

Grief and Dating

Erica Honoré & 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 Erica's 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 ([00:41](#)):

Hey sisters, welcome back. You are here with Sharon and Erica, the grief specialists. And this is a show where it's all about you, the griever and your broken heart. I'm not going to do the poem because I can see the look on my sister's face. And she's like, don't do the poem anyway. Hi, Erica.

Erica ([00:59](#)):

Hi, Sharon for sparing us, honestly, wasn't even expecting the conversation because I thought we had moved beyond that.

Sharon ([01:11](#)):

Like comes naturally when he says action. I just want to go into the poem. I don't know why.

Erica ([01:19](#)):

Gosh, welcome everyone to another amazing episode of healing starts with the heart, the podcast where it's for grieving friends and sisters.

Sharon ([01:28](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Hey, where are the ones having the conversation, which I totally love the conversation that no one wants to talk about, but you came up with this amazing topic and I'm excited to get into it.

Erica ([01:41](#)):

Yeah, I think, I think people will be surprised by the aspects that we'll get into. And I'm also very curious to see where we're going, how far we're going to go with this because it's something people don't think about, but let's one for one second, just to explore grief and dating.

Sharon ([02:03](#)):

Yeah. Those go together. Do those go together?

Erica ([02:13](#)):

Unfortunately, yes. And the reason this topic came about is because of all of our clients recently that we've been working with that are either widowed and getting back in the dating scene divorce and getting back, broken up from a longterm relationship and getting back in the dating scene. So we're getting it from the perspective of people who have done their heart work, but they're meeting people who are still actively broken and moving. And it's been an interesting experience.

Sharon ([02:53](#)):

I think there's another aspect of that too. And it's people that don't want, don't want to go back to the dating because they've been so broken. Right. Or, you know what I mean? They're like, I'm just done with that. I just can't do that right in my heart. Can't take any more pain. Yeah. So there's also that aspect to it too.

Erica ([03:11](#)):

I have a very, very dear friend who is amazingly supportive of all of our work and shares everything. But went through a very grueling divorce. And when I even try to hint at how that is, they just shut me off. So they support everything we do. But when it comes to their personal life, don't want to have anything to do with it. And we'll only entertain non-committal type of interactions with the opposite sex. So I'm more of just a casual encounter. Yeah. Nothing. Long-term nothing serious. Doesn't want to get to know anyone. They stick to casual encounters only because they are still so broken from their divorce. Right.

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

Well, and then there's another aspect right there. You said, just sticking to casual encounters. Some of some grievers we've worked with women that just are so broken, so broken hearted, but yet go on this rampage of just having sex with anyone they meet, just so they're having that physical encounter. They're also posting about it. Maybe not explicit posts, but the wanting, they are posts these late nights, sexual wanting posts because all they want to do to fill that pain is to have sex or be with somebody and just be in that realm. Yeah, that is grief and dating

Erica ([04:49](#)):

That's one of the things that we teach is a common occurrence of like trying to replace the loss behavior. They're just trying to feel that physical space with anyone because the void is so big of how much they missed their, their loved one.

Sharon ([05:11](#)):

Erica, I just want to stay right here and say that that is so common, so common. And if that's you right now, and you just, you are doing things that you never thought that you would do, or you're saying things that you never thought you would say, or you're hanging out with people that you never thought you would hang out with. The very first thing I want you to do is acknowledge that that's happening in your life. Number one, and number two, try to see if you can find the pain that you're really trying to avoid pain. Are you really trying to avoid number one, number two? Is it helpful? Is it really helping

Erica ([05:43](#)):

Well? And, and I would say in addition to the pain, they're trying to avoid, what void are you trying to fill? Yeah. Yeah. What are you trying to you know, what pain is there that you, you are wanting any, any person to just take that pain away for those however length of time, whatever the time you're with that person.

Sharon ([06:07](#)):

So, earlier, You said that you wanted to talk about like, let's say someone has done their work and they're totally healed. And now they're dating someone who is not totally healed that doesn't just happen in a dating experience. Correct. When you and I first went through grief recovery, and everybody we met for the next few months was grieving

Erica ([06:26](#)):

Everyone everywhere. In the prior world, we were acutely aware in this world and unresolved grief because they were, they were telling their stories and doing the things that we had done that we recognize as their grieving process. So, absolutely

Sharon ([06:50](#)):

Well, we were cooks back then we would call each other and be like, Oh my gosh, Sherry needs to get in grief recovery. And this person needs to do grief healing and this person and this person, but the truth is unresolved. Grief is everywhere. Yeah. That's the truth. And once you've become healed and you've healed your heart, then you start to see all the brokenness. But you also see before, I think before we did our grief work, Erica was that, that was just normal. Everyday life gossip hanging out in the pain, sharing sister, love, sharing. This thing happened. We didn't call it grief. We just called it Support. I call it.

