

## Episode Transcript

### TAOLC EP: 31 -

#### The Fullness of Sadness: Why Feeling Down Can Lift You Up?

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00:06 -

Welcome to the Art of Living Consciously podcast, a show designed for out-of-the-box thinkers and mindset shifters who are looking for new ways to evolve. This is an intimate container designed to uplift, inspire and motivate you on your own growth journey. I'm your host, Dannie Reeve. As a certified BNE or Bio-Neuro-Emotion practitioner, I empower men and women to turn their conflicts into stepping stones for growth, because when you question your own beliefs and perceptions and take responsibility for your life, everything else follows. If you ask me, earth is a place where souls are sent to evolve, and in this podcast we will discuss the best tools for our evolution. Hello, hello, my Flawesome friends, and welcome to episode 31.

01:02

Following the great feedback I got from the episode I did on anger I believe it was episode 28, I realised that the topic of emotions and emotional regulation is a topic that is so dear to many of our hearts, because obviously a lot of us struggle with understanding our emotions and processing them, when, in fact, emotional intelligence, which is something that we can all cultivate, is essential to our well-being as human beings navigating this complicated world. So I've decided to go ahead and do a mini series on emotions. I'll be focusing more precisely on those emotions that we deem uncomfortable. If you listen to episode 28, you'll be familiar with basic emotions, which are the emotions I'm going to be focusing on. If you haven't listened to the episode on anger, I highly encourage you to do so. And today we will be delving into sadness.

02:09

Sadness is another one of those very misunderstood emotions and I'm pretty sure that at some point in your life you have struggled with the expression of that emotion or you have felt overwhelmed by that emotion. Perhaps you judge it in yourself and tend to numb it, or you are very uncomfortable around other people expressing it. You perhaps can't stand people crying or showing any signs of sadness and your typical response is to avoid the feeling or to try and fix it. Or perhaps you are on the other polarity and you often feel like you spiral in intense bouts of sadness and even depression. It's like that emotion has a grip on you and you can't seem to get out of the funk. Now, if you're familiar with my work, you'll know that polarity is a big part of it, and a way to see if an emotion is poorly integrated is to look at both ends of the spectrum. In other words, an absence or an excess of that emotion is a signal of a poor management or integration of that emotion. And what you always want to look for is integration. How can I integrate that emotion into my life, or how can I find a healthy balance in expressing that emotion, in other words, neither suppressing it nor wallowing in it, and in order to do that, you have to stop

judging it. So today, this is what we're going to do. We are going to look into the fullness of sadness. You are going to learn what sadness is, what its purpose is and what it can do for you, what can happen when it is poorly integrated. And at the end of the episode, I will lead you through a self-reflection exercise that will be really helpful for you to start seeing sadness as an ally. So I encourage you to stick around until the end and, without further ado, let's delve in Now.

04:29

When you think of sadness, what comes to your mind? I'm sure, as I asked that question, feelings, pictures came to you, and we often associate sadness with, perhaps, a feeling of being lost, someone who's withdrawn, even lost in their own world, maybe feelings of heaviness or despair. But what if I told you that sadness, at its core, has a much richer meaning than simply feeling low. The word sad actually comes from old English sad. I hope I'm pronouncing this correctly which means full, sated, having had one's fill. So, interestingly, it shares a root with words like satisfy or sated. So in its original sense, sadness wasn't about emptiness or loss, but rather a kind of fullness, being filled to the brim with a certain intensity of experience. I think of sadness as not just an emotion that leaves us feeling down, but as one that asks us to pause and reflect. It's like the emotional equivalent of being full after a meal. Only, instead of food, we're full of feelings, sometimes overwhelming, sometimes profound, but always asking for space to be understood.

05:54

In the Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows, John Koenig describes sadness as a fullness. I resonate deeply with this. There is a lot of fullness in sadness, meaning that when you're feeling sad, you're allowing space for a series of emotions and feelings to flow through you. You're giving yourself space to pause and to reflect, even if that sometimes means that you're giving them a little too much space. So, as we move through this episode, I want you to think of sadness not as a weakness, not as something that you must avoid, but as a kind of fullness, because sadness, like every other single emotion has a positive intent for you and it's really important to understand that positive intent if you want to embrace it rather than judge it, and that will allow you to express it in a healthy manner.

