

Ep #13: Forgiveness: The Key to Growing Through Grief



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With Your Host

Sandy Linda

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Holding on to anger and resentment can feel like a badge of honor, a way to protect ourselves from further hurt. But what if letting go isn't surrender, but the key to unlock true healing and growth? Stay tuned as I reveal a powerful tool that may transform your journey.

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, fabulous folks. How are you feeling? We're getting closer to spring, and now the days are longer because the clocks went ahead. I tell you when those clocks go ahead, my head spins because it messes up with my routine in the morning to get to the gym and do what I need to do early in the morning. But anyway, at least the days get longer. Yay.

I also went on a road trip and met with one of my fellow grief advocates. We came to support each other on a journey to healing and thriving through our business venture. She is a life coach who offers support on spirituality and meditation. She is so great to have as a human friend who can support each other's growth and contribution.

She invited me to have a meditative retreat, along with self-care treatment. She was gifted a massage treatment and, of course, I did not decline. I told her massage is a divine discipline to unlock that tightness around our neck area, the shoulder areas, the back area. Oh my God. She went for the smooth Swedish massage, and I went for the deep tissue. It was a great day for our massage, and we spent an hour in meditation and to reflect on how we are managing our life and business as 2024 starts. Because February came and went, and now we're in March.

But before I continue, please join my insider community by hitting that subscribe button on my website and receive a valuable gift. Come and be part of the elite grief warrior squad. Be on the lookout for some exciting events. 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

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looking to move beyond the distress of grief and design a purposeful life. By sharing your thoughts and experiences, you are precious to our community. You're helping us grow and live with intentions. Thanks for being a part of it.

So as we were at the spa resort, my friend was telling me about one of her clients who had held on to anger and resentment for about 10 years because her fiancé was killed in an automobile accident. She felt he abandoned her, and said she would never marry again.

Then she asked me if forgiveness would be a powerful tool for healing through the grief storms. She also asked do you or one of your clients forgive yourself and others after a loss? Ding, ding, ding this led me to discuss the power of forgiveness in amplifying the grieving process.

Now hold on. I know it might not be everyone's cup of tea. But before you leave, let me share some of my doubts and thoughts about forgiveness during my grief journey. Trust me, it's going to be an eye opening experience. Forgiveness is one of the greatest challenges that fellow grievers and I may face. The simple reason is that grief is a natural process whereas forgiveness is not.

We've all been hurt before. It's unavoidable to live in a world of chaos and wonder. You may have a friend disappear during your grieving process. A friend expects you to continue to be normal or a family member has been mistreated. Whatever the situation, it's natural to feel angry, frustrated, and even revengeful when someone hurts us.

Our minds replay the offense over and over. We do that mind game, replaying the offense over and over. Sometimes it feels natural to hold a grudge, to crave justice or vengeance. If we keep holding on to our hurt, it can feel like the person who hurt us got away with it. We didn't even get the justice we deserve. But justice, does it have to be about revenge?

Today, I'm going to define forgiveness and clear up common misconceptions. I'm also going to discuss the benefits of forgiveness for mental and emotional well-being and offer you some studies because I've done my research and discussed the link between forgiveness, the powerful tool for healing and

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growth. Again, I will always offer you practical tips and techniques for cultivating forgiveness.

So let's get on to it. Again, for those who are frightened by the word of forgiveness, there's going to be some doubts here. Then there'll be some thoughts. I'm going to give you your decision on what works best for you. Now, the nature of forgiveness.

It can be hard to let go of that hurt when we are wronged by the offender. But I wanted to start by saying what forgiveness is not about. Forgiveness is not excusing the action, denying it, or overlooking it. It's not about forgetting. It's not about approval. It's not just moving on, especially when you have been thrown some curveballs.

So what does forgiveness mean? When I was going through my grief journey, I used to watch Super Soul Sunday on Oprah because Oprah always had these spiritual leaders that came on and presented their books. The most that I got out of was Eckhart Tolle, and the book *The Power of Now*.

I gained some insights and wisdom to become familiar with healing through those emotional storms. There was a particular episode in which she defined forgiveness, and I wanted to share it here with you. Forgiveness is giving the hope that the past could be any different. It's letting go so that the past does not hold you captive.

But before you can forgive, you have to grieve. Forgiveness is on the path to grief. When you are offended, hurt, or violated, the natural response is to grieve. The challenge with grief is that some people never grieve, and others may grieve for too long.

If you don't acknowledge that you've been hurt or mistreated from a loss, you don't gain the benefits of the human experience. Now, there is power that comes from the experience. But left untreated, you're holding yourself captive to heal, and I'm one of those.

It's common to feel anger when a loved one passes away. You might find yourself angry at the person who died, frustrated with the doctor who could have

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potentially prevented the loss, or even upset with yourself for not being able to save your loved one. Additionally, hurtful words or actions from others after the death can also trigger anger.

