

# I Don't Have an Emergency Contact

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

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

Almost every form you fill out today asks you for an emergency contact. Who's your emergency contact? Who do we call in case of an emergency? What if something happens to you while you're here today? Who should I call first? Give me that person's name and phone number. Let me contact them. In case something happens to you while you are here. We meet so many grieverers that have no longer have the emergency contact. I can't put anyone's name down. I don't have anybody. That's number one, or number two, I just lost my emergency contact. They were the person I was supposed to put down. I what happens when you've lost that emergency contact?

Erica ([01:29](#)):

I think that that is a whole different layer of grief. You know, we talk about grief has layers. One you're grieving the event and two to not have a person to put down for you to show up for you in the event of an emergency is so heartbreaking. It's so sad. And our hearts just, they shatter every time we, we hear that from someone.

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

I think we talked about this a couple years ago, but we had a client that got to the dentist office and you know, quite often they have you fill out your form again. And when she got to the emergency contact, she said I was having a great day. And they gave me the form, you know, on the clipboard with the pen. And I sat down and I just started filling it out. And she got to that line and her exact words were, I couldn't breathe. Who do I put down now? I can't breathe. She talked about her first face, turning red and literally having a panic attack right there in the dentist office.

Erica ([02:39](#)):

I could understand it. I could absolutely understand it because that feeling has to be so comes to from such a place of despair because it's like, you know, having a person,

everyone has a person, you know, Grey's anatomy has that whole, you're my person. That, but to not have a person, I couldn't even, I personally, because our family is so large, like it, we are kind of like you know, what, if one goes down, someone else jumps in and takes its place. You know what I mean? Like we just have that ingrained in us. Like we, all, someone will always show up for us.

Sharon ([03:19](#)):

Yeah.

Erica ([03:20](#)):

We don't know what that's like to not have someone just be okay, I'm here for you now. I'm you're gonna call.

Sharon ([03:28](#)):

Right.

Erica ([03:29](#)):

We don't know what that is like, because we have siblings and we still have our mom, you know? So thank we're blessed. We're blessed in that regard. Yeah. But a lot of people are not and it, how to be so completely isolating when you get there and not have a name to write down.

Sharon ([03:46](#)):

Well, and imagine the woman who's always put her parents down, she put her parents name down all the time in case, you know, she's a single woman, never got married. I always put my parents down and then your parents die. Right. You know, this sounds so simple. Right? Well, just put your friend down or put your co colleague down your work colleague down. It sounds really simple how to fix it. But the truth is Erica. That's, it's so big. It's so much more than that. They're my people. They're my person. They're the person that I talked to all the time. They're the person that I shared with. More than just that line on that paper. It's your heart. It's everything. Your heart is experiencing. It's everything you're going through. It's more than just that line. It's so much deeper than that.

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

Everything it's every single thing. So, you know, my, my mother-in-law and I share this on a past podcast. I just lost her husband of 63 years. 63 years of having an emergency contact. Yeah. And then to go to not, and it's not that she doesn't thank God. She's blessed. And my sister-in-law lives two houses down from her. But if she didn't. What about those people who have, have a person for 63 years and then one day you don't.

Sharon ([05:09](#)):

Yeah. It almost seems unbearable, right? It almost seems unbearable. That it's, it's something that you just won't be able to get past. We realize a lot of times that, that this aspect of the grief comes in when the form is stuck under our nose. We don't realize that we've lost our person. Tell the it's stuck under our nose. The other way that I don't have an emergency contact shows up is when they're your person that you would share all your stories with, when they're the one you would go to to talk about your frustration, when they're the one you share the COVID and the pandemic, and what's going on in the news, or they're the first person you pick up to tell a joke, or you heard that song that that's, you know we're calling it the emergency contract, but losing the person, right?

Erica ([06:00](#)):

Yeah. I mean, the void, the void already with just regular grief, I guess we'll say is big, but it's gotta be the size of a crater when it's your person.