06:58

Okay, so why do we experience sadness? What is this emotion there for? What is it doing for us? Its first positive intent we've touched upon briefly is to allow you to slow down, to go within and to process a loss. Basically, it slows down your body, it lowers your energy levels so you can rest and repair. It's a necessary step to take in order to really face any type of loss that could be an actual death or any other types of losses, such as maybe you've ended a relationship or a friendship, maybe you're going through divorce, maybe you've lost a job, and in those circumstances, think of sadness as a powerful ally for you to recover. It helps you to reflect and process. Think of it as a type of convalescence. Literally, if someone had just broken their leg, would you tell them to go and run a marathon? No, you wouldn't, right? You'd say go to the doctor, get some rest and then, when you're strong again, you could go run the marathon. Well, that's what sadness is doing for you.

08:20

Another positive intent of sadness, which is often overlooked, is that it gives you space for introspection and reflection, in the face, maybe, of a crisis, something that's gone wrong, something that you did that you're not proud of, and the role of sadness in those cases is for you not to repeat that mistake, that

situation, etc. For you not to repeat that mistake, that situation, etc. So it's giving you that magical pause. It's giving you the choice to reflect on your responsibility or on what you could have done differently in order not to repeat that circumstance. In that sense, you could say sadness is giving you a second chance. It's giving you wisdom to do things better.

09:12

If I were to speak of a personal case, I think I shared in the very first episode I did when I relaunched the podcast about my own journey and about how, all of a sudden, I realised that my life was not going where I wanted it to go, and I felt sad. I felt really sad and I can always remember the advice of a friend of mine. She said to me that is the most beautiful sweet spot you can be in, because feeling that sadness, embracing that sadness, is giving you the choice to do things differently. You can only start taking different actions if you are aware of the actions that you have taken and where they have led you. That's why, if you're listening to this and you are currently amidst a crisis, I just want you to know. It's a sweet spot, it's an opportunity. This is such an amazing spot to be in because it's allowing you to reflect and it's giving you the awareness to be able to then do things differently. But it's important to embrace those feelings, because the opposite to that is to bury your head in the sand and just ignore the signals of your body and continue in the same direction. Now, I'm not saying it's easy to be in that spot. It's uncomfortable, it's icky, it feels horrible and it's an ally in disguise. And once you start to see sadness for what it is, then you can start to see that it's giving you that opportunity to birth something completely different.

10:58

Sadness can bring a lot of awareness and culturally, especially in many western cultures like the US, the UK right, just to name a few there's often this emphasis on positivity. You have to move on quickly, you have to see the positive side of life, the glass half full, yada, yada, yada. And whilst there is validity in those ways of thinking as well. What it does is that in those cultures, sadness may be viewed as a weakness, as a failure, and therefore there may be a greater tendency to suppress it or to avoid it. So people may rush to distractions or to finding quick solutions instead of really giving themselves the time to feel and to process their sadness and the wisdom that lies within that sadness. And we can contrast that way of seeing sadness with other cultures, such as Buddhism, for example, where sadness is seen as an emotion that needs to be observed and not judged, but felt and processed through mindfulness, right. Or some indigenous communities, who really see sadness, especially when it's related to grief and loss, as a communal and spiritual experience, and so they're often rituals and ceremonies that aim to help people and their community process grief. So sadness is not seen as something to be avoided, but it's part of the cycle of life.

12:34

It's interesting to see sadness through cultural lenses because it can also give you different prisms and ways of seeing that emotion and kind of asking yourself where do I lie? What does my culture or how does my culture influence the way that I view sadness and how I experience sadness in my life? And then, obviously, there is the culture of the family to which you belong, and how sadness was viewed when you grew up. Were you able to express your sadness freely, or was it something that you couldn't do or that you didn't feel safe to express? How did people in your family deal with loss? Did they overtly express it and process it, or was it something that was very seldom talked about? What did you observe?

