

The Holiday Season

Erica Honoré and Sharon Brubaker

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](#)):

We're on the holiday season. It's comes up on us every time at this year. And some of us still have the same broken heart that we had last year, or we don't have that broken heart. We have a new loss or this holiday season has reminded us of our loss. All different things can be happening right now. And this is our annual show that we will probably do from now until the day we die, where we get to talk about how grief can affect every holiday that you experienced every special day.

Erica ([1:19](#)):

And it's so important to get started on this sooner rather than later, because for some people holiday season, like for me personally starts on Halloween. Halloween was Austin's favorite day. He loved getting his costume. He loved dressing up trick or treating obviously was a huge perk of the day. And to go through every single Halloween, without him in this space was hard. It was really hard for me. And then that set off cause you roll immediately. The day Halloween decorations come down, you have Thanksgiving and even Christmas trickling in the day after Halloween. And you have this heightened sense of doom because the holiday season just means you're going to be sad all over again.

Sharon ([2:12](#)):

Well, and I think that I absolutely agree with you because through then, after that, let's say January, February, March, you get, you get sprinkles of holidays throughout, right? So you get a mother's day, then you get a breather and you get father's day, you get a in there and then you might have their birthday in there. And then you get a breather, but here you're just hit, hit, hit. And I'm here to tell you, the stores are not helping you at all. Because even through the pandemic, we see that all the Halloween holiday stuff is out. We see the Christmas tree, a lot's going up. We see the pumpkin patches going up. We're reminded in every aspect of our life that the holidays are coming and they're not going to be here with us.

Erica ([3:00](#)):

And it's not just that one. Um, from the stores, you have it on social media. If you've ever shopped on Amazon, Amazon's already sending you emails about their, um, pre shopping days. And you know, all these special things that promos that they're doing. So you really have it from every single angle and you can't escape it, right?

Sharon ([03:20](#)):

Even our friends are, are posting about it, you know? Um, and sometimes we can think it's really insensitive and the post can be something really that doesn't affect us at all on a normal basis. Like the excitement of the pumpkin spice coffee coming back at Starbucks, you know, it can be a goofy post, but

it's a reminder, Right? And I think what, the thing that the reminder part is that holidays are supposed to be a happy time. They're our favorite time of the year. There are time when we get together as family and friends. They're the times when we get to show our love, right? Someone has decided that here's the time of the year that you get to show your love, or you also have all of these memories wrapped in there. Right?

Erica ([4:08](#)):

And so that's why it's important to be aware, because like I said, your, your nerve endings are standing at attention because even if you try to block it out and not acknowledge what's happening, your body's reacting, your body is reacting and knows that this day is coming. There's an automatic calendar for me personally, I experienced this there's my body knows the days are coming and I feel a shift and I've described it in the past as, um, it's like in the scary movie where the hand is coming. I could feel the hand coming and reaching for me. Now, prior to me doing my work, I just had to deal with it and suck it up and cry through those days or yell. And you snap and you don't mean to you're like, I don't know why I'm so sensitive, but it's because that's what's happening. And that's why I wanted to bring intention holiday as a season, brings some, um, some undue pain to us that we're not prepared for. So if you're listening to this podcast, it's a way to get you prepared for it. And for our sisters out there that this is the first one that's always so hard to get through. Yeah. The first one without your husband or your child or your whoever is hard.

Sharon ([5:27](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. I agree with you. I totally agree with you now. Let's do something else. Let's add one more thing on that. Now we have the pandemic, right. And a lot of us are still home, which means a lot of us aren't going to be together for the holidays. So our support that we normally would have to help us through, we're not even going to be able to be around them this year. So that's when you're saying they need to get ready. There's a second layer to the get ready that they need to get ready for.

Erica ([05:59](#)):

That is so true. I constantly, um, I think purposely forget the pandemic so awful. It is so awful. And it's gone on so long and I think we were all hopeful that it wouldn't be a factor, but what we're hearing is this is going to go on for a lot longer than any of us anticipated. So you're, you were absolutely right. And I'm glad you brought that point up. Our holidays are going to look a lot different this year.

Sharon ([06:25](#)):

Yeah. So let's say we're not even grieving the death. Right? Let's just talk about that for a second. But on Thanksgiving you can't go be with grandma and you can't, mom's not coming to town and you're not going to be with your brothers and sisters. Um, as a matter of fact, Eric Lauren, my oldest daughter, uh, called me up. She's like, are we coming over for one day for Thanksgiving? And I was like, no, because I, my husband is 74. And my mother who lives with me is 78. She has two children, a five-year-old and a two-year-old. And we haven't been together all year. We're not going to get together just because it's Thanksgiving. I think some people think, Oh, well, it's the holiday.

