

# Give It Voice

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 can 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 Shannon are coitted to sharing their experiences of love, loss, and healing through this podcast. Now your Grief Specialists, Sharon and Erica.

Sharon ([00:41](#)):

What happens when you can't give voice to the pain that you're feeling? I don't, I don't think that so many people understand that holding it in so tight. Like I I'm, I'm gonna hold onto this. I'm gonna white knuckle. It, no matter what, is not gonna get you through. And we meet so many people, Erica, that they're able to get it past six months, they're able to get past a year. We've even met people that can get past five in 10, 15, 20 years. But if we touch that one spot in their heart, it's almost like we, we, we, we're touching a bruise and it hurts so much also giving a voice means, say the ugly say what's really in there. And that's, what's got to be said it has to come out some way.

Erica ([01:30](#)):

It's unreal when we think about the amount of people that we have met, that we don't know how to verbalize the intensity, the darkness, the weight of the emotions that they're carrying. But partly it's, that's how we are raised. That's how we are brought up to not speak of those dark, heavy, sad things. I was on the phone yesterday with a woman whose son passed away a few months ago. I mean, she was uncontrollably sobbing and she said, I don't. She thought her faith was being tested because it was what she was feeling was so dark. And it was so heavy. And she was like almost in a full blown panic attack. And thankfully she called me on FaceTime. So I was able to like, just say, I said, you know, what's happening. You're shock has worn off.

Sharon ([02:26](#)):

Yeah.

Erica ([02:26](#)):

Reality is setting in. Your son is not coming back anymore.

Sharon ([02:30](#)):

Yeah.

Erica ([02:30](#)):

And that you could see in her face, like she, it totally hit home. She didn't know how to verbalize the heaviness of that grief.

Sharon ([02:40](#)):

Yeah.

Erica ([02:40](#)):

It hit her full force and she didn't even know how to articulate. All she could say was it's dark, it's heavy. I think the devil is trying to get me. Yeah. Because for someone in your faith, when you know you've been praying and you're asking God to take this, to lift it off of you, and you will get some relief in that when you rely on your faith. But the reality is that weight comes crashing in. You don't know how to verbalize how physically and mentally debilitating it is when it hits you.

Sharon ([03:09](#)):

The truth. Is that not giving that voice, not saying the ugly, not saying the things, just like your client, just not being able to say that things, we, we need to say it delays the healing process.

Sharon ([03:21](#)):

And you know what? The reason that I wanted to do this podcast, Erica, is because that's what we do. We sit with the clients and we go, and we say, how many times do we say this? We have to give a voice. We have to give it voice. You gotta say the ugly out loud. Yeah. And oddly enough, people know that this, sometimes this is in their past, or this is in their relationship and the reluctance to say it out loud, the shame that comes up with it, right. The shame or the fact that you're so mad about it. I'm so mad that he left me. I'm so mad that I'm all alone. That part right there. I'm so mad. If you hold on that, to that thought in your, in your brain and you don't say it out loud, it ain't going nowhere.

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

Right. I, and I think that, I mean, I, I don't know to be a hundred percent certain, but I, because of what we have personally gone through, because of my personal experience with the anger, I feel like you and I are the first to really normalize, allowing people to be angry. Yeah. Because before people think they're not allowed to be angry at someone who's deceased, cuz they couldn't control it. It's not their fault. But there is an element of how could you leave me now I'm here by myself. I'm trying to figure this out. I don't know

what to do. I don't know where to turn. You know, I'm just so sad and broken and yeah, I'm really pissed off about this.

Sharon ([04:54](#)):

Exactly.

Erica ([04:54](#)):

Anywhere else. Any other books, anything else they don't, they don't allow space for the anger. And like you said, to give that anger voice to say it's okay. And then to release it, it makes such a difference.

Sharon ([05:08](#)):

The other thing that happens is when we swallow it down and we just keep it in there, it starts to affect us physically. It will literally physically start to affect our life. I can get past not thinking about it. I can put out thoughts of Bob all day long. I don't need to think about him the minute he comes to my mind, I push it out. But your body cuz Erica, you always say grief will find a way out. It is going to find a way out. Either you're gonna go off at the teller in the bank. Does anybody even go to the bank anymore? I use that example all the time, but I'm sure people are like, what's a bank?

