

# *Grieving someone still Alive*

Tony (00:02):

Erica and Sharon, are sisters who began a grief journey in 2006, when Erica's 10-year-old son, Austin drown. Together they participated in a grief education program were so moved by this experience. They studied and became specialists so they could help the broken-hearted find recovery. In 2015 tragedy struck their family once again, when Erica's oldest son, Donovan was killed in a motorcycle accident. Erica and Sharon are committed to sharing their experiences of love, loss and healing through this podcast. Now your grief specialists, Sharon and Erica.

Sharon (00:40):

So we're going to talk about grieving someone who is still alive. And when you, and I say that to our friends who, when they come in to do work, you can grieve anyone living or deceased. It's sort of tilts your brain.

Erica (00:55):

It does because the, the thought of grief and the word alive, it's like they do not go together at all. You're trying to put two puzzle pieces that don't fit, but it's actually something that is life-changing. And especially if you have a toxic relationship, it's, it's free.

Sharon (01:18):

And so the subject of our show today is grieving someone who's still alive. I'm Sharon, and this is Erica. And that's what we're going to get into today. We work with so many people that come to us, not for death, not for losing their children, not for their parents have died, or brother or sister has died. Sometimes they come to us because their life is just not happy. They're just not feeling fulfilled. Something's wrong. And they're just not sure what it is or they come to us because they're not functioning on a daily basis because of the overwhelming sadness

Erica (02:00):

When I would add, uh, sadness and sometimes resentment. That, that resentment is, um, is poison. It's poison to your system. And when you have to constantly interact with someone, whether it be an ex-spouse, an ex-boyfriend, a girlfriend, a boss, and you're dealing with that on a daily basis, you, um, walk around feeling pretty yucky most of the time.

Sharon (02:32):

Yeah. We also work with women that, um, get in trouble into trouble in their marriage. Their marriage is in really bad shape. Um, they're trying to make the decision about whether to do a divorce or not, right. Um, an affair may or may not have taken place. They're just not feeling the love that they did 10, 20 years ago. And just want to know how to navigate through that.

Erica (03:00):

And I'm going to add another one in there. And like, we could do a whole show of just naming how you could do this, but what about the mom? And you have adult children or, um, coming into adulthood. And I just remember that phase with Donovan and I, and I didn't like him very much. You know what I mean? It's like, yeah, you can do that. Where you have these, you, they go from your littles where you're their everything. And then you go into this world where they look at you. Like you don't know anything, and they'd rather get advice from the guy at the gas station and listen to what you have to say to them. You know, that's a challenge that is a real challenge. And you described at one time as a breakup, and when you said that to me, I was like, Oh my God, that is what it feels like. But you know, it's mothers, you know, this there's times where you don't like your children and that is hard.

Sharon (03:51):

Yeah. And I think that you need to say that out loud. I really don't like them today. You know what I mean? Or I don't like the person they're becoming, I don't like the choices that they're making. And sometimes those choices, Erica can be heart breaking. Yeah. You as the mom, right. You can absolutely be so broken. You don't know what to do with that pain. Right. Right. And that, that is the crux of what we're talking about is the pain. You know, we're putting all these different scenarios on it, but the truth is in the, in the deep down middle in the center, it's the pain in your heart, your hardest feeling from the loss of trust, the loss of safety, the loss of knowing that he was always there for me, the loss of knowing that I loved him, the not loss of knowing that I just want to walk up in the kitchen and just give him a kiss right on the lips. But yet I don't feel that anymore. And you just get turned off by them. That's the pain, the unknowing.

Erica (04:50):

And we, we talk about a zombie state when you're grieving of what happens to your brain. But I call this when you're grieving someone that's still alive, zombie grief, because the person doesn't go away. Once you feel like, okay, you've worked through something and you talk yourself down or you have lunch with your girlfriend and you share about it and you vent and you complain. And then you're like, okay, you feel lighter. And then you go home and you see the husband and all of that comes right back again. It's like a zombie life. Like you don't get to ever have a relief, a constant right. Relief from it.

