

# Ep #40: How to Effectively Lead While You're Grieving



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Sandy Linda**

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Do you want to be a leader your team admires? True leadership involves empathy during loss. Learn how to support your team and elevate yourself in this next eye-opening episode. Stay tuned.

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 a 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 souls. I hope you are enjoying the pleasant weather in your neck of the woods. Spring is here and we are seeing beautiful flowers in bloom. People are taking advantage of the great weather by going for walks or jogs in the parks and having barbecues. Of course, I do my nature walk, or I go to the beach and do the boardwalk or a jog, maybe.

During my walk, I had an unexpected encounter with a badass defense attorney, who is also my colleague, Michelle. She shared some heartbreaking news about her father's recent passing. As we talked, I could sense the weight of her grief. She told me about the internal struggle she's been wrestling with lately. Despite being a strong presence in the courtroom and office, she has been finding it tough to balance her sorrow with her role as a leader within her team. Her days are filled with courtroom battles and case deadlines while she's constantly fighting waves of grief; each threatens to pull her under.

Michelle is not alone. In fact, her experience mirrors that of many transformational leaders navigating the delicate swirl between vulnerability and strength. And so, the seed is planted for our latest episode, a heartfelt conversation about the importance of honoring our grief, even in the face of leadership responsibilities.

Because here's the truth, vulnerability is not a weakness. It's a testament to our humanity. By showing up authentically, even in our moments of deepest sorrow, we pave the way for genuine connection, empathy and growth, both within ourselves and among those we lead.

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In leadership, success is often measured by outcomes and achievements. But what if we redefine success to surround the emotional wellbeing of our teams and peers? True leadership for accomplished women goes beyond achieving business targets. It involves a deep understanding of oneself and meaningful interpersonal connections. Emotional resilience and empathy are crucial yet often overlooked aspects of successful leadership.

Grief presents an opportunity to redefine long-lasting leadership, even for the most resilient among us. By embracing emotional intelligence and delicate compassion, you become a shining light of strength and a champion of profound empathy.

Today, I will explore how these leadership elements are supportive and essential. They simultaneously empower you to navigate personal challenges and professional demands, providing that every interaction improves those around you.

I'm going to discuss effective leadership and emotional intelligence, the correlation between leadership, emotional intelligence and grief handling, and, of course, I'll offer some valuable tools that you can take action on. Are you ready to embark on an exciting journey of elevating your human experiences as a transformational leader?

Let's get into the fascinating world of leadership that connects emotional intelligence with assertive action. Together, we will learn how to transform challenges into opportunities for growth and cultivate deeper connections. Get ready to be inspired.

So, transformational leadership is about inspiring positive changes in supporters by leveraging personal growth experiences. By inspiring others to achieve their full potential, transformational leaders create a positive work environment that encourages growth and innovation.

In moments of grief, it takes a lot of courage for a leader to open up and show their emotions. However, such acts of vulnerability can truly shine the truth of

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grief in professional environments, creating a more compassionate and understanding workplace where every employee feels valued and supported.

So, at the top of the show, I discussed my colleague Michelle, who had always been known as a strong and confident leader in her company. Her colleagues respect her for her strategic thinking and ability to lead teams through challenging projects.

However, behind her confident exterior, Michelle was wrestling with a deep sense of grief following the loss of her father. As Michelle returned to work after her father's passing, she struggled to focus and engage with her team. She felt overwhelmed by her emotions and unsure of how to navigate her grief while still fulfilling her leadership responsibilities.

One day, during a team meeting, Michelle made the courageous decision to open up to her colleagues about her father's passing. With tears in her eyes, she shared her personal journey of grief, describing the ups and downs she had experienced and the challenges she faced in balancing her grief with her work responsibilities.

To Michelle's surprise, her colleagues responded with an outpouring of support and empathy. Many shared their experiences of loss and offered encouragement and solidarity. In that moment of vulnerability, Michelle felt a deep sense of connection with her team, knowing that they were there to support her through her grief.

In the following days and weeks, Michelle found that her willingness to be open about her grief had transformed her relationship with her colleagues. She felt closer to them than ever before, and they rallied around her, offering their support and understanding whenever she needed.

Through her experience, Michelle learned that vulnerability could be a powerful tool for leadership. By sharing her own struggles and emotions, she created a culture of empathy and compassion within her team, cultivating deeper connections and a sense of belonging for all. Michelle navigated her grief more effectively through her brave openness and created a culture of openness and

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mutual support within her team. Transforming pain into a point of connection, she demonstrated the power of vulnerability in leadership.

As Michelle's story illustrates, emotional vulnerability can be a powerful motivator for strengthening team dynamics and cultivating an inclusive organizational culture. It beautifully highlights one of the critical components of emotional intelligence, and that is empathy.

However, emotional intelligence involves more than just empathy when dealing with grief. It also requires self-awareness, self-regulation, and sophisticated social skills. That's right, I said it, sophisticated social skills. I am going to discuss how emotional intelligence can help leaders manage their grief and support their teams during difficult times. By exploring this topic in detail, you will learn how to turn grief into a personal and professional growth opportunity.

