Midlife Plot Twist: Time Doesn't Heal Grief Transcript

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Introduction to Hotness 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. Hotiness 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 to the second installment in Midlife Plot Twist. Have you ever had a moment where some small little trigger just set off a huge emotional reaction and you thought, what in the world?

Why am I still reacting to this? We're going to take our next steps in how to set that baggage down and let it go. Maybe you hear someone's name and your body reacts and tightens up or conversations replaying in your head.

It's not weakness.

Why Unprocessed Loss Matters in Midlife

it is unresolved emotional pain. And the vast majority of us were never taught to actually process and let go of that pain. Why are we talking about this on this podcast?

I mentioned this briefly in the first installment. I talked about On a podcast about hormones and confidence and desire, why in the heck are we talking about loss and even talking Because by the time we get to midlife, we have all experienced loss.

As well as some unresolved pain that resulted from those losses. And it affects our vitality, it effects our aliveness. It effects are nervous system, It impacts our relationships.

our energy level, our brain function, or ability to be open with the people we care about, even our ability experience joy and connection. And I want that for you.

By midlife, many of us are carrying decades of emotional baggage that we were taught to minimize or suppress or even the dreaded, just move on. We're going to talk about how to actually accomplish that.

Myths About Grief and Emotional Pain

In the first installment, we talked about the definition of grief, which I'm applying to loss. The definition grief is the normal and natural emotional response to laws.

It's normal. Its natural. We also talked about the very important fact that time alone does not heal. We're taught time will heal all wounds, and it's simply not true.

What actually heals the pain from loss is taking the small, correct steps that help complete what was emotionally unfinished. I want to talk today about the myths that we are taught.

So what are we taught? If we're not taught the correct way to process this emotional pain, what our we thought? We are actually taught really unhelpful ideas that sound helpful, but actually can lead to us feeling more isolated.

The first one, as I just said, time will heal all wounds. Nope, it doesn't. That's not the, just time alone. will not heal. Just like a flat tire, if I pull to the side of the road and sit and wait, that will NOT fix the flat tyre.

There are a series of correct steps that I have to take for that to happen. So that's a myth. It's is that grief has stages. I love dispelling this one.

People have the idea of a timeline for when they should get over various losses or feelings of grief, and it just doesn't exist. The whole notion of there being stages, for example, in the Kubler-Ross stages of dealing with death and dying.

She actually, at the end of her career, acknowledged that it wasn't correct. So if you hadn't heard that, now you've heard them. Other myths include, don't feel bad.

Literally, people told, Okay, so don't feel your feelings. Very bad advice. We'll say more about that in the moment. Another myth is be strong. This is a big one in my family.

I come from a long line of strong women. Uh, I'll save more that that, in, uh, future installments. But it's a myth. It's myth about you just need to be stronger and basically not feel you feelings Another one is keep busy.

Now, I actually got people questioning me when I worked not very long after I lost my husband. It was work, it was my work. it Was an expression of myself, not an effort to not deal with the emotions.

So the myth is to just keep busy. It's related to time will heal the wounds because if you keep busy, then the time we'll pass and that flat tire will fix itself.

Another related myth is grieve alone. This goes along with be strong. Because we're not really taught that grief is the normal and natural response to loss, we are literally taught it's unnatural and we shouldn't feel it.

STIRBs: Short-Term Energy-Releasing Behaviors

Don't fell bad. You can see how these myths all feed and relate to each other. So grieving alone is, in my mind, connected to be strong. Don't share your emotions, especially if they're sad emotions.

And one more myth to talk about is replace the loss. This is a really popular one when it comes to the lost of relationships. Loss of a very important relationship, it could be a spouse, It could someone just in the past, doesn't have to be divorce.

It can be relationship that was important to you in past. Now these myths come from a well intentioned place. Right? People are not wanting you to feel sad or bad, and so they're using these concepts that are going to bring you out of your heart center, out your feelings, up to your head to try to help you.

However, you probably can see that what it does teach us instead is to disconnect from our feelings instead of processing them. We don't even have a chance to consider the series of correct steps because we're taught that just having those sad or bad feelings or upset or angry feelings is just something we shouldn't be doing.