Sharon (05:25):

Right. One of the things that we talk about all the time is the imaginary backpack, right? So we, we, we use an example. We used some great examples of imaginary backpack that we were all born with. And as we go on throughout our life, throughout our lives, that backpack gets filled with a bunch of junk crap pain. Right? Most times when we're working with someone quite often and, uh, she's come to us and her marriage may be in a questionable state when we opened that backpack with her together, then imaginary backpack, there's other losses. There's other pains that have gone on for years that they've just discounted or they didn't take care of, they didn't allow in, or they didn't feel that pain. And that's where we're at today. And now we have to take it out and look at it and deal with it and complete it and put it aside. And we also know that that all of that junk can be showing up in their marriage.

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Erica (06:30):

Yeah. And what, what we describe it as is that the backpack and all the losses, all the sadness, all the pain over the years, you know, as you grow older and you're not necessarily, um, in those moments, they're on like a low simmer right there, or a low simmer in your heart. Like the minute you have your most recent experience, it's like that fire is turn up to high and then they all come to a boil.

Sharon (06:59):

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Um, one of the other things that we know, uh, can happen is that when we show them this backpack and the boiling starts, most times, they're, they're often shocked. They're shocked and that this can actually be, I can be still grieving the breakup of a boyfriend from high school that I never dealt with. Grief is a broken heart of any kind. If I broke up with my boyfriend, my senior year of high school, and I never dealt with that properly, do you know, 20 years later that that can still be affecting my marriage.

Erica (07:39):

I have. So, and it makes sense because the things that you learned from that breakup one, the, the pain of it, the self-blame you assigned yourself, the things that that boyfriend said to you about the breakup or, or you as a person, and then when your current marriage is not working, you bring all that back to the surface. Well, that's right. I'm self, I'm a selfish person. That's right. I'm not a good listener. I don't know how to be there for someone else, because that's what was told to you in the first breakup. So you just reassign that to the new relationship and it just starts the process all over again.

Sharon (08:17):

Um, Oh my gosh. I just lost my train of thought. Sorry. Sorry about that. Oh my gosh. It went right out of my head. It's too early. Oh, I think what? Go ahead, Erica.

Erica (08:35):

No, I was gonna say so. So it, it's not uncommon to, to deal with stuff that's not necessarily present in the current relationship, but you bring all this old stuff from your past, into the current situation. So now when you're having an argument with Bob about your current situation, you're really fighting the demons from your past as well. If that makes sense, because we, because we didn't deal with them, we didn't put them to bed. We didn't put them to rest. Like we knew we, you, and I know there's a way to do that. So you're, you're fighting not only your current relationship with Bob, you're fighting Tommy and John and all the other ones as well and the stuff that your mom said to you when you were young, that didn't get resolved. Yeah. It's all in there. It's all in.

Sharon (09:24):

Okay. So when you're grieving someone who's still alive, I've got my train of thought back when you're grieving someone who's still alive, they're not in the room doing the work with us. You're doing your own work. You're doing your own work. You're examining your own heart. You're walking your own path. And they don't ever have to know that you're even doing this or doing some work on some brokenness in your heart of your relationship with them. It is imperative that you understand you are doing your own work. It is not uncommon for Eric and I to grieve with couples that are married and their, their marriage has gotten into a little bit of trouble. And we work with them separately. It's not uncommon for us to work with parents or maybe grieving a child. We work with them separately. The main reason we're doing that is because every one's relationship is unique and individual, just because you come to us and you want to work on some, uh, a relationship with someone who is still alive. The number one thing we're not going to do is have you call them up and tell them I'm grieving you today. I'm working on you. It's it's completely confidential. So they never know. And unless you tell them, they're never going to hear it from us.

