

Ep #30: Processing Loss Without Closure



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sandy Linda

Ep #30: Processing Loss Without Closure

Have you ever felt a deep sense of sadness for someone who is still alive? We often associate grief with the departure of a loved one. But what about the profound sorrow that remains when the person is physically present, yet emotionally absent? Can you truly grieve for someone who is still alive? Stay tuned for the unspoken grief

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. Happy March 2024. Wow, February flew on by. Spring is right around the corner. Holidays are upon us. Easter is my mom's favorite holiday. When my sister and I were kids, she would have us dress up, put on those bonnets, and sit and stand through the mass sermon. My mom does attend her weekly church.

But when the holidays come, whoa, my mom has a mouth about the fools who come here only once a year. She would call them sinners. But that's my mom. That's something that gives me laughter when Easter comes and everyone goes to that church, that once a year thing. But then there is spring ahead and the clocks are going to change again.

So what are your plans for March? Please join my insider community by hitting that subscribe button on my website sandy linda.com and receive a valuable gift. Come and be part of the elite grief warrior squad. Be on the lookout for some exciting events and news.

Also, I would greatly appreciate it if you could rate and review my show. Your feedback is invaluable as it helps me reach and support more individuals who, like you, are looking to move beyond the pain of grief and develop a purposeful life. By sharing your thoughts and experiences, you are precious to our community. You are helping us all grow and live with intention. Thanks for being a part of it.

Ep #30: Processing Loss Without Closure

Today we're going into the unspoken grief world that can be complex. The topic is ambiguous loss, which is a type of loss that occurs without resolution or closure. At the top of the show, I asked can you truly grieve for someone who is still alive. At first, I did not think that was possible. However, I'll explore the deep longing for closure while navigating the heartache of someone who is, in essence, still here.

So let's unpack this emotional journey together. I will explain how it differs from traditional grief and provide examples of situations that can lead to ambiguous loss or loss without closure. Finally, I will offer some coping strategies to help you deal with this type of loss.

Most people consider grieving as an emotional reaction to a death. But there are several examples when you may grieve someone who is still alive. It can be chronic illness or a medical crisis that create a cycle of grief that is not associated with death.

But what about a childhood with inadequate parenting? How about shattered friendships and broken hearts? When individuals feel the suffering of loss without closure, or ambiguous loss, the grief is real and complicated. They are still alive, and there's a possibility of having a relationship.

This type of grief is like riding on an emotional roller coaster. One minute you get lifted up hill with hope, but then you swoop downhill because a family friend said to you damage is done after your heartfelt apology was not accepted. Your grief may fill you with many emotions such as sadness, anger, confusion, and frustration. Then the internal conflict starts playing out in your head.

On one hand, you're happy they're alive to see another day. But on the other hand, you are angry and exhausted at what they have done to themselves and to you. Now your thoughts can be consumed with questions. Could I have done something differently? Did I cause this? Is it even worth it to talk with them? Would life be easier without them?

It is common to blame ourselves and feel guilty or ashamed of our thoughts, especially when mourning the loss of someone who is still alive. Coping with these feelings can be particularly difficult.

Ep #30: Processing Loss Without Closure

As I was going through my journey of grief, I was not aware that it was possible to grieve for those who were still alive. So what happened with me was when I was in therapy, my therapist did tell me that even though you're dealing with the death of your family members, you're dealing with friendships that are now no longer available to you that you may need to grieve because their roles as your friend has been shattered.

It took time to really put in my head why should I grieve for them? Let me go ahead and grieve for the ones that are dead. That's what I've learned. But learning from him had gave me an opportunity to understand that grief does come in different layers. When it comes to loss, the loss of friendship, their roles are no longer available for me to hang out or do things that we used to do, and you need to grieve that part also.

I have to say, that was the hardest work ever. But it was a learning experience because it gave me a chance to learn other examples besides shattered friendships. I also learned about my friend during her childhood with inadequate parenting.

So in this episode, when it comes to talking about this type of loss, I am going to do real life examples where it talks about parental love that no longer exists. I will talk about shattered friendships. It's sort of like a relatable concept about loss without closure. My friend told me about how she did not have that unconditional love with her mother.

Because when we were talking and she heard me talk about my mom, she told me that I didn't have that type of love that you had. It was so fascinating to me that she was telling me that she was grieving for the mother that she wished she would have had. That she wished that there was an opportunity for love. The mother is still alive, but she's doing everything she can to still be the daughter, but she knows with her life journey because she's married with kids and everything that she has to cater to them. But she'll do as much as she can.

