

Hey there, beautiful! 🌈 Before you dive in, a quick heads-up: this transcript is a super close-to-verbatim buddy from our podcast, but it's got its quirks! We didn't call the grammar cops on it, so you might bump into a typo or two. But hey, that just adds character, right? 😊 Embrace the wild side of language and enjoy the read! Happy exploring! 🚀

Create The Best Me

Well, hello there fearless midlife trailblazers. Welcome to Create the Best Me. If you are new here, I'm so glad you made it here. If you're returning listener, Welcome back to the one and only place where we encourage and empower women in midlife to pursue their dreams and live life to the fullest.

In each episode, we will delve into various aspects of life that contribute to molding us into a better, stronger version of ourselves.

I am Carmen Hecox, your host and personal development coach. Today we're exploring a topic that's often tough to talk about, but incredibly significant in our lives, navigating major life changes, grief, and loss.

You see, life is a series of chapters, some filled with joy, triumph, discovery, while others may be marked by loss, change and challenges. These difficult chapters, though painful, carry the potential for profound personal growth.

They are the curable in which our strength, resilience, and wisdom are tested and ultimately refined.

In today's episode, we will discuss how we can navigate significant life changes through seismic shifts that challenge our routines, identities, and expectations. Next, we'll delve into the complex experience of grief, breaking down the many ways it can manifest, and how it intertwines with our major life changes.

From there, we'll explore the concept of acceptance, what it really means, and why it's so vital when coping with grief and change. We'll also discuss the power and the importance of seeking support from others during these challenging times, and how this act of reaching out can bolster our journey.

And finally, we'll close the loop by looking at personal growth through grief and change. How we can use these experiences as catalysts to evolve and create a more resilience, empathic, and self-aware version of ourselves.

So, let's begin this journey by exploring what it means to navigate significant life changes. You probably heard the saying, that change is the only constant in life, right?

Nowhere is that more apparent than in the realm of significant life changes. These aren't your everyday shifts, like trying a brand-new brand of coffee or switching up your workout routine. No, we're talking about big shifts that really shake up the very foundation of our lives.

Perhaps you recently retired, stepping away from decades long career and the daily routine relationships and identities that come with it. Maybe you've just sent your youngest off to college, coming back to an eerie quiet house, an empty nest. Or it could be that you're grappling with menopause, navigating hot flashes, mood swings, and the question of femininity means to you in this new stage of life.

These changes, expected or not, can make us feel like we're sailing in uncharted waters. Our roles are shifting, our self-image is evolving and our routines- those daily rhythms we could do in our sleep are no more. It's disorienting and it can leave us feeling lost or like we're standing at the edge of the deep forest without a map.

But here's the thing. It's okay to feel disoriented. It's okay to feel overwhelmed. You see in the middle of these great shifts, these upheavals that were given the opportunity. An opportunity to reevaluate, to reassess, to redefine who we are and what we want in life. So, if you're standing at the edge of the forest right now, Take a deep breath. Allow yourself the time and space to feel these complex emotions to grapple with the questions that arise.

And in these moments of significant life changes, there's often another companion that tags along grief. Now, grief is a term we typically reserve for death, but it's much broader than that.

You see, at the core grief is our emotional response to loss. So even as we navigate these major life changes, we might also find ourselves grappling with grief. But what does that look like? Well, let's explore that next.

When we talk about grief, there's an image that comes into mind, the black clad individual weeping at the grave site. And while this is undoubtedly a form of grief, it's far from the only one.

You see, grief is the universal yet profoundly personal response to loss. Any loss, perhaps it's death of a loved one, which is a tremendous loss and life altering event. But it could also be quiet, introspective grief that comes with acknowledging your children no longer need you in the same way or mourning your professional identity you've nurtured over the decades but is now changing due to retirement.

Grief is an intricate dance of emotions. It can manifest as a profound sadness that envelops you like a fog. It might show up as a shimmering anger, a sense of betrayal at what life has taken away from you. Or it may be a numbing wave that leaves you feeling detached from the world around you.

It can hit you all at once, an emotional tsunami, or it can creep up on you over time. A slow tide that gradually overtakes the beach and sometimes it swings back and forth between the two.

The important thing to remember here is your grief is your own. It might not look like someone else's, and that's okay. It might not fit into a neat stage or timeline, and that's okay too. There's no right way to grieve. There's only your way.

While navigating through these emotions, these tumultuous waves of grief, there's a beacon that we can turn to acceptance. Now, acceptance might sound simple, maybe even a little cliché. But it's a powerful ally in our journey through grief and major life changes. So, what exactly does acceptance look like? Let's dive into that next.

When we think of acceptance, it's easy to confuse it with being okay with something or resigning ourselves to a situation. But acceptance, particularly in the context of grief and loss changes, is a much deeper concept.