Erica ([7:09](#)):

So we're going to forget the pad debit time out, time out. And we're going to proceed with our normal holiday functions.

Sharon ([7:16](#)):

But that's a loss and a brokenness, right? Yeah, though, you got that. But, and then if you're grieving on top of that, you have that at it, and now you've got to do it by yourself. So you, you know, you're making the Turkey by yourself or whatever. I mean, I've full on C, just the four of us being here on Thanksgiving and we've done every other holiday this year. It's kind of sad.

Erica ([7:38](#)):

Yeah. That is very, very true. And I think that, um, we need to make sure that our friends know that you have to, you have to work through that yes. Through that pain as well. Yeah. You have to, you have to already look at your calendar and get talk with your family and schedule those zoom calls. Yes. Yeah. It's all your Thanksgiving day. Zoom, Zoom Thanksgiving.

Erica ([8:02](#)):

Yeah. Your zoom, your zoom giving, get it on a calendar, schedule it, talk about what it's going to look like and, and start to make the best of a very unfortunate situation. Yeah.

Sharon ([08:17](#)):

So I'm going to stay on the pandemic, um, topic right now. It, it they've gone back and forth. And honestly, because I, honestly, because I don't want to small children, I'm not even sure where that's at, but they were like trick or treating is off trick-or-treating on trick-or-treating is off. So for the one and two year olds littles, they probably don't care whether it's on or off anyway, but for the four or five, six, seven year old, that's always gotten that costume and has always done something for that holiday. And we've done that trunk or treat or whatever. It's going to be a huge loss for them. They're not in school, they're not with their teacher. And now they, they can't celebrate the holiday. And guess what? And my brother's not here, my brother who was always here is now gone. It just adds to the grief that we're always there. We're already feeling and so one of the things that you and I teach and we also have in our holiday guide is that come up with a plan and this now more than ever before is the time to have the plan.

Erica ([9:18](#)):

Yeah, it is so true. You definitely have to plan and we have to continue to get creative. Just like we came up with zoom giving, you have to get creative. You have to go into your toolbox. You got to get with your friends that are, you know, where you could be socially distant. And, and for like Sharon said, the, the littles that are aware that this is a different change. This is different this year, they have to wear the mask to school. All this stuff has been so hard and challenging for them. You got to give them some sort of, uh, uh, a little perk to this fun. Still find ways to make it fun and safe and like, and like, uh, we all know on again, off again, there's constant change every single day. And I think that's gonna go on throughout our near future because they, we just don't know how this is changing and growing and manifesting itself. So just gotta be prepared to roll with the punches and keep being creative. So that's one, and Sharon did mentioned the holiday guide. The holiday day guide is key to give you a lot of tips.

And we're also going to be doing a webinar where we're really going to give very specific information. That's going to run throughout the holidays until the end of the year to help get you guys through. Yeah.

Sharon ([10:33](#)):

Yeah. And we're going to have both of those listed in our Facebook live, uh, notes. So you'll be able to find them all there. I want to talk about two other parts, Erica, number one, you're set, you set the tone as the parent, right? So you set the tone of what holiday the holiday is going to be like. But the second part is you set the tone for what it's going to be like for you. Good, bad, or ugly. You're setting the tone. So let's address that. Let's talk about, just as the parent setting. The tone.

Erica ([11:02](#)):

What I know for me personally, uh, the one thing I can say is you have every intention of I'm going to, I'm going to do it. I'm gonna rally and I'm gonna do it. And then that morning of I couldn't get out of bed. Some days I couldn't get out of bed, I would go into it with, I got it this year, this year is the one we're going to do this. And I would have a full on plan. And then the day would show up and my heart would be so sad. I couldn't move. So don't be too put out if that happens, just give yourself that time and space, because this is what I think, where I made my mistake. I would try to shove that down. No, you get yourself out of this bed. You've got to show up for Donovan and for Jordan, and you've got to make this happen. And so you force yourself to get through it. What I would have done if I had, I know, I would have just laid there and cried and cried and cried and got the ugly cry out. But this not in the tissues and just held onto one of Austin's favorite t-shirts and just cried through it. Right? When you let it out and you release it, it passes. And then you are able to get out of bed. I made the mistake of jumping out and fighting against it. If I would have just allow it to pass through me, it would've been so much different. So, so parents, for those of you that set the tone, allow that to happen. Now, once you get your feet planted on the ground and you hit the ground running, you just do whatever you can on that day. You might've had 10 things that you've got on your list, but you only got two things done. That's all right. Yeah. Is all right.