Okay, so what that does instead is it leaves the emotions incomplete. They do not go away, they don't disappear into thin air. They actually get stored, stored in the body, and that's when it can really impact our health.

Not to mention our vitality and our feeling of aliveness and well-being, which is what I care about the most. So what is our next correct step? So we have a correct of identifying which myths are impacting us.

Which ones am I following rather than acknowledging my feelings and processing them? The next step is what happens when those feelings do not get expressed and they get stored?

Where do they go? They go into a storage place in our soul or our bodies or both, and they build up energy. And that energy eventually has to be released in some way, shape, or form.

In the grief recovery method that this information is really based on, that really spoke to me, and that I'm so wanting

to share with you, they call them STIRBs.

I love this concept. A STIREB is an acronym. It stands for short-term energy releasing behavior. And these are all kinds of things that we do to temporarily avoid the emotional pain.

all kinds of things and I'm going to name them and you're going realize, at least in other people, if not in yourself, it can be overeating, overworking, doom scrolling or even trying to do happy scrolling, but to the detriment of our other life activities and needs, drinking, alcohol, Shopping, we get kind of haha funny and call it retail therapy.

I've done that one myself. It can lead to numbness, just numbing. Another stirb is people pleasing, doing things for others. Along with that could be just keeping busy in some way, shape, or form.

Emotionally shutting down, that goes along with the numbing. Sex can be a stirb, a short-term energy-releasing behavior, and also angry outbursts. That energy is going to get released in some way, shape, or form, so these are a lot of the common ways.

What a Feeling Is and How Pain Gets Stored

So take a second and think about when you've experienced loss, which of the myths that you may have gotten sucked into and what might've been some of disturbs that may you have done.

Now, some of us become very high functioning in these stirbs and other people won't even notice it as what it is. So what we're doing when we are doing an action that is actually a stirb, a short-term energy relieving behavior is we emotionally avoiding our lives.

And it's not because we were broken. It's because weren't taught the steps to emotional completion. I'm going to do one more definition in this segment today.

And that is the definition of a feeling. What is a Feeling? A Feeling is physical reaction to a thought. Yes, it goes in that order, the thought first and then the feeling, and strong feelings can come from any kind of ending.

It doesn't have to be dramatic. it doesn' have be a death or a divorce. It can be moving.it can your nest becoming empty. the kid who left and gave you an empty nest coming back, where you lose the freedom that you experienced.

It could be really loss of any kind. it can be an unexpected, shocking loss, or it could something that your aware of as a slow decline. This is really, really common in relationships.

So we're having feelings even before the loss has really become complete. Now, because we're taught to only express happy feelings, right? And this is to be expected because the people who try to comfort us, they weren't taught how to process and resolve painful feelings.

That leads, as we were just saying, to stored feelings and when we don't know how the pain, that energy is going to leak out. We're going experience some kind of relief of that, either in the form of a disturb or something along those lines.

And what this really is, is false emotional protection. We feel if we feel angry or indignant or something like that, it's actually, we, feel like we're protecting ourselves emotionally.

But when we are not processing underneath, or not the pain, were actually hurting ourselves in the grand scheme. And we really, really can be hurting our health.

We are definitely hurting your vitality. So sometimes when somebody has a loss that they're not processing, they may develop a health problem. This is really common and a lot of people talk about this now.

And then dealing with the health problems can become your STIRB. Your energy relieving behavior can be all the things that you have to do, all of the activities and channeling your energy into addressing the heath problem Meanwhile, you still have not looked and processed and resolved and completed what was happening underneath that caused that health issue in the first place.

In the next installment of Midlife Plot Twist, we will talk about the difference between getting over, for example, a relationship loss versus getting complete.

Getting Complete and Closing the Episode

When we experience these losses, And what are the correct steps coming next to let go of emotional baggage that you may have been carrying? I want you to make room in your body and your soul.

I've done so much work in this area and the freedom that I have experienced has just been a gift and a joy and I wanted that for you. I want you to make room in your body.

I you want to have vibrant health. And yes, hotness. Take care and see you again soon. 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 listening, go to drlizmd.com forward slash hotness for your free midlife guide filled with powerful support for you mind, body and soul because you can embrace your hotnes at every age.