

Ep #44: Rediscovering Your True Self After Loss



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sandy Linda

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The shock and sorrow when early dreams fade in midlife. Who are you now? The question everyone asks after a loss. Losing a loved one leaves us confronting profound questions about identity and purpose. Let's rebuild a sense of self after a devastating loss. 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 humans. How are you all doing? I'm so glad that you are joining us today. Whether you are new to our community or a returning listener, we're here to support you through your journey. Please stay tuned until the end for a special Father's Day prompt for those struggling after losing a dad.

Now, I know last month was Mother's Day, but I have to also give presence to Father's Day and for those daughters whose identity was suddenly disrupted. The question is, what now without your father's presence?

So today, we'll discuss the unique identity crisis that comes with losing someone close to us during midlife. When a parent, spouse, or sibling dies, their absence can leave a hole in our sense of self. We'll talk about why this happens and provide tips on managing the emotional impact of grief, rethinking what it means to be worthwhile and fulfilled, building resilience, and finding meaning in loss.

My goal is to empower you to use these hard experiences as an opportunity for growth. Loss has a way to force you to evolve. Let's honor the past while creating a new identity that aligns even more with your core values.

I'd like to share a story about Jessica, a friend I connected with during the pandemic in an unexpected way. Jessica is a rising star, the youngest VP at her tech firm. She had an aura of confidence and ambition that came from a close relationship with her father, who was her biggest supporter. He cheered her on to reach for the stars in her career.

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Then her world turned upside down. Jessica's father passed away suddenly. She was devastated. Around this time, Jessica and I met virtually. She provided guidance on transitioning to remote work while privately she shared her grief over losing her dad. At first, it seemed we had little in common, but grief connected us. I became her grief advocate as she navigated profound questions about who she was without her father's presence. She became my tech guru as I figured out Zoom.

Our unlikely bond highlights how grief can shake anyone, even eager, successful people like Jessica. When her primary source of support died, Jessica had a tough time figuring out her identity and purpose. Many of us can relate to Jessica's crisis of identity after losing someone close to us. The death of a loved one who played a central role in our lives often leaves us dealing with our sense of self in some key ways.

Let's explore a few of the common effects grief can have on our identity. The first point I want to discuss is how grief alters our sense of self. I tell you, grief can shake us to our core, leaving us questioning our most basic assumptions about life and our place in the world.

When someone close to us dies, it's not just a relationship that is lost. It's also the mirror they provided that reflected back our best qualities and reinforced our sense of self. We relied on our loved one to remind us of who we are and make us feel grounded. Without them, our confidence shifts and we struggle to see ourselves clearly. Jessica saw her dad as her rock. His death made her question her core beliefs about achievement and meaning. She no longer felt the eager go-getter at the office.

Another point I want to discuss is rethinking what it means to be worthwhile and fulfilled. Grief has a way of realigning our priorities and forcing us to re-evaluate what success means to us. What are we truly worthy of? When a loved one passes away, especially one who strongly influenced our direction in life, we may realize we've been chasing dreams or goals that weren't fully our own.

Jessica saw that relentless climbing the corporate ladder was more her father's definition of achievement than her own. She had to dig deep and get back in

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touch with her core values. What really mattered to her beyond status, money, or accolade? Jessica discovered her passion.

Another point is loss can build resilience. Grief can bring out inner strength we never knew we had. By learning to integrate loss, we build the ultimate resilience. Jessica used her pain as a way to grow. She developed a greater sense of self-reliance, courage, and wisdom. Her grief taught her valuable skills to deal with tough situations. To build resilience from grief, here are some clear-cut strategies I want to offer you. Reframe the narrative. See yourself as a survivor, not a victim. You have the power to write the next chapter.

Another strategy is to embrace the full range of emotions, the sadness, the guilt, the anger. Put it out there. Because when you bottle it up, it is a great stress factor. So feel it fully so you can move through it. Another strategy is to try new challenges outside your comfort zone. Things like public speaking, travel, or volunteering to help build that self-confidence.

By taking proactive steps to build resilience, reframing mindsets, facing fears, expanding support circles, we turn grief into an empowering force for growth. We emerge wiser and more grounded in who we are. While Jessica still misses her dad every day, her memory inspired her forward. She emerged stronger with a more grounded sense of identity.

Now, do you want some of that vitamin C care to really answer those questions? Who are you now? Well, now that we've explored the emotional impact of grief and how it can shake our sense of identity, let's discuss some practical strategies to move forward.

Though grieving is challenging and ongoing, we can embark on steps to rediscover meaning and purpose. With self-compassion, reflection, and courage, we can leverage these painful experiences as an opportunity for growth.

Here are some actionable tips for rebuilding your identity after loss. Be a compassionate observer to yourself. Grief takes time. Don't expect to get over it. Identify how your loved one shaped your sense of self. What beliefs might need re-examining? Clarify your core values. What really matters to you? Set goals based on your values. Find new mirrors to see yourself clearly. Connect

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with those who value you for being you. Discover new sources of meaning and purpose like volunteering or creativity. The last is to embrace the personal growth that comes from surviving grief. You now have the inner strength to draw upon.

Losing someone central to our identity creates an opportunity for reinvention. Their absence can reveal that we've been living for others' dreams and not our own. With compassion for ourselves, we can redefine or rethink success on our terms. We can discover new pathways aligned with our values. We can leverage our pain to build resilience and wisdom. Grief shakes us to our foundation.

Over time, experience shapes a more grounded, courageous, and purposeful identity. We honor those we lost by evolving into our best selves. If you're struggling with a sense of loss identity after grief, remember you have the power to redefine yourself. Embrace this crossroads as a catalyst for growth. I'm here to support you each step of the way. Please reach out if you need guidance during this challenging transition. Together, we'll discover the unique gifts within you.

For a bonus, journaling prompts me to thrive as a leader. Journaling helps navigate grief in a personal and professional way. I invite you to take part in a reflective journaling exercise. I have a theme for this Father's Day for you all lovely ladies out there who are struggling with Father's Day. The theme I want to put out there is a symbol of love.

Choose an object or a place that symbolizes your dad's love for you. Describe it in detail and write about why it holds such a significance. How can you incorporate this symbol into your daily life as a reminder of his love? Write about this prompt and what it represents in your grief and healing journey. Give yourself about 10 to 15 minutes.

Please email me your thoughts on how this journaling exercise resonates with you and impacts you. If today's discussion helped, please share this episode with someone in your life on a similar path. Each share extends support and understanding across our community. Join us next time as we explore themes

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that enhance our professional and personal growth. Thank you so much for listening and have a pleasant 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.sandy linda.com.