That is also very interesting to look back in order to see how you constructed yourself around that emotion.

13:43

The other day I was listening to a podcast episode by Layla Martin. I believe she's a tantric, sex and relationship coach and she made a really valid point that hit home with me that I want to share with you. She was sexually abused as a child and had gone through a lot of trauma, and when she was in her 20s she just realised one day that she had never had the space to process or to just allow herself to be a victim and to feel sad. And she at the time was with this boyfriend and she expressed that she needed a couple of months just to do nothing, just to wallow in her pain and to process it. And he told her don't worry, I've got this. You do that, I'll come home and give you some money so you can buy some food, but don't worry about anything, I'm taking care of that. And she said that for a month or two months, I can't remember, she just allowed herself to do absolutely nothing, to stay in bed, to feel her sadness, to feel like a victim, to cry, to really be with what had happened. And after two months, or however long that was, she finally ventured out into the world and started facing the world again.

15:10

Now, what she was saying, on the point she was making there, she was like I know that this was an incredible luxury that I had, because in our societies we are programmed to be doing, doing, doing, doing, doing all the time, and we are we're not given the space to process our feelings and to let ourselves be victims for the time that we need to fill those feelings. And so the point that she made is that we lived in an extremely traumatised society who perpetuated this trauma through this habit of always doing and never stopping. She was obviously referring to westernised societies who tend to glorify achievement and action and working and all of those types of things that leave very little room for introspection, and I can identify with that because, even though I am somebody who did suffer from depression, I was never really given the space and the room to feel my sadness. There was always kind of a judgement towards it, right. I can remember coming home from university and obviously I would get triggered and I would sleep in. I would just want to sleep all the time when I was at my home, back in my parents home, and I could remember my mother shaking me out of bed and saying you need to get up, you need to do this, you need to do that, and I realise she obviously was doing what she felt was good for me at that time. But now, in hindsight, I realised what I needed was more space to process what had happened to me and to be with my feelings.

16:57

Now, obviously, there's a balance with that. There's a point where you can end up wallowing in the victim or in the sad persona, and that is another excess right, which is why I want to talk about now what can happen when there's a poor integration of sadness. And again we're going to look at both polarities. So the first polarity is getting stuck in sadness. It's allowing that introspection and low energy phase to take over. If we take loss and, as an example, there are stages in mourning and all those stages require you to go through all the different emotions. Right, sadness is one stage and obviously there are no definite timelines for how long it has to take, but you will know within yourself if it's taking a lot longer than it should. So just to give me give you a hypothetical example if you've split up with your boyfriend two years ago and you're still sad and crying over it and comparing all your partners to him and just not allowing yourself to move out of this stage and move forward with your life, then obviously there is a problem. Becoming aware that you're doing that is already a big part of solving the problem, because

then you can do something about it. You can seek professional help or you can start to ask yourself the questions that you need to ask yourself.

18:42

You might find it helpful to listen to my episode on anger, because a lot of the time, too much sadness can actually mask the underlying emotion of anger, and anger is the next emotion that is going to help you to face your life, to move to another stage of your loss and to actually start getting out of those despair states. For example, prolonged sadness can be an emotion that we use in order not to face what we need to face or in order to avoid responsibility for our actions or for what is happening to us, and that is a truth that can be a little uncomfortable to hear but I feel is very helpful to be aware of, not as a means to judge yourself and to make yourself even more sad, but as a means of saying oh, maybe there's a way I can gain my power back. Maybe this coping mechanism that I am resorting to is keeping me small and I'm much more powerful than that. Just to give you a tangible example, if I was to take the example I gave you of me realising that my life was not where I wanted to be, I could have wallowed in that and stayed sad for all that time. And, yes, the sadness did give me the wisdom to understand where what I'd done wrong and where I needed to correct. But the next stage was to take action. There was no use me knowing what I knew and having become aware of that, if I didn't use it to do things differently. And when I decided to take action to change my living environment, which was one of the things that I needed to do in order to course correct, it wasn't easy, and I could have gone back to feeling sad and feeling like, oh my god, why me, why me, why me, right? So I'm just showing you this, or giving you this example, to show you how sometimes we can use sadness as a way to stay stuck where we are, and so then, we need to be honest with ourselves in those moments and, obviously, if you're suffering from more severe cases of sadness and depression, a step that will help you to move through your emotions and process them is to seek support and to seek professional support. That is a way of taking ownership and allowing your sadness to move you into a better direction and eventually to uplift you in a sense, because you've sought the help you needed and you are getting the solutions that you need.