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

Yeah.

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

Person that knows all your secrets that knows how to talk you off the ledge. That knows what comfort food to bring you when you're having a bad day, you know, all of that, like you said, it's all of that and more,

Sharon ([06:31](#)):

Oh my gosh, you just freaked me out. I just wanted to try to imagine what it would be like to lose Tony. Okay. But I just, you know, I feel for everybody that's going through that, like, I can't even, I can't imagine, I can't even imagine you shared something in our group this week. A line that you and Donovan used to say to each other all the time. That's a, that was an, that was a perfect example of losing your person. Share that story with us.

Erica ([06:59](#)):

I I've talked about before. I am a reality, huge reality TV junkie and ne of the shows Donna and I used to watch together. They used to always say they overused it at the end of the day. And we made a little game out of it that every time someone would say it we'd look at each other, it was almost like a drinking game. But because he was too young to drink, we just look at each other and laugh. And it was like, it was constant. It was like within seconds, someone else was saying it well after he died. And I would watch that show my heart. It was like, I got stabbed by a million, little, tiny knives. Every time they would say it because he wasn't here for me to be able to look at him. And

Sharon ([07:44](#)):

What was the line

Erica ([07:45](#)):

At the end of the day? That's what it was. And I didn't stop saying it. I even stopped saying it because they overuse it so much on the show. But recently I was sending a text and I wrote it and where I was sitting, when I was typing this text, I was right in front of his picture. And when I typed it in the text, I immediately looked up at his picture and I smiled. And that it was just like such a huge step for me. Yeah. Cause that was so personal for us. It was like a little tragedy. Every time I heard it when he was gone. So it's, it's something to that effect. That's a minor example, but it's something like that. It's something that as simple as a little joke or a game that when you hear it without your person there. It becomes a big, heavy, you know, dark blanket that's put over you.

Sharon ([08:39](#)):

Oh yeah. And Erica, you're saying it's a minor thing now because you've done so much work and you're in such a better place. Right. And your heart is skill and you can have these amazing conversations about Donovan, but go back six years ago that wasn't minor. It was huge.

Erica ([08:53](#)):

I wanted to drop to my knees and stop like ugly cry. Every time I would hear it when you it's just another reminder. Cause that's what it is. It's another thing to remind you that you they're no longer here.

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

I wanna talk about the intellectual aspect of not having emergency contact. One of the thoughts that will go through your head is who will I call? Who will I call? And then we going through the list of who the options and we don't like any of those options because the thing is, I wanna call you, I wanna put your name down. What will I do if I have to go to the ER?

Erica ([09:29](#)):

Yes. And in, in some regard, you know, I kind of struggled with that when we moved here to Texas, because all of my emergency contacts were in California. So when I moved here, I was like, with Lewis traveling, I'm like, if something happens to me, who's gonna show up for Jordan. It was a huge panic of mine. Yeah. But thankfully I formed significant friendships and each one of those people, it was through, you know the circle of parents that I met from Jordan's school. Each one of those friendships that I formed, let me know. I would, I could put them down as an emergency contact. And I, it meant so much to me because that's a big deal. That's a pretty big deal to say, if they call, I will show up for you.

Sharon ([10:20](#)):

Yeah.

Erica ([10:21](#)):

It's huge. And I don't think that those women in the time realized how big that, that was for me, because it's like, we, because we're so close as a family, we never had to look outside of our circle. When you're put in that position, it is such a big deal for someone to say that. And I say this, not to compare the too, because it's, it's not the same because I did absolutely have family. You know, would've taken them a long time to get here, but it's a big deal to have someone say, they'll show up for you. And you, you will find people who will show up for you.

