

*You are  
Calling the  
Shots*

Erica Honoé & 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 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](#)):

You are calling the shots. You're the one that's in control of your grief. You are the one that gets to say when you're the one that gets to say no, and you're the one that gets to say, yes, you the griever. And it's so important that you understand that you get to make the decisions of whether you're crying today or not crying today. You own it. It is in you, it's your heart. And you get to say, whether you are going to heal from this broken heart,

Erica ([01:10](#)):

There are so many, uh, cultural norms, religious beliefs. There's so many, um, just special family things that people tend to do when someone passes away. If that's not in your mindset, if that you can't physically, um, perform some of those things, that's okay, you get to say, no, I can't do it. It's really all about you and how you choose to grieve

Sharon ([01:40](#)):

That that's so it it's so important because we're, we're like I'm a juggler when grief happens, right? We're trying to take care of our own grief. We're trying to help our husband with his grief. We're trying to help our children grieve. Your parents may be alive still, and you're trying to help them with their grief. You got brothers and sisters that are grieving. You're having to make decisions, right? You're having to make decisions on the funeral, the, um, cremate or bury all of those decisions that you're trying to make. And yet you have to honor what's going on within yourself. And everyone is coming at you with an idea, a decision they should be done. This is what we did when our aunt Mimi died. You know, it's like all of these ideas and decisions are coming up. You think just grieving is overwhelming. Try dealing with all of that.

Erica ([02:37](#)):

That is so true. Everyone has an opinion. They always feel that, um, they're helpful and they're not, they're not, not really at all. Um, and you just feel this constant sense of pressure because you're numb and you can't think straight your brain, your is in a fog and you cannot complete a thought, let alone make these very important decisions and figure out if you're doing it right or wrong. Cause you feel is this right? Am I supposed to do this? Yeah, there is no right or wrong. Take that off the table. There's no right or wrong. There just is.

Sharon ([03:25](#)):

It's just grief. It's just grief. Right? So you have to, when you are in control of your grief, you have to say what you want. You have to speak up for yourself, especially in that zombie brain where you can't think it is. It's so important that you speak up for yourself. Hear me out. If you don't want that baby blue color

hanging on the tables at the, the after service, don't pick it. You have the right to say it. You have to say what you want, but you equally have to say what you don't want. I don't want that. I don't like that. Donovan would have never wanted that. That's not who my son was. You are the one that gets to speak up. You're in control of the situation

Erica (04:05)

Now and on the flip side of that, there there's some stuff that you don't care. You just don't care. I don't care. What color you put on the, on the altar in the table, my son just died. I don't care. Now that being said, you can't then go back and have an opinion about it. You have to stay in your realm of you don't care because that's really kind of how I felt. I'm like, I don't care. I don't care if it's red or purple. I don't care. But it's important. One that you're asked one because it is important to get your input. And if you truly don't care because it didn't, it didn't make a difference. It wasn't going to bring him back. He wasn't there. He wasn't going to be here with me. So it didn't matter. But it is. It's still important that people are coming to you. They should not be taking you out of the equation because you're in a, uh, you have griever's brain and you can't make a decision. You should always be consulted.

Speaker 3 (05:03):

I don't think it should. It's have too.

Speaker 2 (05:05):

No, it's have too. But some people will be like, Oh, well I don't want to bother her with this. I'll just pick the choral arrangement.

Sharon (5:15):

Yeah. Right, right, right, right. For the most part, There was a lot of like, and I'm going back to who I was being support is that I did a lot of those things, but there were a lot of things that I brought to you guys, because there were a lot of things that you really had ideas about that you want it done a certain way on both instances with Austin and Donovan. Um, having the same thing. When Sharon died, her kids got to pick the colors. They got to pick the time I told them what I thought. They kind of let me lead it. But they jumped in in one way with other things. Um, you have to allow yourself to feel you're in control of your feet. And you have to allow those feelings in, especially here throughout this time, you are in control of the feelings. If you let the feelings out, you're in control of them. If you do not let them out, you're still in control of them and know that by not letting them out it is can prolong the process.