Erica ([05:47](#)):

I'm really not leaving the house these days.

Sharon ([05:49](#)):

Exactly. You were gonna go off on somebody. You're gonna yell and scream at your kids. The grief is gonna find a way out or just in the form of hives, just in the form of sleeping, just in the form of the depression. Here's the biggest one. I think that surprises people is the fear. Fear of everything. Fear of walking down a dark hall in your house that you've always walked down for 30 years. Now, you can't walk down that hall without the light being on

Erica ([06:17](#)):

Or even sleeping in your house, sleeping in your house, feeling, feeling safe in your own space. I know. And I've shared this before. I never had a problem with anxiety or panic attacks. But after Donovan died because I was resisting my grief and not giving my emotions voice, it definitely attacked me physically, and my, like you said, the fear, I had overwhelming fear every time Louis would leave the house. Every time Jordan would go to a friend's house. Anytime we got on the freeway, there's a lot of freeway construction. It just gave me so much anxiety all the time. And that's it. Cuz I was not giving my feelings voice. What about our special friend that we've been talking to whose husband recently passed away and it was around the holidays. We were really trying to help her give her

feelings, voice. And then with the holidays we hadn't talked to her and right after we did, she was in the hospital.

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

Yeah.

Erica ([07:12](#)):

Her body was completely shutting down. She was holding those feelings in so tight. She wasn't giving anything voice. And when we finally got finally got ahold of her, she had been in the hospital. It, I mean that is just, we have so many cases that people that we know who, when they don't give the emotions voice and it does attack them physically, it's serious. It's very serious.

Sharon ([07:36](#)):

So let's talk about the definition of what giving it voice means. What we truly mean giving it voice means it means that you allow someone permission to express how they're feeling emotionally. That's it it's really simple. Allow someone the moment to say what they need to say. This hurts so bad. I miss him so much. I caused this, I did this. He left me. Whatever that is, you allow them the space to say that express it, share it without the need for them to satisfy you in any way. They can say whatever they need to say about this moment. And that's, it's just left right there. We have clients that are reluctant to even share with their friends because they feel they're gonna take too long. It's gonna take too long. Or my friends are gonna judge me or I don't get to say what I need to say.

Erica ([08:34](#)):

And typically in conversation, we are not well versed in allowing space for people to express themselves freely and openly without interruption, without judgment. And without our need to give some unsolicited advice to this person, right. We don't know how to talk in that manner. We know how to wait to receive the information. And then we're already starting to formulate what we're gonna say in response to what they're gonna say. Yeah. We don't sit and just listen typically. Yeah. That is one of the skills you and I have got practiced down to a T. Yeah. We might. And times to the point where it often makes people uncomfortable because we just listen. Yeah. We don't jump in. We don't share with, well, when I, or when this happened to me or I know exactly how you feel because a, B and C we don't do that. We just sit and people will ramble and go on and on. And then finally they realize we're are not talking and they kind of like go, okay, what's wrong. I've just been going on. I'm so sorry. Then they apologize.

Sharon ([09:41](#)):

Yeah.

Erica ([09:42](#)):

They apologize that they were just going on and on. But that is what makes the difference. When you allow someone, the freedom and the space without judgment or need for your opinion, to just say everything that's in their heart. Even the parts of, I wanna be dead. I wanna go with my son, husband, mom, sister. Those are natural feelings that people have. And it's okay for them to say that without feeling like we're judging them or thinking less of them

Sharon ([10:14](#)):

A hundred percent. So I wanna talk about this. Before we close out, is that grief support groups are so important. And this is why this is exactly why they are so important is because you're in the room or online with a group of people who are experiencing pain in their heart just as you, you are. And that pain doesn't have to be from the same type of loss. You can have someone in that room. That's lost a child, someone that's lost a husband, someone who's going through a divorce. Someone that just feels their life is not happy or fulfilling and that's causing pain in their heart. That's the reason that you and I have a group aspect to our training because it's so important to know that you're not the only person in the world suffering. Here's the downfall to that. You can't just keep going week after week and just keep saying the same thing. I feel so bad. I feel so bad. I feel so bad. You have to do the action steps that go along with it. So that's what brought about the grief support groups. Somewhere along the way, somebody was like, this is a great idea. Let's all get in the room, which I love or who you and I love it. We love the group aspect. The group aspect turns from a crying fest to a laughing fest in a matter of a second and that's the healing power there's healing in the laugh there's healing in the sarcastic joke, right? There's also healing and knowing saying, Hey sister, oh, I'm so sorry. You're feeling that way. That's where giving a voice came from. But the one part we miss is the action to move beyond the pain. So I, I wanna put that out there that yes, the group aspect of healing is so, so important. That's where you really get to give the voice.