Acceptance is about acknowledging the full scope of reality without trying to change or sugarcoat it. It's looking at loss or change square in the face and saying, I see you. I may not like you, but I acknowledge you are part of my reality now.

Imagine being caught in the rip current while swimming. Our instincts are often to fight against it, to swim straight back to the shore. But anyone trained in ocean safety will tell you that that is the most dangerous thing to do. The best way to survive the rip current is to accept that you are in it. Then swim parallel to the shore conserving energy until you are out of the current.

Similarly, fighting against the reality of our loss or change, or denying the emotions that come with them often leaves us exhausted and feeling stuck. Acceptance, on the other hand, is like swimming parallel to the shore. It's not an immediate solution, but it's the path toward eventually healing.

Acceptance allows us to feel our feelings fully, to cry when we need to, to yell, when frustration builds up, to seek comfort when we feel alone. It's our first step toward processing our experience and eventually finding a new way forward.

But acceptance doesn't mean going it alone. In fact, having a supportive network is a critical part of navigating grief and life changes. That brings us to our next segment, the power of seeking support. Let's dive into this topic.

In our society, there's often a myth of the lone wolf. The individual who triumphs over challenges and adversity without the help of anyone else. But in reality, we're social creatures. We're wired for connection for community, especially during times of grief and significant life changes reaching out for support can be a vital lifeline.

Support comes in many forms. It could be a close friend who's always there to listen, a family member who offers words of comfort, a support group of individuals going through similar experience or a professional counselor or therapist who provides tools and strategies to navigate these complex emotions.

Why is support so crucial? Well, first, it helps us realize that we're not alone in this journey. It's easy to feel isolated in your pain or feel like no one can possibly understand what you're going through. But hearing from others who have been in similar situations can be incredibly validating and comforting.

Second, our support network can provide perspective. When we're in the thick of our emotions, it can be hard to see anything beyond our immediate pain. Someone outside the situation can offer valuable insights or a different point of view, helping us see our experience in a new light.

Finally, seeking support is a sign of strength, not weakness. It takes courage to reach out, to be vulnerable, to admit that we're hurting. If you find yourself hesitating, remind yourself that asking for help isn't a sign of failure. Instead, it's a testament to your resilience and your determination to navigate through these difficult times.

So, reach out. Lean on your support network or build one if you don't already have one. You are not alone in this journey and there are many hands ready to help you along the way.

So, we talked about the experience of grief and major life changes and the importance of acceptance and the power of seeking support. But where does this all lead us? Can we really grow from such challenging experiences? Let's explore that in our next segment.

You may be thinking personal growth through grief, through major life changes. That almost sounds like a paradox, but trust me, it isn't. It's these significant shifts, these deep valleys of loss that we often unearth the potential for profound growth.

Growth doesn't mean forgetting about our loss or change. It doesn't mean we wake up one day completely unaffected by what we've been through. Instead, growth through grief is about evolving in response to our experience, reshaping ourselves around the space that our loss or change has left behind.

Maybe it's gaining a deeper understanding of ourselves, our values, our strengths, or even our vulnerabilities. Perhaps it's developing a more profound empathy for others through similar experience, or it might be finding a renewed sense of purpose, a drive to live our lives more fully in honor of what we've lost or changed.

This growth often doesn't happen overnight. It's not a straight line or a simple step-by-step process. It's a journey filled with bumps, twists, and turns. It takes time. Patience and self-compassion, but bit by bit. Day by day, we start to see changes. We start to see that even in the midst of pain and loss, there's room for growth, for transformation, for creation of a new version of ourselves. So, let's recap what we've explored today. We begin by talking about navigating major life changes and how these significant shifts can leave us feeling lost or disoriented.

Then we delved into the experience of grief, acknowledging its complexity and the unique ways it manifests in each of us. We explored the concept of acceptance, not

as resignation, but as an active, acknowledging our reality and our emotions fully. We also discuss the importance of seeking support, reminding ourselves that reaching out for help is not a sign of weakness, but a testament of our resilience.

Finally, we looked at personal growth through grief, recognizing the potential for profound evolution and transformation in the midst of our loss and change.

Amazing trailblazers navigating major life changes. Grief and loss is not a small feat. It's a journey filled with complexity and emotions.

But remember, you're not alone. You have the power to seek support, to accept your reality, and to seek growth through your experiences.

This shows transcripts can be downloaded at createthebestme.com/ep017.

If this episode resonated with you, don't forget to hit subscribe to stay updated. Join me next week as our special guest is Karen Church, the founder and CEO of Wellness Success Coaching.

Karen has uncovered the secret to how to lose weight and keep it off for life. Trust me, you don't want to miss this episode.

Until next time, keep dreaming big, take care of yourself. And remember, you were beautiful, strong, and capable of creating the best version of yourself. Thank you for watching. Catch you next week.

Bye for now.