Erica (06:06):

Absolutely. You get to set grief boundaries. Yeah. There was a lot of times, um, people wanted to talk and tell me their story about Donovan. And like, we, we do this thing where we retell the minute we got the news, you know, you kind of walk through that process. And um, I was just taking them all on. I should've been setting a grief boundary and saying, you know what, I can't talk about this. Right. Yeah. But I did it because I thought I was supposed to do that. But now having this experience and having worked with all the griever's we've worked with it's okay. To set a grief boundary and say, yeah, I can't talk about this right now. Can you please? I don't know if I'll ever be able to talk about it. Can you, can you, can we just talk about something else? Right. You get the right to say that you get to choose. If you want to talk about it, if you want to hear someone else's version or sometimes there's situations that happen where there's, um, survivors of the circumstance and they want to tell you, you know, while we were driving on the

street and then the truck ran the stop sign, you don't have to hear that if you don't want to, or right now, maybe later you want to, but right now you don't have to hear it.

Sharon ([07:21](#)):

You also brought up another point for me. You also get to say what you can and cannot do. It was really important for, um, me and for my daughter, Brittany, to go to where the accident had happened. We needed to see it for ourselves. It was like this overwhelming urge. And so she and I got in a car and we drove. And as we were going to the accident side, I said, Hey, do you want to go? And you said, no,

Erica ([07:47](#)):

I've never, ever been that. You've never, ever, never been. Yeah.

Sharon ([07:49](#)):

There's to do that. But you were in control of that situation. You made the decision that was Best for you. See, I really want to get across it. You get to make the decisions that are best for you. Some people I worked with a lot of people in there, like I went there, I didn't go there either way, whatever choices, it's the right one for you.

Erica ([08:07](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. You know, I, I second guess a lot of, um, not being in the room and when our dad passed away, I did in the first day and I called a really good friend of mine. And I said, this is what happened. I didn't want to go in the room. I didn't want to be there. And he said, what was your first thought when you got up this morning? And I said, well, he's gone. And I wasn't there. He said, but how do you feel about it? I said, I'm okay with it. He said, go with your first. You don't, you don't have to, if you make a decision and you go with it and you're you, you realize you're still okay. It's it's okay. It's not because everyone else says, or does like you going to the accident. I needed to see it. You don't have to do those things. You don't have to do it too. You're still gonna feel the feelings you're still going to grieve. The situation has still occurred. It's still what it is, but you don't have to put yourself in those situations if you don't want to.

Sharon ([09:04](#)):

Exactly. Exactly. A hundred percent. Um, because you are in control of the situation you're in control of the way things should go. And that's the biggest part that we're trying to get across today. You are also, um, in control of, um, the misery and the pain and how you're going to let it in and how people, you know, who you're going to allow to see you in that state. And if you don't care, whether everybody sees you in that state, whether you're going to share that misery with other people, whether you're going to talk about it, you're in control of that. You're in control of what you let out, when, who you talk to.

Erica ([09:44](#)):

Right? Especially in a large family like ours, everyone has an opinion. Everyone has a thought. But the other thing is, everyone's also grieving. Everyone is also grieving with you. Their grief is different. It's their own it's individual. So you understand that like the things that they are, um, conveying to you might be part of some of their internal process or struggle or whatever. That's theirs. It's not yours. If you don't feel

those same, uh, you know, share the same feelings, it's not on you. And you get to say, I'm sorry, you feel that way. But you know, this is what I need for me. This is the decision I'm making for me.

Sharon ([10:30](#)):

And, and the, the most important thing is that and saying this ahead of time or saying it to the fresh new graver right now, it's to let you know that sometimes you didn't know you had the permission, right? I have the permission to make the decisions for yourself. That's why it's so important that you understand you're in control of the grief, right? You're in control of how this thing happens. You're you're driving the ship.

Erica ([10:54](#)):

Yeah. That's what I say all the time.

Sharon ([10:57](#)):

You have to get, you have to get support and support. You can count on that. That's the other thing, because you're in the zombie state and you're not really there thinking about it, getting the support that you can count on. Literally going to someone and saying, Hey, Susie, I can't drop these pamphlets off of the funeral home. Can you handle this for me? Like literally giving them a specific task, you know, because people are all waiting just to be given tasks and they all want to do something. They do. Everybody wants to do something. They want to do something to help. And so saying, can you do this? I can't do this is okay. So getting the right support. I think when you're in control is important and having that one key person that you can go to that can then divvy out the jobs that need to be done.

