

## Intellectual Vs Emotional Grief

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 ([00:40](#)):

Grief comes in two forms, two major forms, intellectual and emotional. We're here to tell you that if you get stuck in your intellectual grief, if you get stuck in your brain, you're not going to be able to find your way out. You've got to grieve the emotional pain that is in your heart. There's two forms of grief, two forms that we experienced, two forms that we're supposed to experience intellectual and emotional, and we help you come from your intellectual grade and drop down into your emotional grief.

Erica ([01:14](#)):

Right! The brain is an amazing thing. It keeps all of our records, all of our passwords, thank goodness. All of our first grade teacher, you know, memories, it's amazing. And it also tries to protect us when we're hurting. It tries to be the protector of our hearts. So it gives us a place to start processing. But what we do is we process the intellectual parts of our grief. What did I say on that day? He called where did I put the paperwork for his school? You know, it's like, you just start go reviewing. When was the last time I said, I loved him. You know, all the parts of the relationship and all that happens in your brain because your heart is so overwhelmed. The brain tries to ease you into the feelings, right. But we can definitely get stuck in the intellectual parts of grief and not go to the heart parts because the heart parts hurt.

Sharon ([02:18](#)):

That's where the pain is. You know, the brain doesn't really feel the pain, the heart bills, the pain, right? So one of the things that I like to say is that we've evolved as people. I mean, listen, look at this. You are in right outside of Dallas, Texas. I am in Valencia, California, and our podcast producer Fermin, who is also on our show right now, guys is in the San Fernando valley. Yet we are recording this show from three different parts of the world all at this time on a Saturday morning at 7:00 AM, which is way too early. But anyway, the regressed I digress. So the world has evolved, right? Two guys just put rockets into the homemade rockets, into the atmosphere, going to the moon, right? Yeah. Everything has

evolved. But the one thing that hasn't evolved is our brain, our brains are still very primitive. Our brains know three things. What you were sharing. It knows it needs to protect us. It knows it needs to seek pleasure, right? And it knows it needs to give us rest. Those are the three things that have happened. It needs to protect us from danger, from being killed, from being eaten by a tiger or a lion or a bear, right? It needs to seek pleasure food. We need to eat. We need to bathe in the sun, right? We need to have sex. Those are the things. The brain is constantly looking for more, some than others to rest. That's why we crept down at night because it needs to rest. The brain looks into our heart at a grieving experience and perceives this emotional pain as dangerous. It perceives that emotional pain is danger. There's no other way around it. And the number one thing that it wants to do is get us from that danger. And so it's going to come up with all the tricks and the trade and everything that it can to keep us from that danger. It has its one job. And like you said, and it does it very well. And it's very smart at what it does.

Erica ([04:22](#)):

And that's why a lot of what people say to us after we have a grieving experience are all intellectual things. No one really says the I'm so sorry for how broken you must feel right now. Or God, I'm so sorry that you must feel like you want to die. You know, we don't talk to people that way. We say, well, he's in a better place. Oh, thank God. He's not suffering anymore. Yeah. You know, you have an angel looking out. You're so lucky. No one wants to hear that.

Sharon ([04:57](#)):

I don't want to hear that crap. You're so strong. Oh my gosh. You're so strong. They got Erica, has you, what would she do without you? Yeah. Yeah. So what happens is when we get stuck in our intellectual grief and you and I, this is the first place that we start friends. We start talking about the brain and how advanced it is and how it is helping to keep us from our grieving. Erica. We see grieverers that are doing everything, but doing that, but doing the green, right. They're spinning in all these other areas planning the funeral, getting everything done, talking to the right person, calling the right numbers, but never slowing down long enough to feel their actual pain.

Erica ([05:45](#)):

Exactly. And then just think about it when they start to tell the story, right? Yeah. The phone ring at three, o'clock like, that's weird. Nobody ever calls me at three o'clock. So I walked over and I picked it up like, and they'll give you every single detail without any emotional words. Yeah. When I heard her voice, oh my gosh. I felt so scared. It made me feel so vulnerable. I just, and then when she told me the news, I just started crying because I was in so much pain and it hurts. They don't tell the story in that way. They tell it very robot, like, you know what I mean? Just the facts. And no one gets to, and then I just wanted to cry because I was so broken, and no one sells those parts of the story.

Sharon ([06:28](#)):

Yeah. 99% of the time when we meet Gravers for the first time, they're actually stuck in their head. Yeah. They, it feels like you're in the, in the pain, in your heart. It does feel like that. Cause it can trick you, your brain can trick you to think you're actually doing the right thing. But the truth is most times I don't want to speak in absolutes, but a lot of times people are absolutely spinning, spinning around and not absolutely going to the grief, the emotional grief. You have to be taught how to do that. Kind of

Erica ([07:04](#)):

Right. Yeah. You do. It's definitely an acquired skill set to be able to go there. But then also you want to distract yourself even further by finding someone to blame someone else. So then, so then that gives you the cause, right? So then you can go out and fight the injustice of the person that caused us. So there's lots of ways that the brain will try to distract us and keep us occupied so that we can avoid the heaviness and the debilitated debilitating sadness. That truly comes with the, the experience.

