

Ep #53: Overthinking Grief: How to Move Forward in Healing



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Sandy Linda

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Are you trapped in a constant loop of worry and overthinking after going through a major loss? The mind can constantly torment us by dwelling on the past and worrying about the future, making it hard to grieve and heal. But what if I told you there's a simple technique that can help break this cycle and give you back control? Stay tuned as we reclaim your mental and emotional well-being even in the darkest days of grief.

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? If this is your first time, welcome to the show. It's so good to have you with us today. A special thanks to those who continue to support and listen to the show. I understand the hardship and loneliness of the grief journey, but you are not alone. I am sending you all my deepest empathy and wishes for healing as you navigate this challenging path.

Today, I want to talk about something most of us struggle with while grieving: overthinking. Overthinking is a common challenge when grieving, making it difficult to process our emotions. When I was grieving, I constantly battled the two faces of overthinking, dwelling on the past and worrying about the future. I felt trapped in a cycle of "what ifs" and "if onlys," unable to find peace. For about three years, I struggled with persistent overthinking, which kept me stuck and unable to cope with my hidden grief and emotional storms.

Many people, including myself and a group I work with, struggle with repetitive thoughts about the past, the "if only," and worries about the future, the "what if." This is a common experience. Overthinking during grief is a topic that hits close to home for so many of us. When we are struggling with the deep pain of loss, our minds can become our own worst enemies, constantly replaying the past and worrying about what's coming.

By shedding light on this issue and exploring proven techniques to address it, we can regain a sense of control over our thoughts and emotions and uncover a healthier path forward in our grief journeys. In today's episode, I will discuss the

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two faces of overthinking that often trouble us during grief, ruminating about the past and worrying about the future. I will explore how these thought patterns can keep you trapped in a cycle of mental anguish, preventing us from finding peace and healing in the present moment.

The first topic I'll address is the tendency to dwell on negative events and stories about the person who died. This type of overthinking can amplify our emotional pain, making it harder for us to cope with our grief. Next is the second phase of overthinking, worrying about the future. I'll explore how this type of overthinking is much focused on uncertain events with potential negative outcomes and how it can lead us to control situations that are beyond our control.

But hope remains. Throughout the episode, I'll be sharing proven techniques for regaining control over your thoughts and emotions, allowing you to experience your grief more fully. Let's help you break free from the grief cycle of overthinking. So join me as I shine a light on this often overlooked aspect of grief and discover how we can cultivate greater peace and resilience in the face of life's most challenging moments.

The overthinking grief cycle. Grief is a complex and deeply personal experience that can leave us feeling lost, confused, and overwhelmed. In the wake of a significant loss, our minds often kick into overdrive, trying to make sense of the impossible. This is where the overthinking grief cycle can take hold, trapping us in a never-ending loop of deliberate thinking and worry.

Have you found yourself constantly analyzing the hidden meanings behind the words and actions of family and friends? Do you find yourself replaying conversations with your loved one in your head, searching for clues or signs you might have missed? This type of overthinking is a common response to loss, as your brains attempt to process the drastic changes and emotions you are experiencing.

But the overthinking grief cycle doesn't stop there. As you struggle to navigate the early days of grief, you may also find yourself dealing with a host of other challenges. Your mind may feel unclear and unfocused, making even the simplest tasks seem terrifying. You may struggle to make decisions or express yourselves clearly as if the words are stuck and out of reach. And our minds are

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flooded with constant thoughts, memories, and images of our loved one. These intrusive thoughts can be both comforting and painful, a bittersweet reminder of the person we've lost.

Your days may involve a mixture of yearning and sadness for your loved ones. Minor tasks can feel overwhelming and exhausting. Another common manifestation of overthinking grief cycle is persistent worrying. When we are grieving, we often imagine the worst and worry about what might happen in the future. Sounds familiar to me. We sometimes worry like this because we want to avoid more pain, but it can quickly become overwhelming.

For many people who have experienced significant losses, the thought of losing another loved one can feel unbearable. This fear can lead to constant worry and hypervigilance as you try to prepare for and prevent any potential tragedies. You may find yourself thinking, "I can't lose anybody else." Or "If something happens to them, I won't be able to handle it." These thoughts are understandable. They can also keep you trapped in a state of anxiety and emotional paralysis.

You may become so focused on preventing future losses that you forget to live in the present moment and engage with the people and experiences that bring you joy and comfort. It's important to remember that these experiences are a normal part of the grieving process. Loss can cause our brains to rewire themselves, resulting in a range of different outcomes. But when overthinking and worry start to dominate our daily lives, it can be a sign that we need extra support and guidance to break free from the cycle.

A study found that dwelling on your shortcomings, mistakes, and problems may lead to depression and anxiety. Deliberate thinking creates mental health problems. Your tendency to dwell on things increases as your mental health decreases. When major hardship happens, such as losing your family members and friends in an instant, reliving it over and over can reduce your resilience. Overthinking can be linked to unhealthy coping strategies like binge eating, drinking, and self-harm. It impairs the quality of sleep too. When your brain is racing, it's difficult to get a good night's sleep.

