Loss Is Sneaky — And It's Running Your Life Without You Knowing Transcript

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Podcast Introduction and Midlife Plot Twist

Welcome to Hotness, the podcast that brings you practical tools to balance your hormones and rekindle connection, confidence, and desire in midlife and beyond.

I'm your host, Dr. Liz Lister. Hotners is a safe space for honest conversations about menopause, sex, identity, love, loss, reinvention, and desire, because you can embrace your hotness at every age.

Welcome, Hot Ones, to the first installment of Midlife Plot Twist. Many of you know the huge plot twist that I went through year before last with the loss of my beloved husband and everything that's happened since then, including my participation in a program called the Grief Recovery Method.

This method made such a huge difference for me that I actually decided to learn more about it. The epiphany that i had while I was working through my own process was that in midlife we go through a lot of loss.

And it can be really painful. And other people don't recognize it as loss because it's not dramatic. It's the death of a loved one necessarily.

Why Grief Matters in Midlife

it could be so many other losses. Now we're going to talk about that a little bit today. Because of this, I'm so happy to share with you some of what I've learned.

We're just going start an introduction today and we'll continue it in other installments. So again, why would we talk about grief on a podcast about hotness and hormones?

I'm glad you asked. The reason is because if we do not address grief, it will quietly shape everything. Our health, our relationships, are vitality, or ability to feel alive.

By the time we get to midlife, those of us who are blessed to get this far, we really have gone through quite an accumulation of losses, transitions. Again, my entry point to really thinking about this was a huge loss.

It was totally unexpected, totally life altering. So as you know, grief is not theoretical. walked through it. I want to start with a definition of grief that you may not have heard before.

Defining Grief and Common Midlife Losses

One way of defining grief is that the simplest definition is the normal and natural emotional response to loss. We see this from birth and little kids and all the way up through all of our lives.

normal and natural emotional response to lust. Even though it's treated as abnormal and unnatural, it is, its normal unnatural. Another way of defining grief, and this was really a revelation for me when I started learning this, is that it can be defined as conflicting feelings caused by the end or change in a familiar pattern of behavior.

So for example, if you lose a loved one, let's say, you may feel, of course, incredible sadness. You might also at the same time feel relief. Maybe they were in pain.

maybe they was someone that you loved, but you didn't get along with. Might be a love one or a not so loved. The important thing for this moment right now in our conversation is that it's not a disorder.

It's no a weakness. Its not even something to get over. I want to come back to the point that its also not only about

death. Most people think of great loss as really only covering death or divorce.

Those are two of the biggest ones that people thing of. But there's really so many other losses that I think are particularly, of course they can happen at any time of life, but many happen in midlife.

Children leave home, careers take a change in direction, which could include a loss of identity or a lost of the role that you've played for a long time in your life.

A loss health or loss energy. That happens with the hormonal changes, a loss of the body that I used to know, that i know that had in the past. For others, at some point in adulthood, it can be loss of fertility.

It can loss parents even before their death. If they have dementia, we can lose loved ones even not in the context of death, We could lose a dream.

Cultural Myths and Suppressed Grief

There are so many ways we could loose a pet. A lot of people It's a little bit stigmatized because many, many people relate to their pet as a very important loved one in their life.

However, they don't necessarily get the same concern expressed towards them. That was something I also was very happy to learn about when I went through this training to become a certified grief recovery specialist.

So basically by the time a woman is in midlife, she has often experienced dozens of losses. And no one, including herself, may have ever acknowledged it as grief.

We also have a cultural problem with grief, at least in the US. Other cultures in world do better than we do. We have cultural conditioning of be strong, replace the loss, just keep busy, move on.

One of the worst ones is, yes, you had that loss but think of this other person, their loss was much greater. So comparing losses. And that's not to mention the treatment of tears and emotion and expressing the emotion of sadness.

We have this in this culture and that leads to myths about grief and how to respond to grief that we'll talk about in another segment. Today, I'm keeping it introductory.

However, you can see how this minimizes the whole experience. And then we internalize these cultural conditioning ideas. And we think, I should move on from this more quickly.

I shouldn't treat it as big of a deal as it was, if it a loss that wasn't a death or a divorce. I should be over this, I might should on myself or other people might, should, on me and tell me that I, should be getting better faster.

So what does that do? It leads us to not express it. It leaves us too suppress and not resolve the pain that is lying underneath.

How Unresolved Grief Affects the Body

So how does unresolved grief show up? it can be emotional numbness, it could be irritability, anxiety, loss of desire, it can be fatigue, disconnecting from the body, difficulty feeling joy and happiness.

Did you hear a few of those that overlap with the hormonal changes of midlife? So sometimes we don't know, we realize that what's happening underneath actually has grief woven into it.

This brings us to why a women's midlife health expert and hormone expert wants to talk about grief, because it's not just emotional, it is in your physiology.

It affects your sleep, which affects everything else. it affects you nervous system, It even affects inflammation. And you're probably aware that it would affect how you feel, your energy level.

You may have heard the phrase, your body keeps the score. And that's absolutely true with any of these types of losses, big or small, and even calling them big are small.

That's somebody else's judgment. Only you get to decide every loss is unique. I'll start with one myth today, but we'll have a lot more in upcoming segments of Midlife Plot Twist.

And this is the myth of time heals all wounds. The example that they give in the grief recovery method is example of a flat tire. If you get a fat tire and you're pulled over on the side of the road and pull out a folding chair and sit down and wait, time will not fix that flat.

It's the same with grief. Time doesn't heal it, but correct small actions actually can. So if you're starting to hear and recognize that you've been carrying around losses that never fully processed, you are absolutely not alone.

The Myth That Time Heals All Wounds

My midlife guide focuses on the physical. We do talk about other aspects of the transition into menopause, but it's all connected. Our bodies, our emotions, are experiences.

Midlife is full of plot twists, and I would love to hear yours. Sometimes the most important plot twist is that you realize that what you've been carrying has a name and also that don't have to carry it alone.

Taking the small correct steps to heal grief heals the pain. It doesn't take away the good memories that might have of the person or the pet of a relationship.

Now that you know that what you've been feeling is valid and there are a series of small and correct choices that can make and steps you can take to heal that pain, I look forward to being with you again in future segments of Midlife Plot Twist.

Thanks for listening to Hotness. Help more women find these practical tools by liking, sharing, and following the show, as well as leaving a review. As a gift for listing, go to drlizmd.com forward slash hotness for your free midlife guide filled with powerful support for you mind, body, soul, because you can embrace your hotnes at every age.