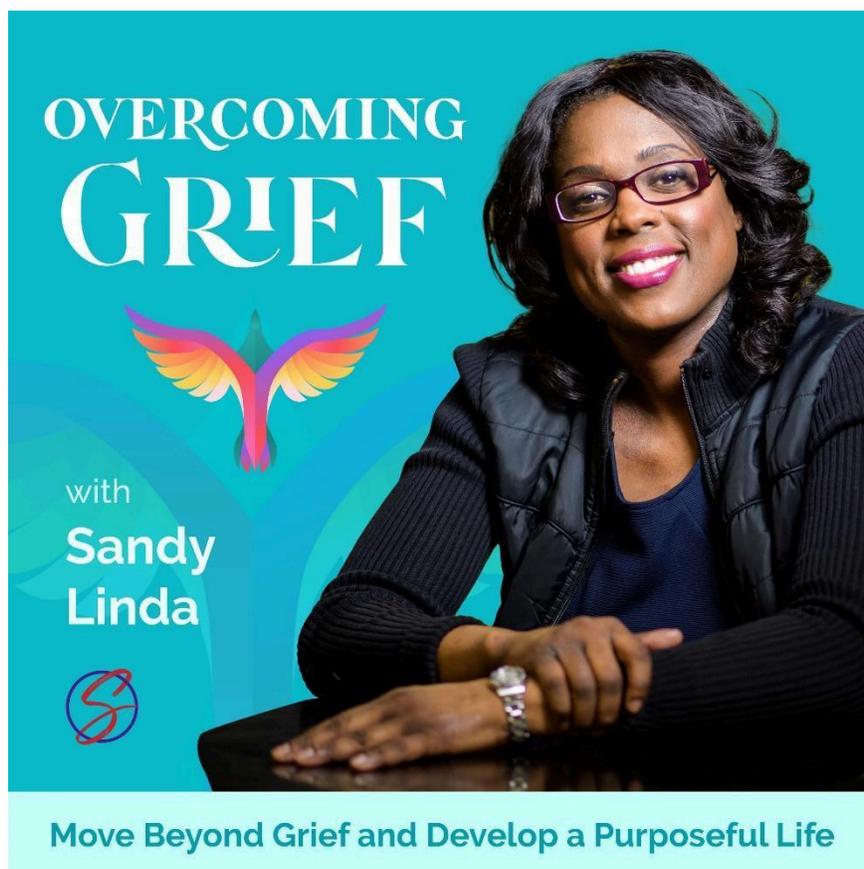


Ep #41: Healing Through Decluttering: Finding Peace After Loss



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sandy Linda

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In the quiet after a loss, the personal belongings left behind speak the loudest. Can decluttering these possessions transform your grief? Discover how embracing the KonMari method can bring you comfort and clarity in our next 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 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. How are you all doing today? If this is your first time here, welcome to the show. I serve as your guide providing valuable tips for overcoming grief and empowering your personal and professional wellbeing. If you have recently lost a loved one, I send you healing thoughts and blessings as you walk on this path to healing through your grief. Thanks for popping in on this particular episode.

Recently, I had the privilege of participating in a unique Mother's Day journaling retreat with my fellow grievers. It was held at a tranquil beach. We were not at any malls or restaurants. But this retreat wasn't just about writing. It was about uncovering and letting go.

As we journal, we shared stories and unpack layers of emotions, like sorting through an old dusty attic but within ourselves. This process reminded me of decluttering, not physical items but our internal world. Throughout that day, as we wrote down our feelings and memories, many of us experienced deep emotional decluttering. We filter through thoughts and feelings that had been cluttering our minds, determining which emotions were serving us well and which were not.

This emotional decluttering prepared us, much like the physical decluttering we face after losing a loved one and help us move forward. Have you ever wondered how to navigate the emotional and practical aspects of decluttering the belongings of a loved one who has passed away?

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Now reorganizing too soon after someone dies can be devastating to your well-being. It's a sensitive topic that many find difficult to handle. What if the decluttering process can signify an important step in your journey of healing and acceptance after a loss?

In today's episode, I will explore the journey of bereavement decluttering. This isn't just about organizing or cleaning out a house. It's about carefully going through the memories and possessions left behind and each item's emotional weight. I will start by recognizing how interconnected our emotions and physical environments are, especially after losing someone close.

After our retreat, it became clear that just as we need to filter through our emotional baggage, there is a profound need to physically declutter the spaces around us, especially in the heartbreaking context of losing a loved one. This led me to consider the tangible aspect of grief and healing. Let me introduce you to someone who has been walking this path.