As my friend shared with me about her client, after she buried her fiancé, she kept her life at arm's length and kept prolonging the past with anger and resentment. It took her several years to forgive. Several studies describe the many negative effects of chronic anger and resentment.

One found that unforgiveness tends to produce the fight or flight system, which may ultimately disrupt our sleep quality. No wonder I was having some sleep issues. years ago. Holding on to a grudge has been shown to cause chronic fatigue and high blood pressure.

When anger is experienced over a long period of time, it does lead to resentment, and resentment is all about you owe me an apology. Now resentment can harm one's health and prevent healing and growth. It can cause one to become bitter and continue to focus on the negative aspects of life.

The idea of forgiving and forgetting is often misunderstood as true forgiveness, and it's not. However, simply pretending that the hurtful incident never happened is not the same as forgiving. Many people cope with their pain by minimizing, avoiding, or numbing it. However, just like a gun during a physical injury can lead to long term physical mental pain, avoiding emotional distress can have similar effects. It's important to confront and address the issue rather than simply trying to move on without acknowledging it.

So, are you ready for some practical steps to begin the process of forgiveness? Now, I am offering a non-judgmental approach to navigating the path to forgiveness. Forgiveness has its own timetable, and it should not be rushed or planned out. I cannot force you to forgive more than you force yourself to let go. We can create the circumstances in which forgiveness is likely to happen.

Now, before I jump into the practical tips, I wanted to offer you that this is just my thoughts and my doubts that I had about forgiveness. I want you to take it for what it is for you, and it's beneficial to your health. So step one, begin to acknowledge hurt in your feelings. If you lost a loved one or went through a

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shattered friendship or divorce, acknowledge the pain of their absence and the emotion it stirs. Recognize the hurt caused by their departure and allow yourself to feel and embrace grief.

Number two is understanding the offender and recalling the hurt. Take this time to remember what happened and reflect on those experiences. Ask yourself, what did their actions or words mean to me? What thoughts did it trigger for me? This self-discovery can help unpack those complex feelings.

Number three, release negative emotions like anger and resentment. There may be guilt. There may be others. But so far, anger and resentment is such a high emotional distress when dealing with grief. Give yourself permission to feel these emotions. Express them and then consciously release them. Whether through journaling, talking to a trusted grief advocate, or finding solace in a spiritual practice. Allow the negativity to transform into peace, empathy, and compassion.

Number four, self-forgiveness. Accept personal mistakes. I have to say self-forgiveness was such a hard step for me to take, but I've learned to release self-blame and guilt and practice self-forgiveness by acknowledging my imperfections and allowing myself to let go. When I had to take on that journey about self-forgiveness, who ever heard of self-forgiveness?

It was a challenge because a lot of people always tell us the other misconception about forgiveness. Forgive and forget, or forgiveness is unnecessary. It's weak. But self-forgiveness was the opportunity for me to share with you, to take on and embrace the idea that self-forgiveness is an ongoing process involving as you move through grief. Those are my practical tips and strategies that you can think about to look over or have some of your grief advocates discuss it through and see how it can heal you from the pain of grief that you're going through.

I'm going to leave you with a quote from the book of *Four Agreements*. I'll leave you on the show notes. This book was so good too. If you haven't read *Four Agreements*, it's another recommended book that I offer you. We must forgive those we feel have wronged us. Not because they deserve to be forgiven, but

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because we love ourselves so much we don't want to keep paying for the injustice.

You see, forgiveness is a powerful tool that can help us achieve personal growth and heal through our distress with grief. By choosing to let go of the negative emotions and freeing ourselves from the burden of the past, we can find courage to become the best version of ourselves. Justice may not be about seeking revenge, but rather it can mean choosing to live a life filled with love and compassion.

If we let go of that hurt, we can regain our power and control over this situation. We can realize that justice might not always mean punishment, and we can move forward with confidence and strength by choosing to let go. I've done that with people that walked away, or I was rejected by others that couldn't withstand my emotional storms. That's okay. Because I had the opportunity to forgive myself and move forward so that I can be in the realms and be able to share and be a compassionate observer to share with others about the journey of grief.

Before I leave, I have another journaling prompt that I want to leave you with. So here it goes. What happens when you forgive yourself? Set aside just 10 minutes to pour your deepest thoughts and emotions onto paper. Now, I want to warn you that your mind is going to battle with you, but it's okay to embrace the anger and the resentment.

Permit the nature of forgiveness through grief to sink into your heart, unveiling any hitting anger and resentment. Navigate your emotions with grace and compassion as you embark on this transformative journey. Now, take on the path to healing and grow through your grief. Have a wonderful week, and I'll catch you on the next episode. 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.