Erica ([11:40](#)):

Yeah. Our, our, uh, cultural norm is to have everybody and their mother converge on the home of the loved one, the deceased, you know, family member give them love, bring them food. Yeah. And that can be overwhelming if that's not something you want, you get to say, I don't want people, you know, I want small group. I want them to call first. I want them, you know, I don't, I don't want everyone here. You get to say that if that's not something you want, but if you want all the love and the people and the noise and the, you know, cause we're not quiet talkers. If that's something that's going to bring you comfort, then by all means, but just know you get a say, so in that, even that much.

Sharon ([12:23](#)):

Yeah, exactly. And that's, that's so really important. Um, the other thing is you get to decide, um, really, uh, how things go down in your house. Who's there, you can shut that down at any time. If it's overwhelming and too many people are coming, you get to say, no one here. When Sharon was dying and the doctors had given her the diagnosis and she knew she only had a couple of months to live. Uh, she made a decision that she didn't want any visitors. They only one she wanted where her kids she's like, I only have this amount of time. I want to spend as much time as I can. Now she was grieving. She was dying and she was well aware of it. And so we stopped everyone from coming to the house. Some people were dropping off food, but they didn't get a chance to see her. And so she made that decision. If your decision is, I need to be with my husband right now, just the two of us. So we can get through these first three weeks. That's okay. If your decision is, I want everybody and their mother to be here. I need as many

people around me. That's okay, too. You gotta do what you gotta do to get through that on a bumper sticker.

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

I think you should. I think you should do really good. And it's kind of jazzy too, you know? Um, I just want to add in, and I always feel like I'm the one bringing this up, but the pandemic, right? So we have to factor that in, because let's say you want all the family, let's say you want the loved one because we had a client like that. Recently they lost her loved one and they wanted everyone and they couldn't have everyone because of pandemic. So you have to one understand that there's sometimes a situation that's outside of your control, but two then get creative, let's go to the park, everyone drive in and we'll meet at the park. It's outside. You know, we'll be socially distance apart. It'll be different. It'll look different, but it'll feel, you'll feel the love. You. You've got to get creative in the times of the pandemic. Grief is not, uh, it's not what it was pre pandemic. There's a whole another layer that's that's added on. So you have to kind of fit these puzzle pieces in as you can. But again, you get to make the decisions.

Sharon ([14:48](#)):

Yeah. Here's the other thing it's not going away. It's not going to go away. If you go put your hand in, head in the sand, it's not going to go away. Sisters, grief is just like breathing. We breathe in. We breathe out. We're not aware of it. Grief is all. Can also be the same way. Either way. You got to do it. You have to breathe to stay alive. You have to grieve to stay alive. Another bumper sticker.

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

You've got to write these down. Are you remembering? Cause I already forgot the first one.

Sharon ([15:23](#)):

I forgot the first one too. I want to listen to it, but I'm on a roll today. I'm sorry. Sorry. That's so funny. Um, You have to go through it, but be in control of it, make some decisions, control the parts you want to control, release the parts you don't care about.

Erica ([15:41](#)):

And, and, and just, I know we're getting close to wrapping up, but you are calling the shots for you. Yeah. Oh yeah. You don't get to tell your spouse or your kids. You don't get to Called their shots. Oh yeah. They get to call their own shots. Cause that, that can lead to some unnecessary conflict.

Sharon ([16:05](#)):

I think its need to be a part two show You can't Control another person's grief.

Erica ([16:13](#)):

No, you definitely can not. So we want to make sure we state that so you can avoid some, some fighting and some bickery in your household.

Sharon ([16:23](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. One thing seemed like recenter yourself, breathe it in. Take a deep breath. Think about where you're at, where you want to go, where you're heading and just re-center yourself. They'll you may need to recenter yourself 10 times in one day. And then what you're going to start noticing is the re-centering doesn't need to be taking place so often you don't need it as often, but getting myself together, if you need to go lay in the bed and cry, then go do that. Or you're going to notice that as time goes on, you're not going to need to re-center yourself. As often, most importantly know that we are here for you. We're with you. We've been on this journey before you and together we will help you figure it out.

Erica ([17:10](#)):

Absolutely thank you so much for tuning in today. Have a great day. Bye bye, Friends

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

Bye, Friends!

Speaker 2 ([17:11](#)):

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. 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.