

Words Matter

Erica Hono e & Sharon Brubaker

Grief Specialists

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 the family. Once again, when Eric, his oldest son, Donovan was killed in a motorcycle accident, Eric 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](#)):

Hey guys. Welcome back. Hey sisters, how have you been? How's your grief then this week? How have you been managing? We remember what it was like when the days just melted into nights and we cried all the time. My name is Sharon Brubaker and I am a grief specialist. I have my beautiful sister here, Erica, and we want to welcome you to our show.

Erica ([01:08](#)):

Hi sisters. Hi friends. Welcome back. This show is about grief. It's about pain. It's about sadness. It's about loneliness, but it's also about being silly cause you and I also banter back and forth. It shows about a lot of different things. It's amazing how we can take the topic of grief and apply it to almost every area of our lives.

Sharon ([01:37](#)):

It blows my mind sometimes, right? Blows my mind and what even, I think blows my mind even more is sometimes when I'm sitting and talking to a sister and I, and she'll be telling me a story or, or a woman friend, and I'm like that's grief. And when they get it, it's even more opening and exciting that they finally get it for the first time and they can call it what it is because we don't ever call it what it is.

Erica ([02:07](#)):

And that's one of the biggest challenges is that we don't know how to talk about grief. It's misnamed. I'm not diagnosed, but you know, people use other labels, depression, PTSD, trauma, but it's, it's really at the center of it all is grief. So it's good that we're putting this out there because we're giving people the dialogue, they need to say what's really happening in their lives and in their hearts.

Sharon ([02:36](#)):

Yeah. Oh yeah, totally cool. I feel like sometimes we are constantly reintroducing our show to everyone. When we know we have sisters that are following them, listen, women that contact us and they say, wow, your show made such a difference in my life today. But sometimes we're, we're constantly going back to the beginning because number one, I think most people wouldn't believe we would have a show that we would talk about this number. There's constantly new listeners coming in and they're like, I can't believe there was a show about this. And number three, we just need to know that we see you. We hear you. We're here for you. We remember what it was like.

Erica ([03:13](#)):

Yeah. And this is such a great space because this is scary. If you have just had a fresh loss and you don't know what to do, you don't know who to turn to. This is definitely a great place and a great resource to

listen and know that it's normal. What's happening to you. It's normal, how you feel about it. And it's normal that your life is out of whack right now. So I love that. And we have this as a resource for people to turn to, to say, Oh my gosh I'm going to be okay

Sharon ([03:45](#)):

For the person whose life is not out of whack. Could you raise your hand? Right? I'm sorry. I had to make a comment on that.

Erica ([03:57](#)):

We got pandemic. It's you have fires here in California. We just had hurricanes. I mean, who's life is not out of whack right now.

Sharon ([04:13](#)):

So you take all that and then you add grief on top of it. Hello?

Erica ([04:19](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Give me a headache just thinking about it.

Sharon ([04:23](#)):

Definitely. Well, that's not even what we want to talk about today. We're not talking about, you came up with this topic that I thought was amazing. So why don't you introduce the topic to us?

Erica ([04:34](#)):

So, our topic today is Words Matter and you know, it came about from a very personal experience that Jordan and I have had Jordan is my 17 year old son. For those of you who don't know, he's starting his senior year of high school in these unconventional times. And this is not about politics, but it just I think I have been seeing everyone is seeing if you're on social media, if you're watching any media outlets, the back and forth, the hate speech that is out there on both sides, going back and forth. I mean, it's just like the civility seems like it's lost these days. And for our personal story last Friday, we had our first football scrimmage and Jordan is a visibly black child, Sharon and I share that we are you know, we are of African-American descent, but we are also mixed race. So when you look at us, you wouldn't say, Oh, those are African-American women. So we were at our scrimmage and Jordan made his first tackle of the game. And the kid that he tackled, proceeded to kick him in the chest, which is football. That's a football culture. I wasn't upset about that. What he said to him are over, over, get some, N-word get some n-word. And when he came home and told me what happened, my heart just broke. It broke for him. It broke for society that we are still having to deal with race issues in America right now. And it broke just for, like I said, the lack of civility that we have as Americans. right now.

Sharon ([06:29](#)):

And you went deep really fast. Thank you sister, for sharing this story. I can't even imagine what Jordan must've felt like, you know what his heart is, it's it in actuality, it's just a word with the meaning behind it is so deep. So in that instance, when we say words matter that one has so much impact going along with it, you know what I mean?

