

Ep #46: How to Navigate Through the Dark Days of Grief



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sandy Linda

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Now I see. If I wear a mask, I can fool the world, but I cannot fool my heart. When will my reflection show who I am inside? These powerful words from Christina Aguilera ring true for someone facing the dark days of grief. But what if embracing these dark days be the key to healing? 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 humans. How are you all doing today? If this is your first time here, welcome to the show. For returning listeners, thanks for popping in the show. If you lost a loved one, I send you healing thoughts and blessings as you walk on this path to healing through your grief.

Are you enjoying the beach or going on vacation with loved ones this summer? I have fond memories of spending summer vacations with my parents, whether we were at the beach or on exciting road trips or tropical getaways. My summers are now filled with road trips and peaceful walks in nature, either by the beach or in parks with my colleagues and business associates. I want to address that the parks looks beautiful when the sun is shining high. and you can enjoy the company of the birds and a mysteriously rabbit that came and took your carrots out of nowhere.

Checking the weather forecast help us prepare for the day, right? Yet, what we do when no preparation can ease the emotional storms of grief, the days when we're caught in a downpour of sorrow and everything feels dark and hopeless. Have you had days like that? I certainly have. When I get an email about how the show has no hope for some, it gives me a chance to talk about the dark side of grief and how it's still possible to find hope.

Now, let me address that. The purpose of this podcast is to inform, educate, and provide meaningful solutions for those who are grieving or supporting someone through their grief journey. It's not a quick fix solution, but I want to illustrate the potential for someone who faced major losses and found an unexpected path to survival.

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Now, some of you wonderful listeners may have experienced a recent loss or have been struggling to cope with grief for over three years. Are you familiar with the term dark days of grief? The hardest part of grief is dealing with the unspoken struggle of emotional storms.

It's like a tidal wave of thoughts flooding our heads. It could be a harmless date on the calendar, a milestone, a holiday, or an anniversary. It comes unannounced and uninvited. It's a dark day. I want to address a journal entry that I wrote back in 2018 that it was so impactful for me to do it on this episode.

On it, it says, "It's a dark day, a day filled with overwhelming grief. It will drag me down and won't let me go. I can't escape the pain in my head and heart because there's nowhere to hide. I'll be helpless facing the harsh truth that my family is gone forever. The sadness is so strong that it physically affects me like a heavy burden on my chest. Grief taunts me as I try to stand, but my tears blind me. I can't change the past. I cannot go back and save my family. I refuse to let society dictate my limitations. If I have to go through tough times, let them be the darkest days."

The dark days are when you feel no happiness or purpose in life. Why act like everything is fine? You can't force a smile for the sake of your other family members. The energy to get out of bed may not be an option. You only want to stay in darkness.

After experiencing a traumatic event, I spent a lot of time isolating myself and avoiding the joys of life. The loss and attempts to find joy only increased my distress. I came across some ideas about personal growth, but they came at the wrong time for me too. It made me want to shut myself off from self-help ideas forever. How does this happen? It happened to me and it's probably happening to many of you.

I understand that the idea of strength and hope can seem unrealistic and ridiculous. I know it's hard to believe in them just because someone says they are true. While self-help promises to bring you wholeness and help you to overcome hidden pain, it can be challenging because it may steer you away from dealing with your current situation.

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Instead of seeking a quick fix, understand where you are in the present moment. When our lives fall apart, it's sometimes hard to understand how we make it through the next day. Not to mention making the adjustments for the next five, 10, or 20 years. Managing milestones and holidays can be draining.

Today, I want to help you understand the intense motions of anger and the underlying feelings beneath it. Anger can often hide a range of other emotions that we avoid facing because they are too painful. Unresolved anger can cause people to lose hope.

I want to help you navigate two common emotions associated with anger that is part of the grief. Those two emotions are bitterness and resentment. I'll provide tools and guidance on how to face and sit with these feelings. The acknowledgement of experiencing dark days is a normal part of the grieving process. However, recognize when it's time to heal and work through your grief.

If you lost someone, or it's been more than 3 years, you may lack the energy to get out of bed and face the world. Grieving can lead to the dark days filled with intense, challenging emotions. That's why I don't follow the stages of grief because one of the stages is anger. I feel like we need to unpack what else is underneath that anger. I wanted to share the two concepts that is relatable to grief and share my story with it.

So the first one is bitterness. Now, bitterness is a strong feeling of anger and sadness resulting that come from feeling unfair treatment. Experiencing loss often triggers a common reaction, especially when life appears unfair. People naturally seek reasons to understand why a loss occurred.

When faced with an untimely death, it's challenging to find an explanation leading to the conclusion that life just isn't fair. This realization can be difficult to accept and may lead to feelings of bitterness. For the first three years of my grief, I clung to my bitterness because I couldn't make sense of what I was going through.

Despite attending support groups, I remained lost and unclear in my thoughts. Some days I'd pretend to be happy even though I was hurting while on other days I got angry at people for small things or blame them for my pain. I

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was doing my best to recover from the pain of loss and move on by distracting myself. Those quick fix or self-help ideas couldn't help me escape the pain of grief.

