



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Sandy Linda**

## Ep #38: Loneliness Epidemic: The Hidden Crisis Impacting Women's Mental Health

Ever wonder why women often feel more lonely than men? Behind the mask of success lies a silent struggle. Tune in for a journey of empowerment and healing.

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 creative humans. It's May already. Wow. I have a spotlight review. New members, new insights. Let's give a warm welcome to our newest community member, Jackie. Jackie recently joined our tribe and wasted no time diving into our mourning journaling and a remarkable tool for navigating the complex landscape of grief. She shared her appreciation for the invaluable insights delivered in our episodes, mainly the one focused on grief lessons.

Like many of us, Jackie has been touched by the profound ways of grief. Through our podcast, she found comfort and a new perspective on her journey. Here she writes, "Thank you, Sandy for your unwavering courage and deep insight you bring to your show. The episode Grief Lessons reminded me of how you and I were on the other side of grief and did not know what to say or do. Now as your fellow grief advocate, I am on a journey to grow and learn to heal from grief. Thank you so much for your openness and honesty, you are a beacon of light to me."

Jackie, we are deeply grateful for your support and for being a special part of our community. Your presence enhances our journey towards healing and renewal. For all others, let's continue to walk this path together supporting one another every step of the way. Your voice matters, and we love to hear more of your reflections and experiences. Share your thoughts with us via email. You never know you may get that spotlight review. Or leave a review on our podcast for your feedback, which makes our community stronger and healthier. All right.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. By the way, I am a mental health advocate. I am thrilled to kick off with a topic that seems a bit unaddressed, and it is loneliness. There has been a significant surge in loneliness among women

## **Ep #38: Loneliness Epidemic: The Hidden Crisis Impacting Women's Mental Health**

post-pandemic, and it's an eye opener. Today I wanted to explore together the experience of high achieving women who struggle with loneliness following the loss of a parent or a sibling.

We're going to have some raw conversations as I continue to raise the awareness of mental health and shine a light on the intersections of grief and loneliness. I understand that loneliness during grief is a difficult emotion to experience. I empathize with the challenges that high achieving women like you face in expressing these feelings. It's important to recognize that loneliness can have a significant impact on your mental wellbeing, and it's crucial that we work together to address it.

Please know that I am here to support you through this challenging journey and fostering empathy and make this process a little more manageable for you. What is possible for you to uncover your grief related loneliness factor? To all my highly valuable women, let's break from loneliness and find the support we need.

Today's discussion will be on the facts about the high rates of loneliness, the unique challenges faced by high achieving women, and coping strategies to redefine success with grief and loneliness. So, let's get started.

Let me define loneliness as I got it in Google's. Loneliness is the state of being unseen or on notice relationally mentally, emotionally, physically, or spiritually. It can be driven by a lack of purpose or meaning and is marked by a deep sense of hopelessness. Loneliness is widespread in modern society, affecting all ages, backgrounds, and demographics.

Despite technological advancements and increased connectivity through social media, many individuals still experience profound feelings of isolation and disconnection. My main focus is the research that I discovered amongst women.

Allow me to explain the research that gave me a chance to discuss it and address it here on the show. The research obtained through a survey with a diverse sample highlights the widespread impact of loneliness on women and emphasized the urgency of addressing this issue during mental health awareness.

## **Ep #38: Loneliness Epidemic: The Hidden Crisis Impacting Women's Mental Health**

According to a recent survey, loneliness rates among women have been largely increasing since the start of the pandemic. Now, before the pandemic, only 18% of women reported feeling lonely. However, by 2022, that number rose to 90% substantially. That shows how significantly women are now experiencing this feeling of isolation and loneliness. When you layer grief on top of that loneliness, it can feel like a double whammy.

The experience of loneliness during the grieving journey is unique yet complex. High achieving women in particular face additional challenges that compound their sense of loneliness and despair. For example, the pressure to maintain an image of strength and independence related to societal expectations of success often results in these women internalizing their pain and struggling to seek support.

Many high achieving women experience social disconnection due to their busy schedules and a lack of meaningful opportunities for face to face interaction. For example, long work hours and demanding careers often leave a little time for deep connections or interpersonal relationships. These limitations deepen feelings of loneliness, making it crucial to address this issue in the context of grief.

Grief is a journey we all embark on. Yet, it's a journey that often feels friendless, isolating, and overwhelming. The loss of a loved one can leave us messing with intense emotions, questioning our sense of self, and longing for connection in the midst of profound emptiness. When feelings of isolation and disconnection compound the ache of loss, we are at a complex crossroads where the deepness of sorrow meets at the profoundness of our solitude, leaving us drifting into an unknown emotional territory.

So why do we go through this loneliness dialog? I'm glad you asked. There's a term, strong and independent, for high achieving women who are viewed as models of empowerment and resilience. Women are admired for excelling in their careers, taking charge of their lives, and overcoming obstacles with grace and determination.

However, the label of independent may seem empowering on the surface, but it can also create unrealistic expectations and barriers to express vulnerability and

## Ep #38: Loneliness Epidemic: The Hidden Crisis Impacting Women's Mental Health

seeking support. Research concluded that cultural norms of strength and independence for women may undermine their ability to seek social support. Ladies, it isn't easy being independent, isn't it?

Another struggle with loneliness with the high achievers is the contradiction of success, in which high achievers, especially women, may struggle to express openness and seek support due to societal expectation of strength and independence. You see in all those published magazines that often celebrate success and achievements that include the qualities of confidence and resilience.

As a result, high achievers may feel pressured to maintain a facade of strength and composure. Even when they're dealing with deep emotional pain and grief. They may fear being judged or stigmatized for showing vulnerability, leading them to internalize their pain and isolation.