Erica ([07:30](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. So take that experience and then apply it to the dating world. So you, you individuals sitting down over dinner and let's say, they're neither one have done grief work. And they're both broken from their previous whatever loss of whatever. Yeah. And then they start to share the experience. So now it's how much, or how little do you share? How much emotion do you show? Like what, cause what do you imagine? It's the first date and you sit down with a gentleman who starts crying about his deceased wife, which is totally normal and totally okay. But because we don't talk about grief enough as a society, we have the experience of yeah, no, yeah. Yeah.

Sharon ([08:30](#)):

What about when those two people come to the table and they're both broken. Yeah. And they ended up going deeper in a relationship and then they ended up getting married and they're both broken and they moved way too fast to avoid the pain that was happening to both of them. Right. And then they ended up becoming our clients

Erica ([08:52](#)):

And then what they do is they start comparing each other to the, the other, the person who broke them. So, you know, she's like, you're just like, Bob, Bob never wants to take out the trash either. And then he starts saying, well, you're just like Sherry, Sherry hated to cook, you know? And then that all of that past brokenness comes in to that numeric.

Sharon ([09:17](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That's so, so, so, so deep. I don't know if I'm judging them because you've been the heal person or joining them because you're still the broken person is, you know what I mean, how it ends up,

Erica ([09:40](#)):

This is what I would say to that. I would say if you're coming to the experience as the healed person, the person who's done, your heart work and you are seeing and recognizing their brokenness, I think it's from that point, it is, are they willing to mend their brokenness? Like have they just not gotten to that point yet? Are they not aware that that's an option for them? Or are they adamant like my, my very

sweet dear friend that they're not going to do it just excuse not to do it. Cause they don't even want to go there. I think that those are, are telltale signs of how involved you want to get in the relation.

Sharon ([10:31](#)):

Right? When is it safe to even is there a time limit on when it's safe to go out again?

Erica ([10:41](#)):

You mean after the experience? Yeah. After, yeah. After your loss? I think that's huge. I think that's huge question because you know one of our clients that we just finished working with who's a widow is dating and getting a lot of Slack from her family. And she keeps saying, I'm a young woman. I was used to, to pull down the blinds and curl up and die in this house because my husband died. Right. But society puts this thing out there that, you know, you got to wear the black and you don't get to have fun anymore. Your life is done. We've come a long way.

Sharon ([11:26](#)):

Well, it's a personal decision that you make for yourself personally, right? It's a personal decision that you make for yourself. Because the old beliefs are still there. The old beliefs that you should at least give it a year, a widow should grieve. For three years, we met a client a few years ago. That was adamant that she were black. The priests in her church told her she had to stop it. He's like you've gotten way past the time. Like the priest was telling her, look, you need to put on some color, you know, because she was continually staying in the grieving experience. So yeah, it's a personal decision for me. I say this all the time and I said it for years, but I believe it to be true when I was young, when I was a young mom and wife, I would say if my, if my husband died, I wasn't going to marry because I had daughters. And I couldn't imagine bringing someone else in now as a woman of married of 35 years, I don't imagine ever getting married again. I mean, there's nobody who's going to put up with me. Like Tony has put up with me, right? Nobody's going to put up with my BS. Like Tony Brewbaker has no one's going to be, he was the one for me. Like I just don't see that being a place for being some thing that I want to do. But that's a personal decision I'm making for myself, correct? Let's say I decided that I wanted to go out and date. When I'm complete with my hard work, that's a decision I have to make for myself. People don't get to decide that my family members don't get to decide that.

Erica ([13:00](#)):

No. And I, and I, I I would challenge any child of a parent who is going into the dating world to try and put yourself in their shoes. You know, where they're people, you know, adult children who give their parents so much flack for going out and dating. But honestly, if they ha, if they make that choice for themselves, you need to respect it. Yes. Because we're grieving a spouse, you're eating a mom or a dad. Your grief is different from theirs is unique and individual, even though they have the same loss, your grief is your own personal brief. The relationship is different. Someone who's lost, a spouse will, might make that choice to date to find another spouse. And that is their right. You can't go out and get another mom or another dad. You can't shoot. Just get another parent. So you have to understand your process is your own personal process. It's not.

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

Yeah. Here's the other thing, sisters. I got to get this out here. Stop going from relationship to relationship without mending the brokenness of the first relationship, wherever you go, there you are. And you take your broken heart with you. If you broke up with Tom in 2018 and you dated for three

years, and that was a terrible relationship. And now in 2019, you're with Bob. Guess what? You're bringing to you with Bob luggage, a backpack full of brokenness, mend your broken heart. Stop bringing that crap everywhere you go, go. After the pain, heal yourself. Do yourself care. Get yourself together before you go to the next relationship.

Erica ([15:02](#)):

Absolutely. Go ahead. And once you do that, you're going to want someone who's coming to the table equally matched equally. You don't want someone who's done their own work and has been on their own healing journey because that's going to make this union that much healthier and stronger. You're not going to want to sit at the table with Bob who is still bitter, that Sherry never wanted to cook dinner. Yeah. That's not going to be attractive to you when you've done your own healing.

