

Ep #45: Is Divorce Really Like Death?



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sandy Linda

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Which is harder to cope with? Divorce or death? Tune in to uncover why many compare it to grieving a death, plus gain actionable tips for your emotional recovery. 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 it's your first time here, welcome. I am your guide to healing and recovering from emotional storms. I offer guidance on overcoming grief and moving beyond your grief and living a purposeful life. If you are grieving a loss, I'm sending you healing thoughts and blessings as you rebuild. For my returning listeners, thanks for popping in.

So last week I had a lunch outing with a good dear friend of mine, and she asked a good question, which was so thought-provoking for me. She asked, is divorce like death without a burial? It was interesting enough that later on, I received an email from a listener with the same question, but not thought-provoking, but the question was reframing it is divorce like a death?

This question hit close to home for me because I've dealt with the loss of a loved one, but I'm not familiar with divorce. I wanted to address this complex issue in today's show because it needs more exploration. Many of us have mixed opinions about the question, is divorce the same as grieving a death? This prompts me to engage in a Q&A discussion and provide coaching tools to help you pick up the difference and similarities. I once believed it's the same, but it taught me something valuable. I want to share with you to help you grow and have better conversations.

A couple of years ago, I encountered someone who was getting divorced during a delicate time in my life. She described it as similar to grieving. I wasn't sure if her divorce and my loss of my family were connected. The death of my family felt different from her situation.

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As I explored the topic further, I uncovered conflicting opinions among experts regarding whether divorce grief and death grief are the same. Some psychologists argue that the two experiences are different. Note in one article, psychologists say that divorce can't be compared to the death of a spouse because the dynamics are vastly different. Yet in both scenarios, you're losing a loved one who is very dear to you. Interesting enough, I noticed that others believe that while the circumstances may differ, the emotional impact can be similar.

From what I've learned, both divorce and death bring a deep feeling of loss and require time to grieve and adjust. Ultimately, I believe that it's not about comparing the two experiences, but rather acknowledging both involve significant emotional pain and challenges. By recognizing this, we can approach either type of loss with greater empathy and understanding. The end of marriage can bring up feelings of grief, but also the possibility of a new beginning.

In this episode, I'll explore the details of grief with empathy and compassion. I'll talk about how divorce grief and bereavement grief share common emotions like anger, regret, and guilt, and the need to readjust. Next, I'll discuss unique experiences with post-divorce relationship and coping with death. I want to address this topic with compassion, recognizing that each person's grief journey is valid and personal. My plan is to provide valuable insights and support along with practical tools for long-term healing and recovery.

Death and divorce are two of the most profound losses we can experience, but they affect us in somewhat different ways. The difference is death is permanent. When a loved one dies, they're gone forever. Whether you liked, loved, or had a complicated relationship with them, they are gone from your physical sight and sound. It's final but also an endless ache because you'll never see or speak to that person again. The relationship remains frozen, unchanged since their passing.

Now, divorce is a unique situation. The person you once shared life with remains present. You might bump into them, see their social media updates, or hear about them from mutual friends. This constant presence can bring both pain and serve as a reminder of what used to be. Unlike death, divorce leaves room for

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the chance of resolving your relationship in the future. It's hard to handle uncertainty when someone's existence starts to affect you in new ways.

While divorce and death are different loss, they share some profound similarities, which is why people often compare them. Divorce and death are major life-altering events. Divorce represents the end of marriage. Death marks life's end. You grieve for the loss and accept a new reality. Neither divorce nor death are part of anyone's life plan.

When we get married, we envision a future together, growing old side by side. The unexpected loss of a loved one is something we never see coming. Both events break these illusions and make us face a new and sometimes unwelcome reality.

The pain of losing someone, whether through death or divorce, is intense and can take many forms. Feelings of anger, guilt, and regret are common in both situations. Finding unexpected joy is a natural part of grieving. These emotions are important for healing, even if they can be uncomfortable.

If someone is going through a divorce and talks to you while you're grieving a death, try to be kind and understanding. Both experiences cause emotional distress. Each person's grief process is unique and should be respected.

Consider the intentions if someone compares divorce to death. Are they seeking common ground and support or are they unintentionally minimizing your experience? So watch out for their intentions when they compare that.

Remember, divorce and death share emotional discomfort. I have to say, the most common emotions that I have come across with who I had in previous experiences and one of my clients are anger, guilt, and regret. But they have fundamental differences.

In divorce, closure or reconciliation may occur while it represent a permanent separation. If the conversation isn't helping your healing process, it's essential to set healthy boundaries. Express that you're in a different place in your grief journey, but appreciate their perspective. When you acknowledge the similarities

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in emotional pain and respect the unique challenges each person face, you create a supportive space of mutual understanding.

Engage in open communication about your feelings and encourage others to do the same. You don't have to face the trials of grief alone. Together, you can find strength and comfort in understanding each other's experiences, whether they are related to divorce or death. Remember, your grief is valid and your healing journey is for you.

By approaching these conversations with compassion, understanding, and healthy boundaries, you empower yourself and others to process their emotions and move forward in a way that honors their individual experiences.

Okay, I hope that helped you understanding the difference and the similarities to it and how to have the open communication with each other. Now, here are some insights that you can put into action. When someone compares their divorce to your experience of losing a loved one, approach the discussion with empathy and understanding.

Start by acknowledging their feelings. You can say something like, I can see how much pain your divorce has caused you. It's completely valid to feel that way. By showing that you understand and care about their experience, you create a safe space for open and honest communication.

Next, gently share your own perspective using I statements. For example, I have found that while divorce and death both involve loss, but death feels more permanent, but I understand that the pain of divorce is still very real and significant. You see how I reframed it?

Finally, I want to emphasize the value of self-care and seeking support during these hard conversations. Creative listeners, remember to connect with your emotions and seek help from trusted individuals if necessary.

By following these steps, you can create a more compassionate and understanding dynamic, which benefits both of you. You will be better equipped to navigating these tough conversations and support each other through the challenges of loss and grief. Begin implementing this approach

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today and witness the transformational impact it has on your relationships and interactions.

To improve communication with people who see divorce as similar to death, acknowledge their feelings. Share your own viewpoint, highlighting the shared emotional impact. You can foster better communication and understanding with those who feel divorce is the same as death. This approach helps bridge the emotional gap and support mutual healing and empathy.

Today, we explored the question is divorce like death? Whether the grief experienced by divorce is like the grief of losing a loved one, both experiences bring deep feelings of loss and sadness. We've reviewed the unique challenges and nuances of each. I shared my personal story and expert insights.

We discovered divorce grief involves the painful end of a relationship with the possibility of future interactions or even reconciliation. Losing a loved one means you can't have closure or make fresh memories with them. However, we also recognize the significant common ground between the two types of grief. Both divorce and death can shatter our expectations for the future. You are left to face powerful emotions and take part in a tough journey of change and healing.

So here are your key takeaways from this episode. Acknowledge and validate the pain of both divorce and death without comparing or minimizing either experience. Approach others' grief with empathy, compassion, and an open mind, recognizing that each person's journey is unique. When discussing divorce and death, focus on the most common emotional threads. They are anger, guilt, and regret while also respecting the distinct challenges of each.

Support others going through divorce or bereavement by creating a safe space for open communication, offering practical help and encouraging self-care and professional support when needed. Remember, healing takes time and is unique to each person. Take time to understand and support yourself and others as you face the emotional and challenging aspects of grief.

Now you have the tools and the strategies to help you and smooth out the conversation with someone that asks is divorce the same as grief. Thank you so much for listening. If today's discussion helped, please share this episode with

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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 to improve our professional and personal growth. 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.