I realized confronting and experiencing the pain is essential for genuine healing. Bitterness is a natural emotion that you may experience. Acknowledge that it's a mental space that you don't want to remain in. Although these thoughts cannot be prevented, I was on a mission to uncover the keys to healing during the dark days of grief. By the end of our discussion, I'll give you some techniques to overcome these difficult emotions.

The next common emotion with anger is resentment. Resentment is a common emotion during periods of grief. Resentment is past grievances or perceived wrongdoings. It's defensive with a touch of anger. Lack of support, neglect, and unresolved conflicts are the causes of resentment. I felt hurt as my family and friends walked away when I needed their support. I was so angry at them.

You know what happens with that anger? It gets trapped when I don't allow to feel the grief. That's one of the main reasons why anger is so unresolved because of the most common emotions. Someone who feels resentful might feel like a victim, but they might be too angry or embarrassed to talk about their feelings. Instead, they hold on to their grudges and show it through anger, especially when I got the email that there's no hope for them by listening to my show.

But I want to offer you that if you avoid grieving, you may end up feeling resentful. Resentment can manifest in various ways. You might keep feeling intense anger when you think about a certain interaction or experience connected to your loss. You might find it hard to stop thinking about the event which can make you feel stuck.

Additionally, feelings of resentment may surface as you fight with the aftermath of your loss. Some people cling to the negative emotions, constantly reliving a painful experience and unable to release their anger or urge for revenge. I kept revisiting thoughts about what happened in my life. Why did this happen? How do I move forward without my parents? Who is God anyway? I abandoned that

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whole spiritual nonsense. The emotional roller coaster ride was unbearable but a sudden stop to face these emotions with a compassionate heart.

Now, here are some basic tips I want to share with you that you can consider taking action on. Don't worry if you're not ready. You have the technique to help you during tough times. Begin by taking small steps to face emotional difficulties. There are ways to confront challenging days with confidence while still being kind to yourself. Start by acknowledging that your loss was unfair. Feeling bitterness and resentful is a natural response.

Examine how your perspective may fuel feelings of bitterness and resentment. It's natural to want to place blame for operational losses, whether in the world, others, a higher power, or yourself. Reflect on where you have been directing that blame. Accept the loss to move forward.

Acceptance doesn't mean forgetting your parents or sibling or denying the unfairness of their death. It means releasing anger to progress with your life. Though challenging, acceptance is crucial for reclaiming a fulfilling life. Please note, acceptance is hard but a journey on your own life terms.

Grief journaling is a powerful tool to help you navigate the unexpected storms of emotions that arise during the grieving process. It offers a private, solitary space to acknowledge your wounds, express your feelings without judgment, and gain clarity as you write your story. Setting aside daily time to journal about your loss helps process complex feelings and discover effective healing methods.

As you write, be compassionate with yourself, honoring your unique grieving process. Remember, there is no right or wrong way to grieve, and healing takes time. With patience, self-compassion, and the support of loved ones, you can find hope and light even in the dark days.

If you're not into writing, you could try listening to music and making a playlist. Music is a powerful tool for finding comfort and processing emotions during the dark days of grief. Music can help express feelings that are hard to put into words and provide a sense of connection and comfort. During the show, I referenced a quote from Christina Aguilera's song, Reflections. The setup

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showed I can't fool you by wearing a mask. It was time to share my reflections on those dark days of grief. Hope exists for all when you are ready.

I made a playlist called Dark Nights of Grief that reflects my own experiences and emotions, and you can title it however you want. But what I want to ask you is what do you want to include in your playlist? Include songs that evoke memories of your loved ones as well as songs that offer hope, comfort, or validation of your feelings.

Again, I want to remind you there's no right or wrong way to create a grief playlist. The playlist can be a combination of different genres, tempos, and moods as long as the songs are meaningful and comforting. If you find any of these suggestions helpful for your healing process, please email me. I would love to hear about your experiences during the dark days of grief.

Now, I am so grateful that I was able to share with you all that there is hope and survival if you just know where you fit in presently through your grief journey. I know I have been offering so much tips and suggestions about growth and contribution, but I am grateful for the fact that I can share with you that there are the ups and downs of grief, and it will probably inspire you to really look ahead of what it means to you about holding on to the memories and continue to go on. But know that grief is your lifelong companion, and I know that.

That's why I continue on progressing through and healing as a way to express myself and engage the conversation. That some may find I don't need this self-help, but I'm not here to offer you a quick fix solutions. I'm just offering some meaningful solution that will inspire you to heal in your own grief journey.

So in today's episode, we explored the dark days of grief, those times when the overwhelming emotions of loss feel unavoidable. We discuss how it's normal and validate to experience bitterness and resentment, even years after loss. To cope with bitterness and resentment, start by acknowledging these feelings. Examine your perspective, accept the loss on your own terms, and consider using tools like grief journaling or create a playlist to process your emotions.

Remember, healing is a gradual process that happens over time. It's okay to have dark days, even years after a loss. Be patient and compassionate with

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yourself and don't hesitate to seek support when needed. You are not alone on this journey. I want to say thank you so much for listening, and have a wonderful 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.