

I'm Terrified Something Bad Is Going to Happen

Sharon Brubaker & Erica Honore

Grief Specialists

Tony ([00:02](#)):

Erica and Sharon, are sisters who began their grief journey in 2006, when Erica's 10 year old son, Austin drowned. 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. 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](#)):

Are you afraid that something bad is going to happen? Has something bad already happened to you. And now you're afraid that something else is going to happen to you. Are you afraid that because you've experienced a loss, what's going to be the next shoe to drop. We can literally live in this pain of fear of what's going to be next and stop us from truly living.

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

When Donovan died, Jordan was going to go for his first summer to California and spend the summer away from me. One, I was excited because I didn't want him to be in, in my world of agony and pain that I was residing in. So I thought if he got a break and a change of scenery, give him the opportunity to be a twelve-year-old and have some fun, like he should taking him to the airport. I was a panicked mess. I remember walking all the way to the gate, like sobbing because then I got this fear of, oh my God, what if something else happens? Like now I'm about to put this child on a plane. Am I crazy? Like, why would I be doing this? So I had to really kind of talk myself through, he has the right to be a 12 year old and to live and have fun summer. He shouldn't have to be forced to be sad and, and watch me be sad. So I had that process and I hadn't had it in a long time. I mean, once he got on the plane and he got there and he had a great summer, you know, for him, everything was great. I then went into my, you know, not doing laundry and sleeping all day mode that we've talked about in the past. But now here I am. I find myself in this position again, Jordan's about to go to college. Like he's going to leave my house. He's not going to live under my roof. He's going to live away from me. And I feel like I'm in this state of panic every single minute of every single day, because I'm about to send my last biological child out into this mean cruel world. And I don't think I'm ready.

Sharon ([02:58](#)):

What does bring it up for you?

Erica ([03:00](#)):

I panicked like legit. I feel panicked. I like, I feel I'm scared all the time for him

Sharon ([03:10](#)):

And you and I shared this the other day, but until the other day, when you said it, when we were coming up with our titles for the show, have you, have you said it out loud to anyone?

Erica ([03:18](#)):

No. And what, what brought this up for me is because, you know, occasionally as grief specialists, we practice what we preach. And I remember I have done a lot. I've done a way with a lot of my, during the

week drinking because of sugar. And we just talked about body image and the extra weight it was putting on and what not. And I was doing really, really good. And then all of a sudden I noticed, I started to like, oh, I'm going to have a drink tonight. And it was like, okay, then I'd have a drink the next night. And the next day I'm like, this is weird. I haven't done this in a long time. What's happening, what's going on? And I had to physically sit in my moment and, and close my eyes. And I just allowed whatever these feelings were. I just gave them free reign to come in. And what, the first thing I thought was, I said, okay, what is this feeling? And it was fear. And it was fear. And I said, okay, well, what is, what am I scared of? What is happening that I'm scared of? And I made the connection. I'm about to send my last living child, biological child. Cause I do have Caleb, but last living, biological child out into the world and I have zero control over what happens from that point on.

Sharon ([04:32](#)):

Yeah. That's scary.

Erica ([04:35](#)):

It's very scary.

Sharon ([04:37](#)):

Saying it out loud. Is it is it some relief? Does it give you some relief?

Erica ([04:42](#)):

No, I want to cry.

Sharon ([04:43](#)):

Yeah. So cry.

Erica ([04:45](#)):

I just am, you know, and then it's like you get, because grief doesn't happen in our brain, it happens in our hearts. My heart utterly feels panic and fear. And my brain is saying, don't own this because then you're going to put some, you know, your fear and negativity out into the world. Right. Don't attract this, but I don't know how to stop it. You know what I mean? I don't know. The, my feelings just are, this is how I feel. So I don't know how to turn it off because this is my reality. This is what's going to happen.

Sharon ([05:21](#)):

Right. Right. So under the fears, there's something under the fear. When you look at the fear, bring, bring the fear in right now and feel the fear. Just let it sit in there. You'll go under the fear and tell me what's under there.

Erica ([05:38](#)):

I guess it's sad.

Sharon ([05:40](#)):

Yeah.

Erica ([05:42](#)):

I think I've been trying to put on such a brave face about being an empty-nester and I am really excited about it, but I am. I am. I'm sad.

Sharon ([05:54](#)):

Yeah. What's in the sadness?

Erica ([06:01](#)):

Well, I think I'm S I'm hung up on this. This is my last one.

Sharon ([06:04](#)):

Yeah.

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

Like I don't have any more chances after this. Like if something happens to Jordan, this is it. I don't have, I don't get anymore. This is he's my last child.

Sharon ([06:15](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. So bring in the sadness, sit in the sadness for one second. Just be sad for a second. What's under sadness?

Erica ([06:33](#)):

I don't know. I don't have anything under sadness.