But she just recalls the emotional neglect that she had with her mother, and she did not have that type of love. What she's doing right now is just grieving the loss of not having that mom, but when that time comes, she'll feel relieved but in a way sad that she did not have that emotional relationship.

Ep #30: Processing Loss Without Closure

Then when it came for me when I had the loss of friendships, I was wondering what happened. I thought they would be there for the good and hard times. But eventually I learned that it was time to move forward and learn that they are not available because they're not understanding the type of grief that I was experiencing. It was a challenge to not be able to engage in conversation with someone, and thankfully, I was in therapy, and then I connected with the right type of folks that can have conversations.

So I wanted to leave you with some strategies you can put into your action steps of grieving through the unclear loss that continues without closure. The first one is to connect with your fellow grief advocates who have experienced similar situations, or a local community that can engage in the hard conversations. You hear me tell you all the time to engage in conversations with people who do get it. The people who have been through the journey of the emotional storms. Not someone that's going to hijack the conversation and talk about something else because they haven't experienced the grief.

The second one is accepting that your life is worth living. Accept that life is valuable, even if you experience loss without closure. It's important to just allow yourself to know that your life is worth living. Whether it be the childhood who did not get an unconditional parent, broken friendships, or divorce. Looking inward can help you discover your true worth and develop more meaningful relationships that are open, honest, and emotionally vulnerable people.

Remember that everyone deserves love and happiness, and you can find it by focusing on what truly matters to you. So forget that they're not going to be available for you during the hard times. You just know that it's time to move forward and live life with purpose.

The third one is expressive journaling. You know, I am a journaling geek because I get to do a brain dump through pen and paper or my digital notepad. Research has said that writing out tough, traumatic stuff can lead to a glorious state of letting go. Check out episode 15 on journaling.

Now, I will offer you a journaling prompt. I would love for you to take action on the loss without closure piece. Give yourself 10 minutes to write continuously about your deepest thoughts and emotions around the unclear loss that

Ep #30: Processing Loss Without Closure

continues without resolution. You can explore how it has affected you or how it relates to your relationships or your career. Remember, there's no right or wrong way to journal. Allow yourself to express your emotions freely and honestly. Writing can be a powerful tool for processing emotions, gaining insights, and finding strength on your journey through ambiguous loss.

Here is your first journal prompt. I would love for you to leave me your comments on how you did. Let me know if you would incorporate this in your grief journey. So here you go. Describe the relationship you're grieving and what aspects of it feel lost. It could be the friendships broken, parental love, or divorce. What emotions come up most frequently when you think about these relationships?

Remember on the top of the show that we have these conflicting thoughts about what could I've done wrong? What could I do better? Like write those things down and say to yourself what emotions come up? Is it the guilt? Is it resentment? Is it anger? Put all that information down and feel how release and letting go of that on pen and paper feels for you? I would love to hear your comments about it on my email info@sandy linda.com.

Okay, let's recap. So today was the topic of ambiguous loss. But I wanted to simplify it and talk about the loss without closure. I discussed that grief does not have to be connected with death. We can grieve for someone who is still alive. The loss of someone who is still in the world but not in our world. We may grieve for the parental love that will never be received and friendships shattered to no future to reconnect.

When you have unclear loss without closure, be compassionate with yourself. Make sure that you set aside time for self-care. Time to process your thoughts and feelings on journaling. Remember 10 minutes of your time to really write out the hard stuff. If you're not ready to write, be sure to have your grief fellow advocates to have the human conversation about what you're going through. Try to understand and accept that there will be ups and downs when dealing with this type of loss, especially grieving for someone that's still alive.

I hope this was informative in helping you to lead to healing and allowing you space to grieve for someone that's still alive. Again, I unpacked so much a few

Ep #30: Processing Loss Without Closure

years ago that it was a challenge to really know what it means to grieve for someone alive. I hope this inspired you to write it out or talk to your fellow grief advocates about this type of loss and where you go from here.

As for me, I've learned that I had to move forward and live life with purpose and not worry at the fact that they're no longer with me or anything like that. I mean, at the end, I think, for me, I've learned that I've outgrown some of the friendships that I no longer have anything to cater with. Anyway, thank you so much for listening, and I will catch you on the next one. Bye.

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.