Sharon ([15:37](#)):

Yeah. I think that this is such a deep topic. Like we're only touching the surfaces of it, but we as women have a responsibility to ourselves, to each and every one of it, we one of us, we have a responsibility to mend our hearts. Before we go out and grab in other relationships. I have sat with women where we have grieved a backpack full of broken relationships. This one left me because of that. I broke up with this one because of this, this had a drug addiction. I didn't feel trusted. I didn't feel security. I didn't feel all of this. And then you bring that into your next current relationship. That's going to be like,

Erica ([16:19](#)):

Right. And, and, and don't expect that it's going to go from the restaurant to the chapel after the first date. Yeah, please, please stop rushing things. Everything in life is about a balance and it has a process. Will someone really get to know them? Let them get to know you. You have to tell the truth about yourself. Always tell the good, the bad and the ugly, or like Sharon calls it the sweet and the sour share that. Learn to grow as friends first become a friendship. Enjoy having a crush. You can be a girl who just has a crush on a boy. Yeah. So much fun to go from the dinner table to the chapel the next week. Yeah. Realistic.

Sharon ([17:16](#)):

And we can help you figure out why do you need to go to the chapel? Because there's something in there in your heart that probably happened in your past. That's forcing that. I met a young girl recently who, after the, her divorce, she took two years, two years to mend a broken heart. She worked on herself for two years. She's like this time is about me. She had two children. She's like, I'm going to devote my son to my job with my children and healing myself. Then when she did meet someone, she refused to meet him in. She just wanted to get to know him. I thought he was the healthiest thing. And they did phone calls, scheduled phone calls, and they would just talk and enjoy each other. They built a six month relationship over phone calls and writing letters to each other. And then, then they met each other for the first time and they were ready to move on in a true, solid relationship. But she went after the true healing. She didn't just jump in like our mother would say, any Tom Dick or Harry.

Erica ([18:27](#)):

I'm not sure if we've shared this on previous podcasts, but Louis and I are broke up for a period of time and, and we are actually legally divorced. And so that was a very prior to losing Austin. That was the biggest loss I had ever experienced in my life because it was so hard and devastating and just so challenging. And I did what you, I jumped right into another relationship right after. And that, of course

didn't work out, go figure. And I made that choice to do that. I decided to stay single and really work on myself because I didn't want to be the person who had just had a series of failed relationships. I would want it to have a success story. And it was life-changing because what happened was through me, working on myself and putting out there what I really truly wanted in a partner, let me ride by to solution.

Sharon ([19:34](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. Right. When you did the work on yourself, you were able to figure out all of the things that you didn't like about yourself, the things you needed to change, and you showed up differently for Louis, you were different. And when you Erica, guess what happened to him, he showed up as a different Louis and it's such a deeper, more loving relationship because of it, sisters. We know what it's like. We know what it's like, you know, to, to, to really struggle in a relationship and have that brokenness. Man. There's so many aspects to this grief, especially the grief in a relationship, especially with us as women, what we do to ourselves. That's what we're talking about, what we do to ourselves. Yeah.

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

We, we try, there's so much judgment out there. We try to fit ourselves into these boxes. We want to be supermom, superwoman successful in careers. Very self evolved. We want to be all these things, which is impossible to maintain that level constantly. When we have to recognize when we have a brokenness in our heart, whether it comes from a past relationship, current work situation, problems with our challenging teenagers. I mean, all of these things can cause pain and brokenness in our heart. We have to acknowledge when it's time for us to do some healing work, to mend that that what's broken so that we can be the best version of ourselves.

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

A hundred percent, a hundred percent. I love that. I love that. Hey, I want to lead you. All of our friends girlfriends to our Grievers Guide that Erica and I have just completed. It's our new Grievers Guide. I love it. I love it. Love it, love it. It is the definition of grief. It is nothing more than the definition of grief. We break it down for you. Here is what grief is. We even talk about relationships in there. It's an amazing grievers guy. It is free. We're offering that to you. You can get it at our website at healingstartswiththeheart.com on our website. You can get access to our blog. You can get access to our new program, which I love processing the pain of grief, our new four week program. You can purchase that there, you can get a mini-session with Erica and I, we would love to sit with anyone that just needs to talk. If anything, we said here today hits your heart and you want to discuss it with us set up mini session. We would be honored to meet with you. Did I leave anything out? Oh yeah. How about our Facebook group? We love our new Facebook group. It's brand new. We just started it. It's a community of women talking about their hearts, their broken heart, and the link for that is going to be in the show notes below.

Erica ([22:46](#)):

Thank you so much for coming back for another amazing episode, guys. We hope it actually, we know, I need to stop saying we hope we know you're going to find something valuable and what we're bringing to the table. So we will talk to you very soon.

Sharon ([23:02](#)):

Bye girlfriend,

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

Bye friends.