Sharon ([06:35](#)):

Exactly. Perfect. That's what I wanted to get you to. So we have fear and we have sadness. Those are the two things that are sitting there. So we keep looking at our emotions until we get to nothing. There's nothing. So we know fear and sadness. Now we know those are the two things that are there. So when you say I'm sad that I'm sending him out, and this is my last chance, meaning what, tell me more about that.

Erica ([07:05](#)):

Well, it's like, you know, if something were to happen to Jordan. So I think, I think I have my fears twofold one, if I, if Jordan wasn't a black child, I would still have these feelings.

Sharon ([07:20](#)):

Yeah.

Erica ([07:20](#)):

But I think the fear is exacerbated by the fact that he is a black child.

Sharon ([07:29](#)):

Yeah.

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

And I'm sending him to Louisiana.

Sharon (07:33):

The deep south.

Erica (07:35):

The deep south, which they, if you just saw, I mean, there's a new story on the news about a coverup from, I think that's a lot of the fear.

Sharon (07:44):

Yeah.

Erica (07:44):

You know. Here we live in a small town. Most people know his face. They know who, who he belongs to. There, no one is going to know his face and they're not going to know who he belongs to nor are they going to care.

Sharon (07:59):

Right. Right.

Erica (08:01):

So I think that's a lot of my fear.

Sharon (08:04):

Yeah. Yeah. So saying it out loud really makes it real, right.

Erica (08:13):

Yeah.

Sharon (08:14):

Degree for real. And we don't try to fix it. I'm not trying to fix it. We're just trying to get to the bottom of what it is and what, what brought you there. Now, I wonder if and I think you would have done this anyway, but doing all the celebration and all that, you'd planning this big party. People are coming in from all different states to come celebrate his graduation. It's the COVID is ending. I mean, even our mom is coming and we have cou. You have cousins coming from all over. Was that part of, do you know, a part of. Oh, I'm going to do this big celebration, sort of like, oh, maybe if I do this and the pain won't be there as much. Do you know if you, if a part of your brain thought that?

Erica (08:50):

I didn't think that I felt like, I think just wanting the family, I just want to be close with the family, like the family. We are, like you mentioned before in one of our shows, a very close knit group, even with our extended large group. And I just felt we just need to be together. I think there's comfort in that, you know, in the numbers. And and, and also getting to be with some of our cousins that have been through

this before and being able to pick their brain and we being able to verbalize it to them and get their feedback on it. I think I'm looking forward to that as well.

Sharon ([09:28](#)):

Yeah. Have you discussed it with Jordan?

Erica ([09:30](#)):

No, not yet.

Sharon ([09:33](#)):

That's definitely where I would go. Is this really having a heart to heart with Jordan? What about Louis? Have you discussed it with Louis?

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

No.

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

I think Louis has probably experienced this as well.

Erica ([09:48](#)):

Oh yeah.

Sharon ([09:49](#)):

This is probably in Louis's heart. So it would be really good to, even though I know I'm all Gulu can be the, you got to get over it. He's moving on!

Erica ([10:00](#)):

Being the caveman that he is. Yeah. And this, this, when I brought it up to you, like, I think it was just the day or two before I had made the connection for myself. So I was still just in my own process of it, just acknowledging what it was and really allowing myself, like I said, to feel the feelings and to speak my truth. So I have, and then I brought it up to you as a show topic because in general, I think it would be so normal. Even if, if Jordan wasn't going away to college and we didn't bring the whole racial piece into it, a mother who has experienced a loss or anyone who's experienced a loss, you feel panic the minute your family member walks out the door, any family member, because you're constantly focused on what all the bad things that could happen because now, you know, bad things are, can be your reality, right?

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

I distinctly remember having a conversation with you after Donovan died. And Lewis went to his first business trip. I don't know if you remember this or not, but Louis had gone to his first business trip and I called you and we were just talking and you broke down crying that the fear of something happening to Louis.

Erica ([11:13](#)):

Yeah.

Sharon ([11:13](#)):

So this is truly an experience that we can have after a loss. Right. And you said to me, if something happens to him, I don't know how I would be able to go on. And you're also and you also mentioned that I never thought I'd lose another child and here I am. So that, that fear can truly be there and hear me, friends, you don't have to be like Erica, someone who's already lost two, two children. You could have only lost one, one had one loss in your life or none to have this type of fear where we're constantly worried about something happening back.

Erica ([11:49](#)):

Right. And I think so. I think it kinda, it stems from me, you know, the reality we have zero control. We have zero control.

Sharon ([12:01](#)):

Yeah.

Erica ([12:02](#)):

And that I think is hard to swallow when you, you get, I think that the need to control things is heightened when you have a loss, because you need to keep everything else in your world tidy and in order, because you can't stomach having that experience again. Right. So then we have the second experience and everything was completely out of whack. And now I was trying to keep everything tidy. And in order once again, and now there's a change in my life happening where the baby bird is flying the nest. And I'm just like all out of whack.