21:32

Now let's look at the second polarity, which is the complete opposite to that, that is to say, if you are a person who has trouble expressing or showing sadness and just generally, sadness just makes you very uncomfortable and you have trouble dealing with it in yourself, but also in other people. And in order to illustrate the difference between both polarities, right, I want you to think of emotions as energy. Emotions are basically energy in motion. So sadness has a quality, as we've seen, of slowing down, of low energy, right. The opposite to that is anger. Anger is high energy, a lot of action, a lot of doing so typically and I'm not saying it's the case for everybody but if you have trouble slowing down, being in touch with your sadness and those uncomfortable low energy feelings, then you're likely to be a person that is always doing a lot, that has integrated that quality of anger.

22:55

When I was thinking about this episode, I reflected upon the people in my life. I always like to do that because I like to see how the other polarity manifests, and you could do the same. Chances are that you have people in your life that are expressing the opposite polarity to you. So for me, I tend to attract friends and partners as well who are very good at doing, at completing, at sort of honing, that angry energy. A lot of them are overachievers and, as we've seen during this episode. A lot of doing, a lot of achieving, can be a way to run away from uncomfortable emotions, from processing your sadness, from

slowing down. And so if you are one of these people who says, but I just have so much trouble being in touch with my sadness, I can't even cry, or I just find it so difficult and even holding other people's sadness like, forget about that, I can't do that. Then I would ask myself what emotion are you comfortable with? What are you maybe doing in order to avoid feeling? And what I want to introduce here, because I think it will be really helpful for you, is this idea that sometimes anger or apathy can be a cover up for sadness. So let me explain how this works.

24:43

When you receive an emotional impact, your body is going to feel any of the six basic emotions that I told you about in the episode on anger. This will be your first instinctive emotional reaction to a situation. For example, if you lose something valuable, your first instinctive emotion will often be sadness, and this we will label as a primary emotion. It's your uncensored primal reaction. It's the reaction of the body. You have no control over that, but with evolution and in order for us to adapt to our environment.

25:26

Our brains got more complex and we have access to more "sophisticated responses". That's to say you have a more evolved system that censors any type of emotion that it doesn't deem acceptable at that moment, and that in itself has a purpose, right? There are situations where, for example, your boss might say something inappropriate to you and your primal instinct triggers anger, which in the stone ages, might have led you to kill him. But your more evolved brain is going to censor that and the anger is going to be toned down. So maybe you set boundaries in an assertive way or you suppress that anger. That part of your brain might lead you to express sadness.

26:22

We refer to that censored or toned down emotion as a secondary emotion or a social emotion, that's to say, an emotion that is acceptable. Like all evolved coping mechanisms, that can be beneficial, but it can also be counterproductive. So, just as we saw in the episode on anger, how sadness can be a cover up for unprocessed anger, anger can also mask unprocessed sadness, and you can see how people who tend to be overachievers do a lot to always be more. In that action, anger persona, oftentimes in their shadow, there is an invitation to slow down and to sit with the uncomfortable emotion or the discomfort of sadness. So in that case, anger might serve as a defence mechanism, allowing you to distance yourself from the vulnerability, but also the wisdom of sadness.

27:38

On a side note, apathy can also be a way to numb sadness. So if you resonate with this and you are somebody who usually expresses very little sadness, you can ask yourself what part of me is censoring that emotion? What emotion do I typically resort to in order not to feel sadness? These are self-reflection questions that can help you delve a little bit deeper into your coping mechanisms. But really, what I want you to take away from this episode is that sadness, like any other emotion, has a positive intent and that the more you become familiar with what it is trying to do for you, the less you will judge it and the less you are likely to be stuck in it or to avoid it completely. Avoid it completely.

