

Ep #26: Grief in Adulthood: How to Mourn an Estranged Sibling



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sandy Linda

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Have you ever found yourself at a crossroads between relief and sorrow when a toxic family member passes away? Grief often wears a cloak of sadness, but sometimes it wears a mask of unexpected relief. Let's go on a journey filled with complex feelings, unspoken words, and the delicate dance between closure and lingering questions. Let's untangle the emotional mess together.

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, beautiful souls. How are you all doing today? As for me, I'm doing okay. I had a minor surgery for a health concern but all is good. By the way, have you signed up to be part of my community insider? You will only know certain updates that I only share through email.

I wanted to let you know that some exciting things are happening soon, including a new book release and other interesting highlights. Don't miss out on any updates. Make sure to hit the subscribe button and join our insider community. As a thank you for joining, you'll receive a free gift.

So today I have a special episode that has been hidden from me and also due to a grief shaming society. When it comes to sibling loss, there's not much guidance or literature on mourning the loss at a sibling level but on a parental level. However, in this unknown territory, adult siblings often find themselves playing caregiver, a role society tends to overlook.

The thing is the world often fails to acknowledge the vital loss when a sibling departs. Those close to you might not grasp the significance, leaving you on a solitary journey of grief without the social support you truly need. So I wanted to share some of my tools and tips about the complication of mourning the loss of a sibling.

For me, there were parts where I was absent from grief as I felt relief from a sister who did not want any type of connection, even if I was her blood sister. I know hands are raised like wow? Relief from your sister. Is it harsh? I'll get to

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that in a moment. But there were parts of sadness with me of why she felt a disconnect.

So I went into the what if struggles to mourn a sibling. I wanted to review the sibling relationship with special characteristics unique to the sibling bond and the meaning of the loss and the grief. After that, I'm going to leave you with some actionable tools and tips for you to take action on your healing journey.

So before I step on the road of grief, I encountered folks who felt liberated by their family's death. I was confused about the absent grief of their deceased loved ones. It was odd. It was strange that they were content that their loved ones are dead. Again, I did not have much education on grief, and that people grieve differently, which is such a learning experience. I've been fascinated with it.

Some parts of the world do have this attitude about grief. Besides, some of us did not hit the road of grief until it hit us right smack on the face. Yes, as I journey into my grief road, I find myself unexpectedly at peace with the passing of my family member, which was my sister. A sense of relief settled in, but it was connected with the realization of an emotionally unfinished business lingering within my family dynamics.

So when my sister passed away, there were no textbook grief vibes when she left. I attended the funeral during the whole "I got this" act. She, a distant figure in my life, had always kept our interaction brief, a mere hi and bye. She did not even try to connect with me after our mother's death. She stayed the same and treated me like an outcast.

Now, I heard stories of folks getting some pretty harsh treatment, or some of them were connected and had intimate relations with their siblings. But mine? Radio silence, no love, no attention. She closed the door in my face. Just the silent treatment.

She threw shade when I showed up, laughed at my failures, and celebrated my lows. When life was good, she just carried on, leaving me in the dust. Not exactly the fairness I signed up for. Oddly, I felt a weight lifted with her departure. No longer burdened by the strained relationship of being her sister.

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I learned from my experiences that relief from a deceased family does not make you heartless or cruel. It's just a recognition that the pain I endure is finally over. No more hatred, no more throwing shade at me. However, is it finally over? The question lingers for a while.

So you see, it's going to be about 10 years since she passed away. By the way, February is her birthday month, and what better way to honor her birthday and learn to mourn the death of a sibling who was estranged. I have to say, I rarely grieve much for my sister because of the mis-disconnection I had with her in the past.

Once she fell out of this earth, I kept moving forward with my life but continued to mourn the loss of my mom and dad. As I was doing this research on sibling loss, it was quite fascinating to me not seeing so much but there was a little bit of information that I could gather about mourning the loss of the disconnect of a family member.

I wanted to dive into the sibling bonds where brothers and sisters tangle the cords of each other's identity. It's a relationship with its own unique flavor. Sometimes sweet, sometimes spicy, and it can leave a profound impact on who we are.

Now, sibling relationships are a fascinating blend. It can be close and intimate, distant and formal, or dancing somewhere between. Mine was distant, of course. It's like a roller coaster. One thing's for sure, it's a perfect recipe for a bit of uncertainty.

Sibling relationships are a mix tape of attachment and opposition, caring and competition, loyalty and the lingering resentment. Certainly, one of the primary factors influencing our grief response over the death of our brother or sister is the type of relationship you had with him or her. For me, the sisterly bond was distant, yet hurtful.

So let's get into the meaning of the loss. Let's talk about the profound impact when we lose a brother or a sister in adulthood. It's like losing a piece of our history. Someone who's been there for what feels like forever. Your sibling has

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seen you grow from a kid, witnessed your highs and lows, and holds a piece of your past in their heart.