Let's talk about how leaders can use emotional intelligence to guide their teams with integrity and compassion. By being aware of their emotions and controlling their expressions of them, leaders can create a resilient leadership style that can handle crises, both personal and corporate.

Emotional intelligence is becoming more and more necessary for leaders, especially during times of grief. Now, you've heard of *Emotional Intelligence*. I even read the book by Daniel Goleman. I'm sure you've read it all; maybe not. Or this is your first time hearing it. But it is strongly needed, and I wanted to present it here in this episode.

Emotional intelligence refers to our ability to recognize, understand, and manage our own emotions and those of others. Now, it involves several components, each of which is vital in dealing with grief.

The first component is self-awareness. Being self-aware means acknowledging and understanding our feelings, and how they affect our thoughts, actions, and connections with others. In the context of grief, self-awareness allows us to recognize and process our feelings of sadness, anger, or guilt without judgment.

Another component is self-regulation, which was such a hard component for me to learn. But it was a learning experience for me. So, self-regulation involves

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managing and controlling our emotions, those impulses and reactions when someone tells you to “get over it” from your grief. Especially in those challenging or stressful situations.

When navigating grief, self-regulation enables us to respond to our feelings in a healthy and constructive manner, rather than reacting impulsively or becoming overwhelmed.

Another component I've been talking about is empathy. Empathy is empathizing with people and being able to relate to their emotions. You become aware of how others are feeling and show that you care. When navigating grief, empathy allows you to connect with others who are also experiencing loss, and providing comfort, support and validation, just like my colleague Michelle did.

The next component is social skills... I told you ‘sophisticated’ social skills... which involves effectively communicating, collaborating, and building relationships with others. In the context of grief, social skills enable us to seek and provide support from friends, family or support groups, cultivating a sense of community and mutual understanding.

Understanding these components of emotional intelligence sets the foundation for practical application. Not only to manage grief, but to transform it into a source of strength both for you and your team.

Let's transition from what we know to what we can do. Here is how you can actively apply the principles of emotional intelligence to become a transformational leader, particularly in challenging times of grief. Are you ready to channel these insights into actions?

Reflecting on Michelle's journey and the transformational power of her embracing vulnerability, let's explore the concrete steps you can take to apply your emotional intelligence in leadership during times of grief. By integrating these practices, you're not just navigating grief, you're reshaping your organization into a more supportive, understanding, and resilient community.

So, for personal growth, there are two things I would love for you to do. Be aware. Engage in regular self-reflection to understand your emotional triggers

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and responses. This will improve your self-awareness. Another tip is practice self-regulation. Use techniques like mindfulness, meditation, or journaling to manage your reactions to stressful situations.

So now, when you're with your team, this is team leadership time. Here are my three tips for you. Communicate openly. Encourage a culture of open communication by sharing your thoughts and emotional experiences with your team. Another tip is, encourage a supportive environment. Create a supportive workplace. Initiate wellness programs or support groups that focus on mental health... Because you know it's Mental Health Awareness Month.

The last is, lead by example. By living out these principles, show your team how to balance professional responsibilities with personal emotional health.

Today, we've explored how transformational leadership and emotional intelligence can profoundly influence how we handle personal grief, and support others through theirs. We begin by understanding the key role of vulnerability, as shown in Michelle's story, which highlights how openness about one's own grief can build deeper connection and promote empathy within a team.

Here are a few key takeaways to incorporate into your leadership and personal coping strategies.

**Embrace vulnerability:** Allow yourself to be open about your feelings. This authenticity not only aids in your personal healing but also encourages a supportive team environment.

**Develop emotional intelligence:** Do a regular check or practice on self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and sophisticated social skills. These elements are crucial for leading effectively, especially during challenging times.

**Lead with compassion:** Remember that leadership isn't just about directive authority, it's about connecting and caring for your people on a deeper level.

**Create supportive structures:** Make mental health a priority in your workplace by initiating wellness programs or setting up supportive groups.

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As I close today, remember that the true measure of leadership lies not only in how we lead during times of success, but profoundly in how we handle moments of vulnerability and adversity. By utilizing emotional intelligence and embracing the human aspects of leadership, you are paving the way for a resilient, compassionate, and thriving professional environment. Remember, you are not alone on your journey. Leadership is about growing together, and your courage to be vulnerable can be your greatest strength.

Now, a bonus journaling prompt tailored to your leadership journey. Journaling is your activity in navigating the landscape of grief in personal and professional areas. I want you to take a moment to ponder this journaling prompt: What challenges do you currently face in managing grief through your work environment? Dig deeper into the contributing factors and your role in them.

Give yourself about 10 to 15 minutes to jot down your thoughts, allowing room for reflection and growth. I love to hear how this exercise impacts you, so please email me your insight at [info@sandy linda.com](mailto:info@sandy linda.com).

If this discussion inspires you, don't keep it to yourself. Share this episode with a friend or a colleague who might find it helpful. Join us next time as we continue to explore powerful themes that enhance our professional lives and personal growth.

That's all for today. Until next time, remember, you're not alone on this journey. Have a beautiful week. 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.SandyLinda.com](http://www.SandyLinda.com).