

**Ep #78: Intentional Vulnerability:
Why the Best Leaders Share Their Fears**



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With Your Host

Sandy Linda

[The Reinvention Lab: Where Ambitious Women Transform Loss into Legacy
with Sandy Linda](#)

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Leaders are expected to have it together. But what if that's a myth holding us back? Let's explore the truth about fears and why owning your uncertainties may unlock trust and long-term success. Stay tuned.

Welcome to *The Reinvention Lab: Where Ambitious Women Transform Loss into Legacy*. Hosted by Master Certified Life Coach and fellow trailblazer, Sandy Linda, this is your space to discover how life's biggest challenges can ignite profound transformation—where grief becomes growth, setbacks become stepping stones, and your unique story lights the way for others. If you're ready to turn life's challenges into opportunities for leadership, legacy, and forward momentum, you're in the right place. Let's dive in.

Hello, creative humans and fellow trailblazers. This morning, as March arrives, I stand at my window watching the first green plants push through the soil. Nature doesn't apologize for its transition. Winter doesn't hide its transition to spring. Yet in leadership, we often feel the need to hide our own seasons of change and uncertainty.

Yesterday, I was on a call with my team about a major strategy pivot. I felt that familiar tightness in my chest, the fear of admitting I wasn't 100% certain about the outcome. But I remembered, every time I have shared an appropriate fear with my team, our connection grew stronger, not weaker.

Today, let's explore why intentional vulnerability, when carefully shared, might be your greatest leadership strength. For those who have faced profound personal loss, you have developed an understanding what truly matters. Let's talk about transforming that wisdom into leadership power.

It's okay to have fears, but sharing them appropriately can be a leadership advantage. This angle is valuable for you who may feel pressure to have it all together during your personal and professional transitions. It may feel relevant as you redefine leadership in this new chapter.

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Last week, I attended a leadership event. One leader projected unwavering confidence about an upcoming transition, leaving no room for questions or doubt. The room's energy felt stiff, with people nodding, but not engaging.

Many leaders fear uncomfortable conversation because they worry negative emotions could undermine team motivation. One leader I met shared that she felt her positivity and resilient mentality were the backbone for her team. But in protecting that image, she realized she was ignoring her own emotional needs and projecting a facade of competence. This, as we all have heard before, is what many call toxic positivity.

Let's talk about this fascinating research about how we understand team dynamics. A Harvard researcher introduced the concept of psychological safety. What? The environment where people feel they can speak up, share ideas, and yes, even express concerns without fear of punishment or embarrassment.

What's captivating about the research is that the highest performing teams weren't those where everyone felt comfortable all the time. They were the teams where people felt safe to express uncertainty and vulnerability.

In fact, studies with teams show that members who admitted to and discussed their mistakes actually had better outcomes than those who maintain a front of perfection. This contradicts the old school leadership approach of never let them see you sweat. When leaders model appropriate vulnerability, it signals to everyone that it's safe to be honest about challenges.

There is an important difference between strategic sharing and what I call emotional dumping. Strategic sharing is purposeful. It's when you thoughtfully reveal concerns or uncertainties to build connections and find solutions as you maintain boundaries and awareness of your role. For example, saying to your team, "I have concern about our project timeline and would like everyone's input on how to address these changes." This is strategic sharing. You are being honest as you are maintaining a leadership presence.

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Emotional dumping on the other hand is unfiltered and burdensome for the listener. It's showing up to a meeting and saying, "I'm completely freaking out about this project and don't know what to do" with no direction or purpose.

For those of us who have experienced significant loss, our emotional journeys give us an intuitive sense about what matters and what doesn't. We have faced our deepest fears, giving us a unique capacity for authentic leadership. We can translate that experience into thoughtful vulnerability rather than emotional withdrawal.

The research is clear. When leaders maintain a constant front of positivity while ignoring real concerns, team performance decreases. People sense the disconnect. They stop bringing their full selves to work. Innovation suffers. But when leaders model appropriate vulnerability, they create the psychological safety that allows teams to thrive through challenges.

Instead of hiding fears or unleashing them without structure, use this three-part communication framework that maintains leadership presence while creating authentic connection. The first step is called Strength-Concern-Direction Framework.

Strength is begin by acknowledging a relevant strength or positive aspect of the situation. Concern is articulate your special concern or fear using I statements. And direction is close with a path forward or invitation for collaboration.

I'll give you an example. "Our team has met challenges with creativity", that's strength. "I'm concerned that our current timeline doesn't allow enough room for testing before launch." You hear the word concern. "I like us to explore options for adjusting the timeline or prioritizing the most critical testing elements." That's direction.

This framework works because it provides context and balance, transform anxiety into exact concerns that can be addressed, maintain your role as a guide rather than someone overwhelmed by fear. And it creates psychological safety for others to contribute solutions. If you navigated loss, you understand

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that naming fears makes them more manageable. Apply this wisdom to your leadership approach.

Step two, create vulnerable circles for useful sharing. Not all fears should be shared. Create trust circles to guide your vulnerability decisions. Your inner circle should be about one or two trusted mentors or peers outside of your direct reporting line to discuss deeper fears, uncertainties, and development areas.

Your leadership circle should be your direct team where you share unique, relevant concerns about projects, challenges, or directions using the first framework. Wider organization is about reframing fears as lesson learned or insights gained. Share vulnerabilities after you have worked through them.

The key distinction is timing and processing. Your inner circle helps you process your fears. Your leadership circle receives structured vulnerability. And then the wider organization benefits from your vulnerability derived through your wisdom. After a significant loss, many leaders mistakenly isolate their feelings or share aimlessly. I've been there. Creating intentional vulnerability circles honors both your need for authentic expression and your leadership responsibilities.

Step three, implement the fear to insight reflection practice. Stay with me. Transform your leadership fears into strategic assets through this regular practice. Set aside 10 minutes weekly to write your current leadership fears or concerns without judgment. And then question each fear. Ask yourself, What specialized information or insight is this fear trying to give me? How might my experience with loss influence this perspective? What unique wisdom might my journey give me?

And then after that, rewrite each fear as an insight statement, starting with this concern shows I value or this fear highlights the importance of. Choose one insight to share in an appropriate circle using your journaling session.

For example, I wrote fear. I'm afraid my team will lose momentum on our initiative while I'm struggling with my grief. And the insight was, this concern shows I value sustainable progress and need to create systems that thrive even

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when I need to step back. Then I apply to, I share my insights about creating resilient teams with our leadership team, acknowledging that life's anxiety has highlighted the importance of distributed leadership. You are honoring your fears and using them as tools for growth, for yourself, and your team.

When guided by intention, vulnerability is a superpower. After talking with courageous leaders who face profound personal loss, I discovered a surprising pattern. The leaders who strategically share their fears outperform those who don't.

Reflect on this today. Strategic vulnerability is a skill that takes courage, refinement, and intention. Share wisely, practice often, and you'll find that vulnerability connects you with others and strengthens you as a leader.

Don't forget to subscribe to our newsletter for weekly insights or share your stories with us through info@sandy linda.com. We're here to learn and grow together.

Thank you for joining me today. Keep leading with courage, embrace your fears, and most importantly, with kindness. Have a beautiful day, guys. Bye.

Thanks for joining us on *The Reinvention Lab*. If today's episode inspired you, don't forget to follow and share it with someone who's ready to turn their challenges into opportunities. Want to take your journey to the next level? Visit sandy linda.com/program and apply for coaching today. Together, we'll turn your story into a legacy. Until next time, keep moving forward with purpose, passion, and power.