Laurie who was at the retreat, my fellow griever, her story is not unusual, but it's deeply personal. She just lost her mother a year ago, and Laurie was faced with the unsettling task of sorting through her mother's belongings. Her mother's closet was still full of clothes and shoes, her drawers were packed, each item a testament to a life lived.

Laurie found herself wrestling not just with what to keep or let go, but with the rush of memories each object brought and the guilt that sometimes followed her decision. Laurie's story really resonated with me and highlighted a truth that often goes overlooked, the emotional journey of decluttering after the loss. It's a delicate balance between holding on to cherished memories and finding the courage to let go, knowing it may bring peace and closure. I will dive into how Laurie, like many of us, navigates this bittersweet task. We'll see the ups and downs, the pauses and steps forward in their journey.

But before I go on, it's important for you to catch the foundational aspects of bereavement decluttering and how it is distinctly different from ordinary decluttering. I want to emphasize that grief is a deeply personal journey, and there is no one size fits all approach. While some may find comfort in a swift

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decluttering process, others, like Laurie, wrestle with the emotional weight attached to their loved one's belongings.

Do you tend to cling to everything that reminds you of the person you lost? Or do you go fast and furious with your family's belongings? I'm going to define what bereavement decluttering is and why it's important. The debate about bereavement decluttering, explore how the KonMari method can be adapted and applied to the grieving process, and, of course, offer tips and strategies for decluttering, which can help you honor the memory of your loved ones while creating space for new beginnings.

Taking your time with this process is important as I provide actionable advice on approaching decluttering. All right, so here is the definition of bereavement decluttering that you've been anticipating to learn more about. It refers to the process of sorting through and organizing belongings, spaces, and possession after the loss of a loved one.

This practice involves making deliberate decisions about what to keep, what to discard, and what to repurpose in order to create a more functional, meaningful environment during the grieving process. To truly understand this, let's talk about an episode I caught on Netflix. I will put the title of the show in the show notes.

In one touching episode, I encountered the story of Margie, a widow who bravely faced the task of decluttering her late husband's possessions. It had been only nine months since her husband's passing, and the grief was still fresh and natural in every corner of their shared home. As a person deeply connected to memories and sentimental objects early on in my grief, I initially found Margie's readiness to declutter stunning. But, again, everyone grieves differently.

However, Margie's journey revealed a crucial aspect of bereavement decluttering. For her, many of her husband's belongings were not just simple objects. They had become symbols of her intense pain and loss, constant reminders that were becoming too painful to bear each day.

With the courage and the guidance of KonMari method, Margie undertook the emotional task of sorting through her husband's things. She carefully touched each item, deciding if it brought her memories of joy or sorrow. This selection

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process was heart wrenching. Tears were her frequent companions as she sorted out her husband's clothes, books and personal effects.

Ultimately, Margie chose to keep only those items that spark a light within her. Items that brought smiles in the middle of the sorrow, like the collection of photographs from her travels together. The rest, while cherished once, were lovingly packed and donated thereby helping others and honoring her husband's joyful spirit.

The episode beautifully captured Marjorie's dual nature of grief and healing. The decluttering was painful, an emotional trial by fire, but it also catalyzed her healing process. As the final box was given away, Margie's expression revealed a tangible sense of relief, as if a burden of grief had been lifted from her heart and the objects surrounding her. She called the experience a rebirth as she was able to relive many memories and make room for many more to come.

This story demonstrates that the journey of bereavement decluttering does more than just organize a physical space. It can profoundly transform the emotional landscape, turning sad reminders into cherished memories and ultimately fostering a path towards healing and acceptance.

So the KonMari method is developed by Marie Kondo, the tidying up expert who has helped people around the world transform their cluttered homes into spaces of serenity and inspiration. Her simple but effective sorting out method ensures you never revert to clutter again. It also emphasized the importance of recognizing what brings us joy.

Now, while the idea of joy might guide many in selecting which memories to retain, it's crucial to recognize that joy manifests differently for everyone. For some, it could be a book that brings back laughter. For others, an old gardening tool might rekindle feelings of warmth and connection. It's all about the unique emotional ties that bind us to different objects.

There's been this fascinating debate about bereavement decluttering. It's like that ultimate showdown between emotional attachment and practical. On one side, you have folks who are all about the sentimental value of their loved one's belongings. They see these items as little pieces of memories, almost like

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holding onto a piece of the person they lost. You can totally understand that, right? These things become more than just objects. They're like little time capsules of cherished moments.