Sharon ([12:41](#)):

Right. So if you were my client, I would probably tell you, one that you should really look at this and really go a little bit deeper for yourself, just to see what's really in there, if there's anything other than fear, even though I truly believe that it is a lot of just the fear and the sadness that's in there, it's a life-changing event having a child leave and go to college. It's a life-changing event becoming an empty nester is a life changing event, even though for you guys, thank God. You're still living and doing all yourself, which is really great. A lot of times what happens with people is they find out when they become an empty-nester that their marriage is really in the toilet and the toilet. The reason that that happens is because they're so busy with the kids. They're wrapped up with the kid. So one of the things that I strongly want to encourage you to do is to be complete with Jordan when he leaves just as complete as you will with Donovan, when he left, be complete with Jordan, sit down with him and he's probably gonna call you dumb and stupid, Mom I don't want to do this. I don't want to do that, but really be complete with him because we can complete in real time with someone in front of us, let him know how important he is to you. Let him know your fears, the fears that you're having, let him know that when he first gets there, you're probably going to be calling him a lot and checking on him a lot. And that over time it will start to lessen. Let him know that he's the love of your life. And you have this fear for him, truly have that conversation and use the work of bye and say goodbye to him until I see you again, and really complete with him in real time.

Erica ([14:27](#)):

Right. I think that that is great. Cause I hadn't considered that. What's funny is like you said I think I've been focusing more on Louis and I am making sure where, where we're supposed to be, because that does happen. You hear all those stories, you know, the couple, I mean, look at the gates, bill gates and

his wife of 27 years or something in there. They're getting a divorce. You don't know when it's going to happen, but it's possible. So I've been focusing so much on making sure we're good that you're right. I do need to communicate with Jordan in real time and get a lot of this off of my heart and, and be good with him.

Sharon ([15:03](#)):

You have to be, Erica. I can't imagine how you can not be. He needs to go away at one, knowing how you feel about him, knowing how important he is in your life, knowing that you guys over his 18 years have experienced the worst thing possible and you did it together. And what your hopes, dreams and expectations are for his future and his going out to live his world. I mean, the baby bird is flying away. And I also thought, well, can he, why? I'm not really sure, but it seems like you can really some pizza or something, you know, it's time for him to, we, we raise our children to grow their wings and fly. And then when it's time for them to fly, we want to get the scissors out and cut the way. So the bottom line is grief and loss can bring on fear and sadness on other areas in our life. We have to be aware of that.

Erica ([16:00](#)):

Right. Yeah, I think it's so I, I'm actually very proud of myself that I connected the dots in that I forced myself to allow the feelings to come in so I could get to what was really happening and just give it voice and speak the truth about it. Because if I hadn't, I think I would be making the situation worse for Jordan because when he D when I, you know, the first missed call, then when he called me back, I'd be ripping his head off and it wouldn't be his fault. And he wouldn't even realize where that was coming from.

Sharon ([16:33](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. And the, the need to know where he is at all times. And, huh, interesting. So for me, with my kids, when they first started driving, you know, wanting to know where they were all time and, you know, knowing where they are looking for them on the computer, I still do this now. Just out of a need for safety, but they know that I'm doing it. But yeah, I think completing with him in real time is going to be your best, the healthiest thing that you can do for you and for him, honestly, for those two, because he's going to be like, why are you freaking out? You know? Yeah. So for all three of you and you know, maybe you guys can complete as a family. You know, I think that would be great too, I sit down as a family and really have that conversation. I think it's a beautiful thing. You know, we're leading the path and then I, and then think about how beautiful it will be 30 years from now when Jordan completes with his own child. When he, when his children go off to college, you know, you're setting that up. This is your legacy that you're putting out there and setting up. I think it's a beautiful thing. Acknowledge it. Talk about it, share it in complete, in real time.

Erica ([17:39](#)):

Right? I think that that's great advice. You're a good grief specialist.

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

I'm an amazing grief specialist. As a matter of fact, I'm really damn good at this and I'm not even joking. This grief thing.

Erica ([17:55](#)):

You should get a podcast.

Sharon ([17:56](#)):

I should get a podcast. I should grieve in real time. This leads into our next show, which is, can you joke about your grief, which I want to let you know that when you said that thing about bill gates, I wanted to talk into my arm, but I didn't think it was appropriate, but I just wanted to let you know, we got to go to the next show, which is, can you joke about your grief?

Erica ([18:17](#)):

Oh my goodness. Thank you guys, everyone for listening to us and having me grieve in real time with all of you. So if you connect it to this and you're struggling, reach out to us, we are here from you for you. Excuse me. And as you can hear, I can totally relate to your struggle.

Sharon ([18:37](#)):

Thank you friends. Bye.

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

Hi friends, Erica Andre 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 at healingstartswiththeheart.com. There you will find not only today's podcast, 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.