However, the reality is that grief does not discriminate based on achievement or success. High achieving women are just as easy to the emotional pack of loss as anyone else. Suppressing feelings of grief and isolation can have damaging effects on our mental and emotional wellbeing, which worsen the feelings of loneliness.

Balancing the demands of grief with the pressure of maintaining a successful front can feel like an impossible task. High achieving women may struggle to prioritize their emotional wellbeing while meeting external expectations, which can lead to feelings of guilt, inadequacy, and isolation.

High achieving women often feel a lack of empathy and understanding from others during grief. A study on female entrepreneurs who felt pressured to uphold an image of having it all together experiences higher loneliness rates compared to women without the pressure. The expectations of high achieving women should be able to handle challenges with composure. This lack of understanding of the struggles faced by high achieving women who experience loss can intensify feelings of loneliness.

The pressure to maintain a show of success can strain relationships, particularly if high achieving women cannot be authentic and vulnerable with loved ones.

## Ep #38: Loneliness Epidemic: The Hidden Crisis Impacting Women's Mental Health

This can create a sense of disconnection and isolation within personal relationships, increasing the feelings of loneliness during grief.

For example, if we try to cover our grief, we're not showing up with the realness of our sorrow. Now, the misconception of having it all places unrealistic expectations on high achieving women, making it difficult for them to navigate the messiness of grief. Yes, I said it, the messiness of grief. That's okay.

As I express some of the tough conversations that will expand your mind, I want this to be a journey of support and help ease the feelings of isolation and loneliness, allowing individuals to grieve openly and connect meaningfully. As I journeyed through the devastating losses, it was not easy to be at work and put on a mask in front of my colleagues that everything was okay. I realized that my grief was misunderstood or that people had other obligations. It was hard but an opportunity for self-discovery.

Now I unpacked a lot today. Now we're getting into some strategies, some actionable advice. Coping with loneliness during grief requires a holistic approach that includes both self-care and seeking external support. Number one, practice self-compassion. Learn to be alone. As you navigate the ups and downs in grief, allow yourself to feel your emotions without judgment. That is something that I had to take on was to be alone and really sit with my emotions.

Number two, connect with nature. Spend time outdoors in nature, which can be soothing for the soul and provide a sense of connection to something greater than yourself. Take walks in the park, sit by a pool or beach, or simply enjoy the beauty of the natural world around you. Number three, seek professional help. Consider seeking support from a therapist or a counselor specializing in grief and loss. Fellow grief advocates can provide valuable coping skills, emotional support, and a safe space to explore your feelings.

Number four, journaling and reflection. Journaling can be a powerful tool for processing your emotions and expressing your thoughts in a safe and private space. Write about your experiences, memories of your loved ones, and any feelings of loneliness you may be experiencing. Another study I want to share with you again, journaling has been shown to help reduce loneliness during times of grief, especially for women who feel pressure to suppress emotions.



## **Ep #38: Loneliness Epidemic: The Hidden Crisis Impacting Women's Mental Health**

I decided to reassess my approach to loneliness by spending time with myself and journaling my thoughts and emotions. I went off the grid because I needed to reevaluate my friendship with myself and my health, especially after a tragedy that people misunderstood. I didn't want to let my job define my vulnerability. So I took time to listen to myself and write down my emotional storms.

Healing is not something that can be fixed quickly. So I made a conscious effort to allow my awareness to lead me to take action. As I returned to the land of living, I started to form new friendships that were open, honest with constructive and fun conversations somewhat casual. Some were just chronics.

I have found comfort in sharing my journey with others who have faced similar struggles. By being open about my experiences, I have connected with individuals who understand the challenges of grief and loneliness. We have formed a supportive community that provides comfort and strong encouragement, open dialogue and empathy can ease isolation and foster the belonging of a grief warrior squad.

Now, remember, coping with loneliness during grief is a gradual process. It's okay to take things one step at a time. Be patient with yourself, practice self-care, and reach out for support when you need it. You're not alone in your grief journey, and there is hope for healing and a connection ahead.

All right, I unpacked a lot for you. Almost to the finish line for you guys. Recognizing that success looks different during these challenging times as you navigate the turbulent waters of grief is essential. While the relentless pursuit of external achievements may have been your norm, now is the moment to shift your focus inward and prioritize your emotional wellbeing and self-care above all else. Self-care is a divine discipline.

Redefining success in the midst of grief means prioritizing your emotional health. It means giving yourself permission to feel your emotions deeply without judgment. It means honoring your needs for rest, reflection, and renewal, even when the world demands more from you. Above all, success during grief is about navigating the journey with grace and resilience. Knowing that healing takes time and patience. It's about honoring the memory of your loved ones while also honoring your own need for healing and growth.

## Ep #38: Loneliness Epidemic: The Hidden Crisis Impacting Women's Mental Health

So to my dear high achieving women, I encourage you to redefine success during this challenging time. Embrace self-care, prioritize your emotional wellbeing, and know that it's okay to put yourself first as you navigate the complexities of grief. You are strong, resilient, and worthy of love and compassion, especially from yourself.

I'm going to leave you with a journaling prompt. Loneliness during grief is a profound challenge, especially for high achieving women facing societal pressure. But there are paths to connection and understanding. So let's take a moment to reflect. Consider writing about a time you felt lonely or misunderstood during your grief.

I want to encourage you to explore the emotions that surfaced and any desire you felt to hide them. What support or connection did you need most in that moment? Journaling allows us to express our inner truths. The simple act of writing can be freeing, helping us process complex feelings of grief and loneliness. Know that your emotions are valid, and there is a community ready to listen and understand. You're not alone. Thank you so much for listening. Happy Mental Health Awareness Month. Take care of you, and enjoy the process of healing through grief. 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](http://www.sandy linda.com).