Sharon ([12:47](#)):

Yeah. So you said you set the tone as the parent, but you also set the tone for yourself. And so that was a great example, but I also want to talk about when you're setting the tone for yourself, let's say you don't have littles around. And the tone you set is that you're not going to get out of bed. You're not going to get out of it today. That's absolutely. Okay. Okay. You're going to sit in it. That's okay, too.

Erica ([13:09](#)):

No, it is for sure. You have to give yourself permission to have the feeling. You can't think that it's a bad thing to have the feelings. We, it, it feels bad. It definitely feels bad. So we want to avoid it, but allow it to happen and you, and accept it, accept it. I'm not getting out of bed today. It's Halloween. I don't feel like it. I don't, if the pandemic, I can't go to this Halloween party anyway, I'm just going to stay in bed and watch love stories or hallmark channel and enjoy your day. Enjoy it, embrace it and enjoy it.

Sharon ([13:49](#)):

And here's another thing that happens. What happens when you come up on the holiday and you want to act like it doesn't exist. So for example, if Halloween was his favorite holiday, but now this year you

decide, I don't even, I'm not celebrating. I'm not decorating and I'm not going around anyone that is decorating. And I'm not going to go to any trick or treating.

Erica ([14:09](#)):

I mean, if that's your personal choice, I think though the one thing to really examine is, are you saying that because you're resisting or are you saying that because you just don't have an interest in it? You know what I'm saying? You don't have to look at it really evaluated. Are you pushing back against it? Are you throwing your hands up and saying I'm not doing it? Cause I'm not. I'm not even acknowledging that this day is coming. And so we can insert insert Halloween, Thanksgiving or Christmas here. Cause it could be any one of the three. Are you resisting? Are you just not interested? If you're just not interested and you choose to do something, read a book. That's fine. But if you're, if you're pushing back against it, you have to look at what's causing to push back.

Sharon ([14:54](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. I totally agree on that. How, um, the holidays can be painful. You have to say that they will be painful without a doubt. Yeah. One of the other things that you and I talk about a lot when we're talking about the holidays is that we can get through Thanksgiving. Like it was a breeze and we're like, Oh man, I totally got to bath. And the next day we're flat on our . Yeah. Cause we literally didn't prepare for the day after, because we held on so tight and we just had to get through today, get through today, get through today. And it, the punch in the gut comes the next day.

Erica ([15:34](#)):

Yeah. And for Thanksgiving is our, uh, comes up with our dad's anniversary of his passing and his favorite holiday. We have a twofer on Thanksgiving and yeah, we can. And for us, because well, pre pandemic, we are social entities and we cook, we cook, our creativity, goes, the love goes into the food. So we're so distracted by our menu and executing it flawlessly and presenting this beautiful table. And then you're right the next day. You're like, I didn't even deal with the emotions at all. And they hit you like a ton of bricks the day after. And you absolutely can't get out of bed because we didn't allow ourselves any time to have the emotion. And we didn't even talk about what the day really is.

Sharon ([16:18](#)):

Yeah, exactly. And so you and I talk a lot about having a plan, having a plan for whatever you're going to do, having a plan for allowing bringing them into the holiday, right. Having a plan for sometimes people will set a place for them at the Thanksgiving table. Sometimes they will make sure the biggest bottle of ketchup is on the table because they put ketchup on everything. And that's just an understated statement. Sometimes they just light a candle in the room and they don't want to talk about it at all. But you have a plan. Do not go into the holiday without a plan. Or if you go into the holiday without a plan, you're going to get cut off at the knees and it is going to knock you for something.

Erica ([17:00](#)):

Oh yeah. Oh yeah. You don't want to be blindsided by the holidays. You absolutely can tell yourself. I'm not acknowledging this. This is not happening, but it will blindside you because the days are coming, whether you like it or not, you're going to wake up and it's going to be Halloween, Thanksgiving and

Christmas or Hanukkah or whatever your, your season is. You're going to wake up on that day. And if you don't have a plan, it's going to just literally smack your face.

Sharon ([17:24](#)):

Yeah. And we're all just waiting for 2020 to end. Oh my God.

Erica ([17:30](#)):

True words. Have never been okay. Oh my gosh. I need to, honestly, and this is, I'm saying this in jest, but I mean this, you need to agree.

Sharon ([17:43](#)):

Oh yeah. That's that definitely has to be a show. We need to talk about that because you know the other thing that I've been saying, whenever someone says, well, this happened, well, these bags don't work well, this doesn't happen wrong. Ofcourse it's 2020. It like, it fits on everything. Now, everything that goes wrong for 2020.