Erica ([11:58](#)):

Yeah. And, and the amount of connections that are made during that process. Yeah. Everyone, once you're bonded in grief, and like you said, it doesn't matter what causes the grief. There's a sisterhood that is, that is established. And it goes beyond when we're done those people stay connected and that's so beautiful. Yeah. We've given people, you know, to say, Hey, if you can't reach me or Sharon, your group members got you. And they 1000% show up every single time. And like that is the most beautiful part. The connections that continue on beyond our work.

Sharon ([12:37](#)):

Cause we show them how to do it. For sure.

Erica ([12:39](#)):

-H.

Sharon ([12:39](#)):

So let's say you need to talk, you really need to talk. Your heart is just so broken and you absolutely need to talk or share with somebody what's going on, but you don't feel comfortable. You don't feel like you can really get it out. You can't give it voice today. I can't give it voice today. You came up with the perfect lead in and I, I just wanna share this with all of our sisters out there is. Hey Barbara, I just need to vent. When you proceed it with I just need to vent, that is a whole paragraph of don't say anything. This is not your grief. I don't want your response. I don't want your opinion. I just need a safe place to vent. When you say that, when you proceed that with what you're about to say it, lets, should let the other person know, I need you to be a big, giant heart with ears and just listen to what I have to say.

Erica ([13:33](#)):

Yes. Thankfully I've gotten that. Well practiced from Louis. He's given me that nifty tool, cuz you know, our husbands are fixers, you know? So it's like early on in our marriage when I was just venting and he tried to fix it. I'm like, no, no, no, I don't want that. I don't want that. He started I'm like, I just, I I'm just venting. Well you need to say that. So,

Sharon ([13:56](#)):

So I actually do the opposite. If I say, how would you do this? Tony knows that that's where I need him to fix it. So you would, we're both doing two. I never say, I just need to vent. I have to say, how would you handle this? Or how would you do this? And that's his clue for you fix this for me. <Laugh>

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

You're gonna use whatever works in these relationships as we know. Yeah. but yeah, that, that really lets the person know. I just need a heart with ears. I just need to dump this because you have said it's so important for grievers to just have a free space, to dump. And that's really what it turns into is a verbal dumping.

Sharon ([14:36](#)):

Yeah. A lot of times we'll hear grievers tell us that they feel the grief in their throat, not in their heart. And that is a clear, clear sign that they are not giving voice to what needs to be said.

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

-H.

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

If a griever tells me it hurts here, in their throat, they can't get it out. Here's the other one, Erica, I can't get the flu to go down. I feel like it's stuck right there. Something stuck. That's the voice box needing to be expressed.

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

Yeah. And we, we initially, like I said, in the shock days, you don't even know what you're feeling it cuz your body is protecting you.

Sharon ([15:10](#)):

Yeah.

Erica ([15:10](#)):

Your brain goes into, so it's hard to find the words because you're just numb and in shock. So don't be surprised if you're willing to give a voice, but nothing is coming out cuz nothing is resonating because you're in shock. Yeah. So it's gonna take a few days or maybe aim in a couple weeks for the build up to come for you to be able to start verbalizing what's going on.

Sharon ([15:35](#)):

A hundred percent, 100%. Okay. Sisters, here's the deal. You gotta put the words to the feelings and the emotions and that's what we help you do. Check us out in the link below. You can find our website there. You can find other podcasts. You can find our blog, you can find ebook or you can simply set an appointment with Erica and I, and we will help you to put voice to the words that are getting stuck. Thank you friends.

Erica ([16:02](#)):

Bye friends. Thank you.