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

Oh yeah, for sure. A hundred percent. And if you don't, because sometimes you don't. I wanna get back to what I was saying, because I think you had a really good point and I loved what you shared, but I'm on the thought part. Stick with me, sister. I see. You just had this moment at all. Okay. Sometimes you don't in the sense of, it's not you just want him or her so bad, you refuse to allow anybody in. Right. That's the other thing. So, but what I was getting back with, who will I call? So what I wanna share with that is that's the thought we can get stuck in, right? Who am I gonna call? I have no emergency contact. That's, intellectual's thought what I want you to do is with this, that's gonna help you just a little bit beyond that is go into, how does it feel that I don't have him? Not the thought, not the intellectual. I have no one to call. I have no one to take me to ER, but how does it feel? How did it feel when you knew you couldn't look at him and say at the end of the day, what emotions came up for you with that?

Erica ([12:05](#)):

Completely, yeah. It's completely devastating. It's completely devastating in your heart. Just shatters every time you're in minded. So every time you get the form and you see that line with the emergency, contact, your heart shatters over and over again, every time you're put in that situation.

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

Yeah.

Erica ([12:22](#)):

Yeah. But then back to my point,

Sharon ([12:25](#)):

Back to your point. Okay. So back to your point, I just wanna finish my point back to your point is, and, and, okay. So I wanna ask you a question then. What happens when you don't come with a name to put down?

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

I think, I think like you said, you've gotta go to the emotion part of it. Yeah. And you've gotta get out of that. Being stuck in that, the fact that you don't have a person and the thoughts that are associated with that. You have, have to get past that. Yes. You have to do the work. You have to sort it out and know that that's the pain and the grief talking.

Sharon ([13:01](#)):

Yes.

Erica ([13:01](#)):

Then you have to set. Okay. Well who, who will show up for me? Yes. Who do I want to show up for me?

Sharon ([13:09](#)):

And that's the part where you go, who is where you go back to the intellect, cuz all business decisions made with the brain and what's happening here. And that was the part I was trying to get to Erica is that it's the brain and the heart in a fight. They're in a fight when you didn't have anybody for Jordan and you, you had that freak out moment. That was an emotional experience you were having. But when you slowed down and you realized you did have the friends, oh my gosh, these friends are gonna show up for me. That was the intellectual part. And so not to be confusing. Even though I am here, sorry guys, is that there's so many aspects of the grief going on.

Erica ([13:48](#)):

Yeah.

Sharon ([13:48](#)):

There's so many aspects of the grief going on. And I wanna say this, I have no idea what it's like not to have. So to put down is, is an emergency contact. I have no idea, but I know what a broken heart feels like and it truly sucks and it hurts. We can help you with that aspect of it and working through the pain.

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

We absolutely can. And it's imperative that you do it. It's imperative that you work through the pain. Otherwise you you'll get stuck there. You'll get stuck and your outlook will seem so bleak to the fact that you can get stuck in. I don't have a person.

Sharon ([14:28](#)):

Yeah. You can get stuck right there and never move beyond that pain of that grief right there. It hurts us. It really is painful for us to see it's a grieving experience for us to see a griever get stuck and not wanna go any further. We look down that alley and it looks dark and ominous and painful.

Erica ([14:51](#)):

Well, and that's the message that everyone is told. You'll never get over this. So it's super easy to get stuck, but that's not the truth. We are speaking the truth and the truth is it's possible. You don't get over it, but you go through it and it's possible. Come out on the other side. Not the same, but better, so much better. It's not dark. It's not heavy. And there's promise and there's hope. And then you can start saying, I know who I have a person.

Sharon ([15:24](#)):

Yeah. I have a person. Yeah. Thank you, Erica. Thank you for sharing that. All right. Brothers and sisters. Thank you so much for listening to our show. Remember you can always go to our website. Erica has the link here in the, in the bio there, we have an ebook that you can download. We have a, a tab where you can set an appointment with us. You can see the Ted talk. You can read some of our blogs. There's so many as next to grief. We've literally been talking about it for three years and we still have a list, an arm long of things to discuss we're grievers. We were grievers first and we're here for you. Bye.