

Ep #96: How to Build Relationships That Can Weather Any Storm



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With Your Host

Sandy Linda

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with Sandy Linda

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What do you do when the people you thought would catch you when you fall are the same ones who walk away when life gets hard? Let's unpack from fair-weather friends to unshakable teams. 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. How are you all doing today? This summer has been amazing. I've had the pleasure of meeting some of you in person who bought my book online and wanted it signed. Someone told me they were thrilled to meet the real me behind the podcast, which cracked me up a bit. That's why I love connecting with you face-to-face when I can. If you ever want to connect, check the show notes for ways to reach out.

Many of you have been listening and gaining value from these conversations about transformation after a loss. Thank you for being here and sharing your stories and feedback. You inspired me.

And speaking of connecting, that's what today's episode is about. How loss showed me what deep, lasting relationships look like. And how they are the foundations of any strong team or leader. Maybe you are listening because you have lost something or someone important to you. Maybe friends disappeared when your business failed, or people you trusted couldn't handle your grief. Or maybe you're just starting over, asking yourself, how can I build lasting support?

Well, I've got three practical strategies that have transformed how I built relationships as a leader. By the end of our time together, you will have tools to create lasting connections.

Let me take you back to about 10 years ago. I was working as an event planner, and if you know anything about event planning, you know it's all about

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relationships. I was the social butterfly, always connecting people, always building networks. Then, out of nowhere, I lost my family members who meant everything to me. And my world just stopped. I took six months off to grieve and handle all the obligation that comes with loss. If you've been there, you know what I mean. The paperwork, the legal stuff, and trying to function when your world has been turned upside down.

But here's what nobody prepares you for. Sometimes the secondary losses hurt just as much as the first ones. People I had known and worked with for 15 years, they couldn't handle my grief. They walked away, some stopped calling, others made excuses when I reached out. I'm thinking, "Wait a minute. I just lost my blood family, and now the people I thought were my chosen family are disappearing too?"

It was like getting hit by a second wave when you are already drowning from the first one. But you know what? That experience became my greatest teacher in genuine relationships. I realized I had been building relationships like I was collecting party guests instead of creating a support system. These weren't bad people, but they were fair-weather friends. They could celebrate my wins, but they could not sit with me in my storms. That's when I knew I needed to build lasting relationships, especially if I was becoming an extraordinary leader.

After that experience, I worked as a mental health advocate. I helped people in crisis, shared my story, and spoke to leaders about mental health. And you know what I learned? The strongest support systems aren't built during the storm, but before the rain starts. If you are leading a team, your people are always watching. They wonder, "Will my leader be here when things get hard? Can I trust her to tell the truth? Or will she bail or blame me if things go wrong?"

Here's the truth that took me way too long to learn. Strong relationships aren't just nice to have as a leader. They are essential for team performance. When your team trusts you will be there in the hard times, they'll move mountains with you in good times. When they know you have got their back, they will give you their best work, their creative ideas, and their extra effort.

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Before I continue, please leave a rating or comment on your podcast app if you are enjoying this episode. Your feedback helps other women, creatives, and leaders find these insights. I love hearing how these ideas resonate with you. Every five-star rating brings this message to someone who needs it. Now, back to the show.

Here are three strategies that transform how I build unshakable relationships as a leader. The first strategy is building transparency, meaning openly sharing information about team goals, challenges, and changes. Think of it like being the parent who explains to their kids why the family is moving instead of just saying, "We're moving," and expecting them to be okay with it. When you are transparent, you are showing respect for your team's intelligence. You're saying, "I trust you to handle the real information."

When my fair-weather friends disappeared during my grief, I realized something. They left because they didn't know how to handle the uncertainty. They were uncomfortable, not knowing what to say or do. When you are transparent about challenges as a leader, you give your team the chance to step up instead of step away. For me, it looked like regular team check-ins where I say, "Here's what's going well, here's what's tough, and here's how we are tackling it." Soon, people stopped worrying and started helping. You share the "why" behind decisions, not just the "what."

That brings us to the second strategy: building trust through consistency. This is where your actions match your words, especially when it's inconvenient. It's like being the friend who shows up on time even in rough weather. The friends who walked away when I was grieving, they had made promises to always be there. But when being there got hard, their actions didn't match their words.

As a leader, I learned my team watches my actions more than my words. Consistency has three parts. First, following through on commitments, even small ones. Second, setting realistic expectations from the start to keep your promises. Third, communicating early and honestly about any delays or obstacles.

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Let me give you an example. I used to be the person who would say, "I'll get back to you by Friday," and then Friday would come and I realized I needed more time. So I sent a quick message Monday morning apologizing. But here's what I learned. That Monday apology doesn't rebuild the trust that was broken on Friday. Now I say, "I'll get back to you by Thursday, and if I need more time, I'll let you know by Wednesday." It's better to over-deliver.

And here's the beautiful thing. When you show up consistently in small ways, your team starts trusting you with the big things.

This leads us to the third strategy, which ties everything together: fostering a culture of accountability. This means everyone on the team, including you as the leader, takes ownership of their actions and commitments. It's like a family where everyone contributes to keeping the house running, not just one person doing everything as everyone else watches.

After losing those fair-weather friendships, I realized I needed to be accountable for choosing better relationships. I couldn't control their actions, but I could control who I invested my time and energy in going forward. I hold myself to high standards about who I show up for.

In leadership, accountability looks like setting clear expectations for everyone, including yourself. It involves following up on commitments without micromanaging and owning your mistakes and showing how you will improve. Instead of saying, "We need to improve our response time," I might say, "Our goal is to respond to client emails within 24 hours. I will check in with everyone Friday to see our progress, and if there are obstacles, we'll solve them together."

When you hold yourself accountable first, you set the tone. Your team will follow, and it builds a deep, lasting trust. The team I work with now, we all share values around excellence, meaningful work, and relationships. Accountability keeps those values alive in our daily actions.

These three strategies work together like the legs of a stool. Transparency without consistency is empty words. Consistency without accountability

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becomes people-pleasing. Accountability without transparency feels harsh and unfair.

If you are rebuilding after loss or business failure, these strategies help you create the support system you deserve. You're not looking for people who just want to be around for the celebration. You're building a team that will help you create something meaningful. These strategies help you create a relationship where people choose to give their best work because they trust you and the mission you're building together, whether you're leading a corporate team or building your own business.

Here's my personal reflection with growth. I used to think my fair-weather friends walking away was the worst thing that could have happened. But now I see it differently. It was a gift. It taught me the difference between connections and relationships. It showed me what I really want to build with my team and in my business. Those friendships were a setup for me to create something better: a team built on shared values, relationships that can weather any storm.

So, here's what I want you to do this week. Pick one of these three strategies and implement with someone on your team or in your business network. Consider being more transparent about a challenge you're facing. Follow through on a small commitment you've been putting off. Or have an honest conversation about expectations and accountability. Just pick one. Notice how it changes your relationship dynamic.

Now, if you're listening to this and thinking, "Sandy, I'm ready to do the deeper work of rebuilding my relationships and transforming my leadership approach," I'd love to talk with you about my coaching program. I work with women who have been through the emotional storms of grief and loss and who are ready to create something beautiful from what they have experienced. If you're ready to go deeper, if you want to rebuild your relationships and leadership from the ground up, I'd love to support that. All the info about my coaching is in the show notes.

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But remember this, it's about you, not about business. But here's what I want you to remember most. The relationships that help you build your legacy aren't the ones that disappear when things get tough. They are the ones that get stronger because you weathered the storms together.

Until next time, keep building something beautiful from whatever you've been through. I want to thank you so much for listening and have a beautiful 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.