Okay, everyone, now here are some practical strategies that exist to help you manage these persistent worries and break free from the cycle of overthinking

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grief. Now, I read about a technique called schedule worry time. Now, give me a moment to explain because I know it sounds odd because when I heard about it, I was like, who schedules worry time? But studies have found that using this strategy helps people feel less anxious and depressed than relying on traditional treatments, right? Odd.

The technique of schedule worry time involves setting aside a dedicated time each day to confront your worries and concerns. The idea behind schedule worry time is simple. Instead of allowing worries to consume your thoughts throughout the day, you contain them to an assigned time and place on purpose. This helps to break the cycle of constant rumination and gives you a greater sense of control over your thoughts.

When it's time to worry, you concentrate on recognizing and dealing with your worries head on. You could try writing them down, analyzing without bias and brainstorming solutions. By facing your worries in a structured manner, you can find new ways of looking at them and develop practical strategies to deal with them.

Scheduled worry time has one of the key benefits that it frees up mental space during the rest of your day. If worries come up when you're busy, just remind yourself to deal with them later. Stay focused on the present moment and engage fully in other activities. You can achieve emotional balance and resilience by letting go of your worries and actively dealing with them.

Besides schedule worry time, another effective strategy for managing overthinking during grief is practicing mindfulness. Mindfulness means being present and helps when you're stuck in thoughts of the past. To practice mindfulness, focus on observing your present experience without trying to change it. Pay attention to your senses. What do you see, hear, smell, or feel? If judgments or worries arise, acknowledge them without getting caught up in them. Let them pass through your mind like clouds in the sky and redirect your focus back to the present moment with a gentle touch. It's important to remember that mindfulness is a skill that requires practice and self-compassion. It's natural for your mind to wander or get caught up in judgment, but that's okay.

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Practicing mindfulness and self-compassion is crucial to remember. The key is to notice when this happens and guide your attention back to the present.

Another tip is to challenge your negative thoughts. When negative thoughts come up, it's important to challenge if they are true. Ask yourself, is there evidence to support these thoughts? Are there alternative explanations? Is my worry about something that may not occur? If you don't have proof of your negative thoughts, you might worry and overthink for no reason. By challenging your thoughts, you can reframe them into more realistic and positive viewpoints.

Overthinking can trap us in a cycle of mental anguish. In today's episode, I discuss the problem and offer you practical solutions to overthinking during grief. When we ruminate about the past and worry about the future, it intensifies our emotional pain and stops us from finding peace in the present moment.

The overthinking grief cycle is a common experience for those who have suffered a significant loss. It can take many forms, like constantly analyzing the meanings behind what people say and do, or replaying conversations with loved ones in our minds. We might experience a mix of comforting and painful thoughts and memories about the person we have lost.

Overthinking during grief can lead to endless worrying about worst-case scenarios and negative predictions about the future. This fear of losing another loved one can keep us trapped in a state of anxiety and emotional paralysis, hindering us from engaging with people and experiences that bring us joy and comfort.

However, it's crucial to remember that these experiences are a normal part of the grieving process, especially in the early days of grief. Our brains are rewiring themselves in response to the trauma of loss. And overthinking is a common manifestation of this. But when it dominates our daily lives, it's essential to seek extra support and guidance to escape from the cycle.

By incorporating the strategies that I offered to you into your daily life and seeking support when needed, you can cultivate greater emotional balance and resilience in the face of profound loss. You have the power to reclaim your mental and emotional wellbeing, even in the darkest days of grief.

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If you're struggling with overthinking during your grief journey, I want you to know that you're not alone and there's hope. This schedule-worry-time technique can be a game-changer in helping you break free from the cycle of constant rumination. By setting aside dedicated time each day to tackle your worries, you can create a space for healing and regain a sense of control over your thoughts.

I know it's challenging to implement new strategies when you're grieving, but I promise you the effort is worth it. And remember, be kind to yourself throughout the process. Healing takes time and it's okay to have setbacks along the way.

If this episode resonated with you, I encourage you to take action today. Test out the Schedule Worry Time technique for a week and observe its impact on your overthinking. And if you find value in this content, please share it with someone else who might struggle with overthinking during their grief journey. Together, we can create a community of support and empowerment.

Before we wrap up, I want to remind you that you are stronger than you realize. You have the power within you to navigate this challenging time and emerge with greater resilience and peace. Keep showing up for yourself, keep reaching out for support, and keep believing in your ability to heal.

Thank you for being here today and for trusting me to be part of your grief journey. If you haven't already, be sure to subscribe to the podcast for more insights and strategies on navigating the sneakiness of grief. You are not alone and you have the power to reclaim your mental and emotional wellbeing. Until next time, remember, grieve with grace, nurture your inner strength, and lead with courageous hearts. Take care of yourself and keep making gradual progress. Have a wonderful 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.