Erica ([18:00](#)):

I had Jordan laughing at me the other day because he had been complaining about a headache and I kept offering him Tylenol, Tylenol, Tylenol out. Well, I ended up getting a headache. So I go to get the Tylenol that I'd been offering him all day and I pour it out. And there's only one left in the bottle. And I looked at him and I said, freaking 2020.

Sharon ([18:23](#)):

You can meet a blame for everything. It's going to be a holiday. We never celebrate the 2020 holiday.

Erica ([18:33](#)):

We're going to have to do a full year of just self-care shows for 2021. So we could recover from 2020.

Sharon ([18:39](#)):

Oh my God. Well, actually I thought about, uh, there was such to get it on a side note, but I thought, have I taken a picture of myself in a mask? Cause like I need to have that so I could show my grandchildren. And then in 2020, we all had to wear this.

Erica ([18:53](#)):

I don't know how they're going to write this down in the history books. And I don't know how they're even going to give it and do it justice.

Sharon ([19:02](#)):

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. So that is a whole nother, it's almost like the dark cloud that's hanging over the holiday season. Right? Right. The holiday. See, you brought that up as dark, but then there's this dark cloud. That's just hanging over it. And it's the 2020. I can't even imagine sisters, anyone having to do any

of the holidays without your family near when you need them more than anything. Plus, all of us that have experienced loss this year and death due to the pandemic or without the pandemic, just a loss of death. Not being able to go to the funeral, man. This is this whole year.

Erica ([19:37](#)):

Yeah. This this whole year. That's why we have to continue tap into those creative juices. Don't let 2020 get the best of you. Whether you agree to meet up in a parking lot and open, you know, socially distance and open your, the hats on your car. If you have a truck sit in the bed of your truck and everyone just gathered in that way, do it. Do it. Don't let 2020 get the best of you. Get your creative hats on and find ways where you can come together. Support one another, hold the space for everyone. And, and just muster through this pandemic and the holidays as best we can.

Sharon ([20:19](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Because the one thing we know is that we need, we need our support to help us through. We need our plan. Be prepared. Do not let this just hit you out of nowhere.

Erica ([20:32](#)):

Yes. We are going to be airing this show on Halloween. And I encourage you, everyone. All of our sisters and friends who are listening to this, the minute this podcast ends pick up the phone and start making those phone calls to your loved one and start making your plan. Yeah. What are we going to do? Or what let's do? Zoom thing, Zoom Giving let's do a, I can't think of something creative for Christmas, you know, but whatever the zoom parking lot, however you do it. Get on the phone.

Sharon ([21:04](#)):

I love it. Zoom-miss

Erica ([21:08](#)):

Get on the phone, plan it out. Start sending out the emails, cook your meals, show up in the parking lot. Potluck it, everybody eat their own, um, meal, you know, make the best of it and laugh through it because you do need laughter. I know we think we're silly cause we're, we're laughing, but the laughter gets you through and just do the best that you can.

Sharon ([21:40](#)):

Yeah. We couldn't have made it without each other without each other. At those times, even for Thanksgiving, our dad died on Thanksgiving morning. We were all came together. That day Donovan died. We all went to Texas and we spent Thanksgiving together. So we had plans Christmas for Austin. We all spent the night together. So we had plans and we got together as a family. So it's going to be so, so important. You'll be seeing our griever's guide. And it has a bunch of tips in there for you.

Erica ([22:04](#))

Absolutely. We'll be putting up information about the webinar so you can that'll run, like we said, till the end of the year. So if you need to go back and rewatch it or whatever, it'll be up in, it'll be available.

Sharon ([22:17](#)):

Yeah. Thank you, friends.

Erica ([22:19](#)):

Bye friends. Thank you.

Erica ([22:21](#)):

Hi friends, Eric Honore here with healing starts with the heart. Sharon and I are so glad you joined us for another great episode of our podcast. We hope you enjoyed this episode. We want to let you know for more information you can go to our website [@healingstartswithaheart.com](mailto:healingstartswithaheart.com). There you will find not only today's podcasts, but all of our podcasts, along with our blogs, the information on the programs that we offer and the griever's guide, which is something Sharon and I put together to document how we came to be your grief specialists. We also have a quiz to take, to identify if you are truly grieving. And if you want to talk specifically with either Sharon or myself, you can schedule an appointment there. You will also find a place to join our private face book group at hope, heal and recover. Thank you so much for being with us. Have a great day friends.