

Ep #88: Rebuilding Community After Loss



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With Your Host

Sandy Linda

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with Sandy Linda

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You lose a loved one. Your job suddenly ends, or friendships that felt permanent drift away. What happens when your world shifts, that your sense of self no longer fits what others expect of you? Let's reimagine how we can create meaningful community during those critical periods of personal reinvention. 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. I hope you're doing well, especially those on the East Coast weathering the rain. I always remind myself that some seasons feel heavy, like the downpour. But they help us grow, right?

Recently, I was chatting with a fellow grief advocate about how we rebuild a community after loss. Our conversation sparked today's episode because, deep down, many of us are searching for belonging while trying to piece ourselves back together in the aftermath of change.

In our social media-saturated world, we're constantly shown images of perfect communities and support networks. But when real loss hits, whether it's the death of a loved one, a sudden job loss, or the painful departure of crucial friendships, those polished images often don't reflect what we need. The real work of rebuilding ourselves and our support systems happens quietly, beneath the surface. Not all communities are created equally, especially when it comes to helping us rebuild after loss.

Today, we'll explore how the types of community we find or create can either empower us to move forward or keep us stuck in our grief. Think about it. After a major loss, you're not just mourning what you have lost; you're also facing the question: Who am I now?

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Some communities embrace and support that search for a new self. Others, even with good intentions, can make you feel invisible or pressure you to rush your healing. So let me ask you this: When your sense of self is shattered, will your existing communities still hold space for you? Or will you need to build new ones?

Many people, especially women in creative roles, leadership roles, struggle with this identity reconstruction. It's common to hear, "I don't even know who I am anymore." This feeling doesn't just apply to personal loss; it's true for any major life-shifting event.

So, let's break down three types of communities that people encounter after loss and how each one can impact your journey of identity rebuilding.

First, let's talk about validation communities. These are rare, precious places. Spaces where your grief and changing identity are both honored. In these communities, you're allowed to be a work in progress. There's no pressure to move on quickly or rush your reinvention. You're given space to mourn, reflect, and try on new versions of yourself.

After a company merger, a client of mine lost her CEO position. As I learned from my previous work with her, she went out to find a group of former executives with whom she felt she had connections. In that space, she could grieve her lost role while also imagining who she might become next. That group didn't judge her for not bouncing back right away. She had permission to heal and to reinvent on her own timeline.

The second type is expectation communities. It's more common, yet sometimes tricky to spot. These groups casually, or not so casually, push you to maintain your old identity or quickly adopt a new one that fits their narrative. You'll hear phrases like, "Be strong for your family," or "You'll get back to normal soon." The trouble is, these messages can make us perform strength rather than actually experience healing.

Many women end up feeling invisible here, as if grieving openly or changing too much is letting others down. I felt this myself when I lost my family members.

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People, from colleagues to relatives, keep hoping I return to normal. But the version of myself they remembered was gone. I needed space to figure out who I was becoming. No pressure to pretend nothing has changed.

Finally, growth-focused communities strike a powerful balance. They recognize that healing is about looking back and looking forward at once. These communities offer emotional support and practical advice. They help you integrate your loss into your evolving identity without forcing you to cling to old stories or become defined by your grief.

In my experience, people who thrive after loss often find these kinds of growth spaces or intentionally create them. They're not about blending in or making excuses. They're about allowing you to reform yourself in connection with others and the world as you move ahead.

So, which community are you interested in? Before I continue, please leave a rating or comment on your local podcast app if you're enjoying this episode or any other episodes. Your feedback helps other women creatives and leaders find these insights, and I love hearing how these ideas resonate with you.

So, what can you do if you're in the midst of a major loss, searching for your next community? Start by assessing your current groups. Are they helping you honor your journey or rushing you to meet their expectations? Seek out or create validation and growth-focused spaces. These might be grief circles, peer groups, or even online forums where people share honestly about loss and transformation.

Give yourself permission to step back from communities that pressure you to perform healing rather than truly experience it. And finally, be open to new connections that emerge during transitions. Sometimes, the most supportive communities are the ones you never expected but found along the way.

So, I ask you, our Reinvention Lab community: What aspect of your identity is emerging after your loss? And what kind of community would best support that evolution? When you find meaning in your loss and the work that emerges from

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it, you are less likely to burn out, more likely to build authentic connections, and better positioned to transform your loss into a meaningful legacy.

Let's recap. Loss isn't just about what's gone; it's about discovering who you will become. The community you choose or build has a crucial impact on your healing and growth. By seeking out spaces that honor both your grief and your emerging identity, you give yourself the best chance to transform loss into a foundation for new leadership, meaning, and belonging.

Thank you so much for listening. Remember, your story isn't over. It's unfolding, and you're not alone on the journey. Have a great week, everyone. 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.