Think about it. They've been a part of those cozy family traditions, the laughter on holidays, and yep, maybe some not so fun moments. Those embarrassing situations, family jokes, and times when childhood insensitivity got the best of you. Your sibling knows it all. They got the inside scoop on the family scripts and tales that make you uniquely you.

Now, when we face this loss, it's a chance to reflect and do some inner work. It's about finding meaning in our relationship and making sense of the void they left behind. It's okay to take the time to regain control of our lives and then your grief.

Let's chat about the real deal of grieving when you lose a sibling. Depending on the unique oddness of your relationship and the circumstances of their passing, your grief journey might hit you with the usual suspect, guilt, sadness, and regret. Why? Because let's face it, our sibling connections aren't always the picture perfect story we hoped for.

Maybe you didn't have the closeness you dreamed of. If that's the case, grieving becomes a mixtape of what was lost and what you never had in the first place. It's a unique flavor of sadness. If you grew up with these great unrealistic expectations about family relationships, the grieving for what you never had can hit even harder. But you know what? It's okay to feel all that. It's part of the journey.

So let's talk about something that doesn't always get the attention it deserves. The loss of a sibling. Society might not shout it out from the rooftops, but hey, it matters. So here's the deal. If you had a toxic relationship with your sibling, their passing can stir up a world wind of emotions. But you know what? It's time to dig into those unresolved situations, face the past hurt, and figure out what grieving really means for you. Healing from a toxic sibling dynamic is a journey, and it starts with acknowledging the impact.

So ever feel like you could use a bit of a guide on this whole grieving thing? Especially when it comes to dealing with the lack of solid sibling relationships.

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Good news, we got some tips to share. Let's break it down together and navigate this journey of mourning a sibling relationship that never got its resolution. Narrative storytelling. Let's keep it real and personal. Grab a piece of paper or your trusted phone notepad. Let's spill out everything, brain dump, write down the feelings, the memories, the messy bits. Everything tangled up with your sibling.

Your unique relationship with them is like a compass for this journey through grief. If your history with your sibling is more complicated or you drifted apart, like myself, it's expected to be hit with a wave of regrets. You might catch yourself wishing for better times, or you've been more connected when they were still around. It's all part of the story. Getting it down on paper is like putting a piece of puzzle together.

If you have a trusted grief advocate, continue on engaging that conversation. Because when I was in St. Maarten, I had absolute pleasure to have a conversation with someone that had a journey of grief and also felt the relief of their family member passing on. It was a great insight for us to engage in the conversation. It doesn't mean that we're heartless or cruel. It's just that we have a better stance on how to heal through the grief.

So the next one is to check this sibling baggage at the door. Let's do a little self-reflection. There's no judgment here. Take a peek at how those toxic sibling dynamics are tagging along into your grown up life, at work, in your social circles everywhere. Ever catch yourself getting those workplace jitters because of a bossy sister vibe? Or maybe you're holding on to some old anger. Now, if someone in your adult life gives off that same vibes as your sibling once did, you might notice the same old fear or that burst of anger.

But here's the cool part. When you catch it happening, it's like shining a light on personal growth opportunities. Real talk. Once you're aware of these triggers, you can navigate life without feeling like a ticking time bomb. It's a chance to find your peace, even in the chaos.

The last, new beginnings, new perspectives. When thoughts of your sibling take a backseat, you find yourself eagerly building new connections. You're stepping into a fresh chapter of your life. You filter through the past, turning them into

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memories rather than the constant companions. Take a moment to look within reflecting on your experiences with your sibling. How can you broaden your view of yourself, define yourself anew. Consider what your sibling has taught you about who you don't want to be. It's a powerful shift to distance ourselves from the artificial and stepping into a space where healthy relationships foster growth and learning.

There you have it. Your toolkit for navigating the complex emotions of mourning an estranged sibling. In those silent spaces where words were left unsaid and emotions unfinished, remember that grief is your journey. Uniquely yours. As you unfold the layers of your sibling relationships through narrative storytelling, confronting the impact of toxic dynamics, and welcome new beginnings with fresh perspective, know that healing is not just a destination, it's a journey.

In the quiet moments of reflection, embrace the power to redefine yourself, learn from the past, and force the relationships that align with your growth. Sibling loss is an uncharted sea. But armed with your toolkit, you can navigate its waters with resilience, understanding, and unwavering strength to mourn and heal and emerge stronger. Your sibling story may have reached its final chapter, but yours is still being written.

I have to say that this was a special episode for my sister. I actually never had the opportunity to honor her birthday. But doing this episode gave me some hardcore wisdom on healing and mourning the loss of someone that I did not have any connection with. There was no sisterly bond with her, even though we were blood sisters.

But I want to wish her a happy birthday. It gave me the opportunity to share with you how to heal and mourn the loss even though they may be estranged. So if you want any more of this topic, please send me an email, and we'll go dive deeper into it. So thank you so much for listening and have a beautiful and wonderful day.

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

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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.

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.