But then there's the practical crowd. They argue that decluttering is essential for moving forward and making space to breathe and heal. They say that holding on too much stuff can weigh you down both physically and emotionally. Hey, they got to a point too. Sometimes letting go can be incredibly freeing. It's like a tug of war between the heart and head, right? On one hand, you want to honor your loved ones memory and keep everything close. But on the other hand, you know that letting go might just be the key to finding peace in the chaos of grief.

After understanding the emotional attachment and potential hurdles of bereavement decluttering, let's proceed with a structured and healthful approach. Let's explore how the KonMari method can be utilized in this unique situation, offering a pathway that brings order to your physical space and honors your emotional need during this challenging time.

All right, here are some actionable steps that you can walk away with, your step to step guide to bereavement decluttering. Step number one, prepare mentally and emotionally. Before you start the physical task of decluttering, take a moment to acknowledge your emotions and affirm your readiness. Journaling, meditation, or having a supportive friend or family member present might be helpful.

During our retreat, Laurie shared her emotional journey with her mom's belongings in the house. She found herself consumed in the overwhelming emotions of grief and guilt, which led her to open up to us. After releasing her pent up emotions, she welcomes guidance on how to progress without being constantly haunted by reminders like unworn piles of clothes.

Step two, handle each item with care. Now with the KonMari method, you hold each item you own and decide whether it brings you joy or not. This helps you keep only the items that truly matter to you. As you hold each item, ask yourself if it sparks, joy, comfort, or any significant emotion.

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Laurie's process was deeply introspective. She wrestled with feelings of guilt and loss as she decided what to keep and what to let go. What sparks joy in her mother's possession? She holds on to valuable pieces of jewelry that she will keep, but discard most of her mom's clothes and shoes. Remember, what brings joy can vary widely. For some, a piece of jewelry might bring a smile. While for another, joy might come from an everyday kitchen item that brings back fond memories spent together. It's not about the item's function or traditional value, but it's the emotional vibrance with you. A

Step number three, seek closure and healing. Recognize that letting go of some belongings does not mean losing memories. Give yourself permission to find peace and closure through this method of decluttering. As for Laurie, handling her mother's possession wasn't just about organizing physical items. It represented the slow, thorough work, inner work too, of honoring and letting go of the past.

Our collective emotional decluttering at the retreat mirrored this journey through personal memories. Just as Laurie sorted through physical items, we dive into our internal clutter, identifying emotions that need acknowledgement and release. Laurie's experience underscored the profound impact of physical decluttering on emotional healing. It reminded us that while objects may be tangible, the actual work is often within the dim shadow of our emotions.

By carefully and thoughtfully adopting the KonMari method, you can make the process of bereavement decluttering less dreadful and more meaningful. Each step you take is not just about organizing material possessions, but also about acknowledging your grief and celebrating the life and memories of your loved ones.

So in this episode, we explored the deeply personal and emotional journey of bereavement decluttering. Using Laurie's story and the principles of the KonMari method, we discuss how decluttering a loved one's belongings can be a step towards healing. We learned that the process is about creating space in our homes and processing and honoring our memories and emotions.

Here are some takeaways. Bereavement decluttering helps in achieving emotional clarity by allowing one to confront and process each memory

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associated with the deceased's belongings. It's essential to declutter at a pace that feels right for you. Everyone's grief is unique and so is their path to healing.

Focus on keeping items that spark joy or bring comfort rather than holding on to everything out of obligation or guilt. Learning to let go is a profound step in the grieving process, symbolizing both an end and a new beginning in how we remember our loved ones.

As I wrap up today's conversation on bereavement decluttering, remember that each item you touch holds not just memories but a piece of your heart. Honor that connection as you decide what to keep in your life. Now for a bonus journaling prompt tailored to your headspace to declutter. Journaling is your activity in navigating the landscape of grief in a personal and professional space. I invite you to participate in a reflective journaling exercise.

Here's your journaling prompt. Think about an item of your loved one that you hold on to, reflect on the emotions that surface when you touch or see this item. Does it kindle joy, bring comfort, or provoke sadness? Spend 10 to 15 minutes writing about this item and what it represents in your journey of grief and healing. I would love to hear how this journaling exercise resonates with you and how this exercise impacts you. So please email me your insights at info@sandy linda.com.

If today's discussion brought you any comfort or insights, please share this episode with someone in your life who might be on a similar path. Each share extends support and understanding across our community of listeners. Join us next time as we continue to explore powerful themes that enhance our professional lives and personal growth. Have a fabulous week everyone. 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.