Erica ([06:55](#)):

Yeah. And the, you know and how we're tying this into grief specifically, you know, for me as a mom and he's a 17, soon to be 18 year old young man, I can't protect him from these things anymore. He's out in the world. He's about to be in college. He will soon be in the workforce and I can't heal those hurts for him. He's going to have his own experiences that exists outside of me it saddens me that there's, I'm powerless to protect him from the ugliness that's out there in the big, bad world, right.

Sharon (07:35):

A hundred percent. But there's another thing that goes along with that. And that is that he needs to feel that for himself, you're saying I can't protect him, but you need to guide him while he's feeling the pain. Right. He needs it. He experienced it period. There was nothing you could do. You weren't on the field. You didn't hear it. There was nothing you could do to protect him at that moment. But we talk about feeling our feelings. This is another example of that. So it's two subjects going together is that he had to feel that 100% feeling in his heart and his soul. And you had to guide him through the journey.

Erica (08:14):

Right. And that, that's the thing. I think that you know, cause your initial response is rage. Like I wanted to go back to that football field. I wanted to put one on pads and get down there, you know, cause, and in that kid's face, but of course, you know, unrealistic, but that's your first response is rage. Someone hurt my baby. I wanna, you know, make sure that that doesn't happen again. But once I slept on it had time to gather my thoughts about it and sit down and really talk about it. It's true. That's the kind of the process we went through. This sucks. This really sucks. Yeah. And unfortunately it's not gonna be the last time that this happens. No,

Sharon (08:56):

No.

Erica (08:57):

So what can we do moving forward? And I constantly am preaching to him. You have to educate yourself, stay educated so that you can use your words civilly, back to say why it's not. Okay. And then think about how your, what your part is to affect change, to stop this from happening to other young kids coming up behind you, because we all have a responsibility, you know.

Sharon (09:29):

You're right. If I say that one more time, I'm going to knock myself out. I say 100% all the time. It's my response. I don't know some words. She, she showed me the other day that I say that Erica we're, it's also matter grief healing. And on the grief journey, I don't want to lessen what, what happened to Jordan. But it also happens when we are helping our children or when we are helping our loved one who is grieving. Right. Words also matter then, and we, as a society have gotten to this part where we just keep saying things that we think it's absolutely okay to say, to agree for someone with a broken heart, how would it have been if you'd have just told Jordan, just give it time. You'll feel better in time. Right. Inappropriate. It doesn't even situation. How would you like it? If I had come up to you and said, Donovan has just died, but sister, you just give it some time and you will feel better.

Erica (10:31):

Yeah. Yeah. Well, in the other, what im, what if I would've just said to him, you just gotta be strong, suck it up, Suck it up. Completely Minimizing his experience not even validating that he has a right to have

this anger and hurt, you know, that would have also been terrible for him to process it and to try and find healing in this situation.

Sharon ([10:56](#)):

Jordan, you just keep busy. I know that that happened to you. I know you were on the football field. I know the guy called you the N word, but you just keep busy and in two or three days, you won't even remember.

Erica ([11:07](#)):

Right, right, right. Yeah.

Sharon ([11:12](#)):

Words matter. And none of those make sense. And who would have used those words at that time to help Jordan through what he had just experienced.

Erica ([11:21](#)):

Right. Well, and actually, and I think he, the initial response, he said that, you know, he was got from some of his coaches. It was just ignore it all. That's also the kind of, you know, similar, it goes along. It's kind of hard to ignore, especially when, you know, we were being told, I was being told after the fact everybody on the field was hearing it. So you're telling him to ignore it when this kid, you know, his voice is projecting. So many people were hearing it. Another thing that you know, we're, we're saying words matter. I had, we had a client. You remember she shared with us that after finally opening up about her traumatic divorce, she was going through and her girlfriend said, you have two weeks to cry about this and then you got to move on. And, and so now that she's come to find help, she feels weak because she feels like she didn't do what she should've done was put on our big girl panties after two weeks and move on with her life. But that's not how it works, right?

Sharon ([12:21](#)):

Well, I think what, what we don't understand is this, that we offer this advice that sometimes is shallow and fall short. And what we need to understand is that our sisters and our friends, they don't need the advice. Jordan did meet the advice to keep busy. What he needed was a listening ear. And he needed someone to say nothing would let him share how he felt he needed to also tap into his emotional feelings of what that was and feel that, and the truth was as hard as it was for you. You had to let him sit in that pain for a second, because that's life reality. That's grief, that's brokenness. We have to sit in it for a minute, a week, a day, a month, or however long it's gonna take.

