all doing today? Have you set your intentions to propel you to achieve your goals? I did an episode on setting your intentions to provide a framework for healing, growth, and finding joy in the journey itself rather than the outcome.

Deciding on an intention is about figuring out who we want to be deep down, what matters most of us, our values, our innermost desires, and our purpose. Then we take action to become this version of ourselves. That includes goals involving concrete actions and outcomes that can be observed and tracked. If you have not listened to the episode, please grab those earbuds and listen. Ensure you are aligning yourself by setting goals with the right intentions of your heart. It was on episode 20. However, we'll leave it on the show notes.

As we kicked off today's episode, let's dive into a topic that's close to my heart, and I'm sure resonates with many of you. So picture this. The self-imposed pressure to please others, a struggle I wrestle with and I also witnessed in the lives of people I've crossed paths with as well as clients I have the privilege of

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working with. It's a journey I've explored in books too, and I'll leave those gems in the show notes. So here's the question for today. Do you find yourself caught in the people pleasing trap, even if it means disrupting your grieving process? So let's unpack that together.

So I want to define people pleasing from Google. So a people pleaser is someone who can't say no to others. They always prioritize other people's needs over their own, even if it means that they have to sacrifice their own well-being.

Now I have another definition from the book that I will leave in the show notes, again, and these definitions resonate and it was such a great topic for this discussion for today. The disease to please is a set of self-defeating thoughts and flawed beliefs about yourself and others that fuel compulsive behavior that in turn is driven by the need to avoid forbidden negative feelings.

Now people pleasing does have an effect on our thoughts, behaviors, and feelings. However, I wanted to discuss and focus on the people pleasing feelings aspect of it. This is where I come across you lovely listeners and some of my clients attempt to avoid the emotional experiences. You feel either uncomfortable or frightened to hurt other people's feelings. The people pleasing feelings I will be most concerned with are the negative emotions.

Now, these are typically the uncomfortable emotions that come with the fear of anger, hostility, conflict, and confrontation. When we feel scared, it often leads to what we were afraid of occurring. This happens because these emotions can prevent us from properly expressing our anger or dealing with conflicts.

Simply put, if we don't face our fears and work through our issues, we may end up creating the very outcome we were afraid of. Therefore, it's important to address our emotions and confront conflicts in a healthy and appropriate manner.

When I talk about emotions, I use negative and positive to describe them. Negative emotions are unpleasant, painful, or hard to accept. On the other hand, positive emotions are those that are pleasant, comfortable, and easier to deal with and express.

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So, in early life experiences, you may have learned that pleasing significant others was an effective way to gain their desired approval. Pleasing others still may be rewarding to some extent. Although most people pleasers are far too exhausted by their routine to enjoy much anymore.

Since we taught ourselves to avoid anger, conflict, and confrontation, we can also be taught how to handle these difficult emotional experiences effectively and constructively. So listen up. Trying to please everyone can really mess things up for you. It can make you more scared, make it tough to talk to people, and get in the way of understanding your own feelings. So let's muster up the courage to face your emotional fears and be ready for a personal journey to recovery from the hidden costs of people pleasing.

All right. Now, let me embrace the characteristics of people pleasing in the context of grief. So when it comes to maintaining a pretense of positivity, do you happen to smile through tears? I know I've done this before. So you might wear a constant smile or exude cheerfulness to avoid burdening others with your grief. You also may downplay your loss. You might minimize the impact of the loss, dismissing your pain and focusing on comforting others.

Another way that you may pretend that you are cheerful is avoiding difficult conversations. You might shy away from discussing the heartbreaking losses of your emotions, deflecting with topics like everyday news and work. I get this, and that is one of the characteristics of when we go through a hard hit loss that we have to put on a front just to maintain that positivity and not face our own journey of grief.

The next one is that we sometimes excessively are helpful and accommodating and people pleasers tend to go to the great lengths to put up the wishes and expectations of others, even if it means neglecting their own needs during the grieving process.

One of my recently divorced clients was determined to find a man so she would not be alone. However, she was putting the desire for a man's needs over her emotional needs to heal through her heartbreaking loss of a divorce. She would tell me, "Sandy, I have to put men first and do everything I can to please them or else they won't love me, or I am alone."