Erica (10:42):

Yeah. Grief is an inside job. It's for you. It's for the individual. Now, granted, it's going to make you a better wife, because you'll be able to wipe the slate clean of all the old stuff. And it's gonna make you a better mother and a better employee and a better whatever the relationship is that you're grieving. It's going to make you be better because you're going to be more present. You're going to let go of all the old stuff and you're going to show up. And each day is going to be new and fresh. And you won't have all the all old resentments. And you definitely don't need to tell Bob, Bob, I forgive you that you didn't take the trash out last Thursday.

Sharon (11:17):

Yeah. Yeah, exactly. Exactly. A lot of times when we're working with, um, women and men and, and they come to us in their marriage or their relationship is that their significant others in trouble. The first thing we always say is, do not make a decision. How about what you're going to do until you're done with your work. Cause a lot of times we go into doing their work. They do, they do the work and we're guiding them and they realize they're really the problem I've been blaming him for this. But it really has to do with me. This has to do with my own, uh, pain and brokenness, right? And so we'll often say to them, do not make a decision until you're completely done with your work. And I will tell you ladies that sometimes the decision is absolutely. I need to get a divorce. This is not the right marriage for me. Absolutely. I need to break up. This is not the right relationship with me, but many times it ends up that no, I need to get back in here and work on my marriage. I do love him. So, which ever one happens for you be okay with it. But the discovery is huge when you're absolutely getting into the trenches and doing the work well.

Erica (12:30):

And when you, when you free your heart from all the old hurt and the pain, there's going to be a positive change in you. And your relationship is going to reflect that change. That the person, when you're no longer bickering about taking the trash out or who didn't cook dinner, who didn't load the dishwasher, because we all know those are just a surface things, but there's a deeper issue happening, right? Yeah. Anyone who's married knows that that's, there's something else going on when you're, when you feel better about yourself and you no longer are doing engaging in that behavior, your relationship is going to reflect that. And so then you'll see it through a fresh set of eyes of, okay, because he sees me changing. He's also changing and we're going to go to the movies tonight and we actually had a good time. And then that starts, you know, hopefully the beginning of many, or like you said, maybe the opposite I've changed. I feel better. I'm engaging differently. And he's still the same old turd. Okay. Now I know I'm valid in making this decision. I need, I, this isn't for me.

Sharon (13:37):

Well, it gives you the energy to make the right decisions for sure. Right? Right. I would say to, um, our grieving friends that are out there, the number one thing, and it's just so hard, but I don't know how else to fix this, but they don't, we don't want to call it grief. They don't want to call it grief. When I am a woman that is sitting at a moment in my life where I'm unsure of decisions that I'm making, I'm not sure whether I should stay in this relationship or not. And I'm not sure the next step I should take. That's a grieving experience. Grief is any loss that you experienced in your heart? Grief is brokenness. Grief is sadness. Grief is a feeling of depression, a feeling of not being enough. Those are all grieving experiences. So I could take out the word grief and just say, Hey girlfriend, are you having trouble? Do you want to figure out we need some self-care yeah, I could flower it up. But the truth is it's grief.

Erica (14:36):

And you know, sometimes it's the actions that someone else is doing makes you feel raged, just angry all the time. And you don't know why you don't know where it's coming from. You just know like, when you said you just don't feel good about yourself, but when you're constantly angry in your mouth all the time, how can you feel good about yourself? Let us help you take that piece out, take the anger away and see what's really under the surface. Let us help you kind of reboot your system, right? And give you a fresh perspective, perspective, and a new lease on life that will help you to at least feel better. And like you said, re-energize you to make some important life changing decisions for yourself.

Sharon (15:26):

Yeah, that's really cool. Okay. I'm going to leave you here with this. Life is way too short to live as the victim to live in anger, to live in pain and to live with someone that you just aren't in love with. It's too short. We have an educational program designed to go after the pain and loneliness in your heart, and we're here for you. And we're willing to walk that path with you. Thank you so much for joining us today. And we would be honored to hear from any of you.

Erica (15:55):

Bye friends. Thank you.