Erica ([13:18](#)):

Absolutely. If we don't allow the feelings in, it's just going to take us longer to get through the process. So you're right. That, that is one of the things that I do try to help him with is allowing him to have that time, to feel the feelings. It is so important to do that.

Sharon ([13:35](#)):

So I don't know if this is the right time to share this, but I'm here right now. Anyway. So Sheila and I are our cousin, Sheila, we were talking about going and learn how to shoot a gun, something I've wanted to do for years, but here's the deal. I am definitely afraid of guns. I'm definitely afraid of guns. So I always

kind of like, think about it. This fear comes up in me because I don't know if in a past life I was shot by a gun or whatever, but anyway, just the thought of a gun, like totally freaks me out last night, Sheila and I were talking about it. There's a Oh, someone's advertising a group for women where they can come and she's like, let's go do this. And the fear came up. And so I, I literally said to myself, sit in the fear, sit in I acknowledge that there was fear in my heart. I couldn't literally feel it. And so I just didn't experience spearmint when myself and I just sat in the fear first for quite a while, actually. And just trying to examine what this, this is fear it's going to be okay. It's okay. Let it be there. And I just let it be there. I kept thinking about the gun and I just let it be there. I did it for myself because what I noticed was every time this gun thing comes up, I would think gun and then fear. And then I would push back. And I would tell you that. But last night I did a, I made a purpose effort to just sit in the fear and that's what we have to do as grievers. And as women with broken hearts, we need to just sit in whatever that feeling is. We needed to sit there.

Erica ([15:12](#)):

Right? And that's so true. You have to, you have to sit in your own feelings. You have to learn how to shut down the unsolicited advice from your well-meaning friends and family, and just get in with what's true. What's truly going on in your heart and know that you don't have to listen to the, just give it time or the suck it up, or, you know, put your big girl panties on. You really have to just go through your own process in your own time, in, in your own way.

Sharon ([15:46](#)):

Yeah. And that's why I think it's also so important to when you have a guide that helps you go through that and helps you look at all those little idiosyncrasies and the little aspects that you never thought of. You never thought that you knew that when you heard just give it to her and it didn't feel right, but you didn't know why you don't know why this doesn't feel right. And so we're constantly searching for that part to figure it out.

Erica ([16:12](#)):

Yeah There's never any answer on how much time it's like, just give it time. It's then you're sitting in, you're waiting and you're waiting. And a month turns into a year and a year turns into two and five years later, you're still waking up on Christmas morning bawling your eyes out wondering if you've given it enough time.

Sharon ([16:30](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. That definitely that definitely happens. Okay, sisters, here's the takeaway for today: Words matter what you're going to say to your grieving friend and your hurt child are going to make a huge difference and impact them for the rest of their life. Jordan was impacted by what happened to him and thank God he has a mom. That's going to be able to guide him and lead him out of it. But had he not, that would, that would impact him for the rest of his life. Even though it's still will, it'll never go away, but he knows how to process it. Words matter, what we say and what we tell our friends and sisters as they're grieving also what we hear and listen to. It all makes a difference in our lives.

Erica ([17:14](#)):

It really does. We learned by trial and error that the information that was out there, the in works and, and on other podcasts and shows weren't necessarily helpful for us because they weren't actually true for the grieving experience. So once we sorted out the misinformation and really said, well, that didn't

work. That's not true. This isn't real. And we got down to what's, what's real about grief and put this show together to put it out there. I think that that is one of the most helpful things that we do. And like you said, we've become the guides. We were the blind leading the blind and now we're trained professionals.

Sharon ([17:58](#)):

How amazing is that sisters? We want to thank you so much for joining our show today. We hope that this gives you a tidbit to understand what powerful and what not, how powerful your words are.

Erica ([18:11](#)):

Thank you so much for letting us in for this brief moment. And we hope you enjoyed our show today.

Speaker 2 ([18:18](#)):

Hi friends, Erica Honore here with healing starts with the heart. Sharon and I are so glad you joined us for another great episode of our podcasts. We hope you enjoyed this episode. We want to let you know for more information, you can go to our website at www.healingstartswiththeheart.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 facebook group at hope, heal and recover. Thank you so much for being with us. Have a great day friends.