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Once she is attracted to and interested in a new man, she puts herself in an obedient and submissive position. She lavishes men with attention, adoration, and praise. She believes to be worthy of man's love. She must prove that she will always put his needs first.

Now, my client will agree to do anything, go anywhere, and comply with any requests or desire to make her partner apply. When you're grieving, taking on extra responsibilities to support others can cause you to overlook your own emotional needs. It's important to focus on your own mourning and emotional process first.

Another characteristic of people pleasing is the fear of disapproval. There's often an underlying fear of disapproval or rejection, making it difficult for people pleasers to say no or assert their own preferences when dealing with grief related situations. I noticed that the client tends to defer her partner's opinions and rarely voices her own.

She constantly tries to align with her partner's views and often goes out of her way to praise him for his intelligence and ideas. This behavior puts my client's thoughts and beliefs on the backburner, which can be concerning. She doesn't want to face the hard reality of her loss and becomes fearful of the disapproval or rejection of men.

Another characteristic of people pleasing is the difficulty of setting boundaries. Now setting boundaries becomes a challenge as the focus is primarily on keeping others content, potentially slowing the grieving individual's ability to establish limits that safeguard their emotional well-being. I've been there. Boundaries were such hard work that I did, and I think I did an episode on that too. I'll also leave that on the show notes.

So those are some of the characteristics of people pleasing in the context of grief. I would love to hear from you through email and let me know if any of those characteristics, and if it resonates on how it is propelling you or hitting you from being more assertive on your grief process.

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So are you ready to move past people pleasing and embrace self-acceptance on your grief journey? Here are some practical tips and strategies to empower you to overcome people pleasing patterns.

First one is identifying your triggers. Recognizing situations and personalities that activate your need for approval. Now, you're navigating through grief, and suddenly you catch yourself downplaying your own pain. Why? Because there's this sneaky fear that others might not handle your raw truth. Sound familiar? It's the classic people pleaser move. We suppress our anger, put everyone's needs on a pedestal instead of our own.

Well, the last one is invited to the party. But wait a minute. Whose anger are we really afraid of? Have a talk about handling our anger like the bosses we are. The next step is setting healthy boundaries. Learning to say no gracefully and prioritize your own time and needs. Nice people can say no. Allowing yourself to refuse someone's request can be a huge relief. You don't have to constantly do things for others to be a good person.

Sometimes it's okay to say no to some people. It won't make them think less of you. In fact, it makes them value you more. Trust me, I've done this before, and it has helped me. Some have walked away, and some still want to have an engaging conversation.

The next tip I want to share with you is practice self-validation. Now let's talk about self-validation because who needs external approval when you have your own cheering section? Instead of the old thoughts I should always do what others want, need, or expect for me, let's hit pause, rewind that tape, and replace it with something like I know that I don't always have to do what others want, need, or expect from me. I can choose to give when/if I want to do so. It's a self-validation party, and everyone's invited.

The last tip I want to share with you is harnessing your expertise with a dash of swagger. All right, you rock stars. Let's wrap this up with a bit of expertise harnessing. We all got skills, talents, and a bag full of tricks. So why doubt ourselves, especially in formal situations?

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It's time to channel your inner genius, walk into that room with confidence, and remind yourself that impostor syndrome is so last season. You've got this. So during this topic of people pleasing and how it has impacted on the grieving process, I actually did the work, especially allowing me the space to understand that I was hindering myself and now allowing myself to grieve properly and have better communication with people that I can have engaging conversations with.

So when it comes to the people pleasing and the impact on grieving when someone is grieving, the need for approval can make it hard for them to face their feelings. High achieving women might focus more on meeting others expectations and keeping up appearances than caring for their emotional needs. Suppressing grief for the sake of people pleasing can lead to prolonged and complicated mourning and hinder the healing process.

I've been there. I always encourage others to really dive deep into your soul and really know truly what's in your heart and who you want to really connect with, not because you want to not be alone and want to just do whatever they say.

Well, fabulous souls, we've just scratched the surface of breaking free from the clutches of people pleasing. Remember, it's a journey, not a destination. Celebrate the small victories, laugh at the hiccups, and most importantly, embrace the glorious mess that is you. Until next time, keep sparkling and shining because the world needs your light. Have a great day. 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 for step by step instructions on how to follow rate and review.

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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.