28:39

So in order for you to explore a little further that wisdom that sadness can bring to your life, I'd like to take you through a simple exercise that can help you to ground all this into more tangible personal examples and start becoming familiar with how sadness shows up for you. So, first of all, what I'd like you to do is to find a peaceful spot of your own, somewhere where you won't be distracted or disturbed. If you want to pause the episode, then please do. If you're driving, please wait for a moment where you're not driving anymore, and if you have a piece of paper or a journal, even better. Please grab those. Okay. So now that you're all set, I'm going to invite you to close your eyes, and if you don't want to close your eyes, just soften your gaze and take a deep breath in through your nose, hold it at the top and exhale. Let's do that once more. So, in through your nose, hold it and exhale. Okay.

29:53

So now that you're here, you're present and you're in your body, what I'd like you to do is to take a moment to recall a specific moment where you felt really sad. It could be recent or it could be from the past. Just let whatever image comes to you come. Don't analyse or censor anything. Just trust your gut. It could be something somebody said to you. It could be the loss of something or somebody, anything that comes to mind. Now. I'd like you to revisit that moment as if it were happening now. Are there other people with you? Who are they? What can you see, what can you smell, what can you touch? What can you hear? Just get familiar with that moment. If there's another person involved, what is the expression on their face? What are they saying to you? For your unconscious mind and your body, there's no past or future. Everything is the present. So the more you allow yourself to connect with that moment, the more you will be able to feel what your body is feeling in that moment. And remember, emotions are not good nor bad. They're just energy in motion and they're actually there to help you. So there's nothing to be afraid of.

31:32

Now that you are in this moment again, I want you to pay attention to your body. What does it feel like in your body? Where is that emotion you're feeling located? Is it in your chest, in your throat? In your stomach? What are the qualities to that emotion? Is it heavy? Is it light? Is it tight, is it warm, is it cold, is it pulsating or tingling? Just be present with what is happening in your body at that moment and that will allow you to be in touch with that emotion.

32:26

And now that you are familiar and in touch with your physical sensations and the emotion in your body, I'd like you to see it as an ally. At this point, you might choose to open your eyes and to come back to the present moment, if this is too intense. You might also choose to stay in the experience and with your physical sensations. In either case, my invitation is that you ask yourselves the following questions: what is this emotion trying to help me with? Is it trying to help me to slow down, to process a loss? Is it pushing me to reflect on a mistake or create space for introspection? Is it wanting me to be more vulnerable and ask for support? What positive intent can you find behind that emotion? Really, take some time to reflect upon those questions and, if you can, I would journal about any realisations or insights you had regarding the positive role that sadness played in your experience. You can even reflect on how you reacted in that moment, in that experience, and any wisdom you can glean from that, maybe other experiences come to mind and you want to repeat the exercise with those experiences.

34:01

It is my wish that, through these exercises and through this podcast episode, you start to see sadness as an ally, as an emotion that is there to play a role in you recovering, in you getting better, in you learning from your mistakes, in you gaining wisdom from a crisis. And the more you recognize its wisdom, the less you judge it, the more you will be able to hold it in yourself and in others. Sadness does not need to be fixed. It needs to be felt, held, heard and processed. Its ultimate goal really is to move you through the motions of life and ultimately, to uplift you. And because I love Carl Jung by now I'm sure you know I want to leave you with one of his potent quotes, and you can substitute the word depression for sadness.

35:08

But here it goes. Depression is like a woman in black. If she turns up, don't shoo her away. Invite her in, offer her a seat, treat her like a guest and listen to what she wants to say. And there you have it for today's episode. To find out more about what I do and how I can best serve you, head over to [www.danniereeve.com](http://www.danniereeve.com). And meanwhile, why not hit that subscribe button so you can be notified when the latest episode drops in? I promise the journey will be worth it. Thank you so much for listening. I truly appreciate you and I wish you a flawsome day that is flawed and awesome just the way we like it. Thank you.