Sharon ([07:46](#)):

So why is this so important? It's important because the healing will never happen in the brain. Guys. We cannot heal you from intellectual grief. We cannot guide you. We can guide you in the intellectual grade, but we guide you down into your heart and to the emotional parts of it. People don't heal from intellectual grief when they get stuck in their head, when they're blaming somebody or more importantly, they become the detective. That's trying to figure out becoming a detective means. You're trying to figure out and put together all the pieces of the puzzle. And so you're constantly what three o'clock this happened then at four or five that happened. And you're constantly going there when you get stuck in your head and you get stuck in intellectual grief, healing doesn't happen there. Right. Healing happens in your heart. And that's why a lot of times, once we explain it to them and they start talking to us, we're like, get out of your head. That's a thought.

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

Yeah. Yeah. It's so easy to get stuck in our heads. And also think about the parts where there's been an affair, you know? So you just found out, you find out about it. How much time do you, do we see people spending in the detective work, helping you? When did the affair, how long has he been seeing her? Where all the places they go, you know, you get so caught up in that because it's, that's protecting you from the feelings of, I wasn't good enough. The rejection, he doesn't want me anymore. You know, all of those emotions that come with being cheated on, we don't go there because it's, it's uncomfortable. And the realizations that we have to look at, you know, I stopped being romantic. I always haven't had sex in forever. You know, the parts where we have to give ourselves some accountability, nobody wants to do that. So we get all stuck in the details of when did he start seeing that tramp?

Sharon ([09:38](#)):

Exactly. Exactly. But you hit the keyword and all of that, what you just said is protect it. Our brain is really trying to protect us. Right. And that was like, that was a perfect example. That's the brain protecting us from the truth. Yes. The brain protecting us from feeling the pain because pain is perceived as danger. And if I have to say that I haven't had sex with my husband in two years, it makes sense why he got to keep me on the side, then that's painful, right. To say the parts that I'm responsible for are painful. And so the brain absolutely goes out and tries to hold back on.

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

Yeah. Yeah. And in when there's a death, it's so much more common to try and find the, the responsible person. And when we say we have to, even in those times, even when Donovan died, when Austin died, I had to look at myself and say, what parts of this relationship was I responsible for? Not in causing the death. We're not saying people are responsible for causing the death. There's parts of the relationship though, that I could have been better. I could have showed up more, you know? And we don't even want to look at those parts because that's sad. You know, to say, I could have been a better mom to both boys, but I had to, we have to tell the truth. The truth is really what sets us free. And I know it sounds very cheesy, but it's, it's so real. And I'm not saying we have to look at ourselves and say, oh my God, I was the worst mother. No, I was a great mom. And I, those boys know that I, that I love them, but there were parts where I did fall short and that's in every relationship because no one is perfect. And it's okay to admit that

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

Humanness talking about being in your humanness. And yeah. So what we talked about in our earlier podcasts was looking at all the junk in our trunk and examining all of that. And so when we go to reviewing a relationship, when we get down to the intellectual part, we're reviewing all the parts of it, all the good, the bad, the ugly, the stinky parts, all of it. And that's kind of what, what we're talking about here. Now it takes time for you to leave intellectual grief, to go to emotional grief. It takes time. That's why a lot of times when we meet griever and their losses just occurred, they're so stuck in their head. It's not time for you to do your work yet. Right. Is this something you and I've learned over the years, it is not time because your brain is so spinning and trying to protect you. We almost have it down to a science. Was that a cat?

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

That it was a spider.

Sharon ([12:29](#)):

Erica is in her barn recording. So I thought maybe a cat came in it. It takes time for the brain to allow the heart, to really feel it, to really let it in. And that's why sometimes I even tell griever in the beginning, this kind of get a lot harder right now. They think they're at

the worst. They think they are at the worst days and I want to prepare them and let them know at some part, your brain is going to release and allow you to drop down in your heart. And it's going to be so unbearable. You're not going to feel like you can live and you're not going to want to live. And that's the moment that it's time to do the work.

New Speaker ([13:09](#)):

Right and that happens. Most importantly, when your brain is comfortable and knows you found a safe space, because until then, it's going to hold on. Your brain knows when you're in a safe space. And that's when it releases and allows you to start going after the Mo and doing the emotional work. So first and foremost, you've got to feel you, as the griever have to feel comfortable, you have to feel comfortable and protected. And we give you that gave you the safe space and Le allow you to feel that you're protected. And that we're not going to

Sharon ([13:47](#)):

A hundred percent. I don't know why. Tell me why does the brain not release sometimes? Why doesn't it allow them to go there?

Erica ([13:58](#)):

I think it just feels so much it, when you have a lot of old hurts, your new hurt connects to everything. Then the brain feels like it has to protect you even more, you know, because it's like, you're not just going through this one experience. You've got all this junk in this trunk and it's holding on, you know, to fight, to save.

Sharon ([14:24](#)):

Yeah. A hundred percent. I think that it definitely comes there. And you're just like, I can't figure this out. And it becomes confusing. We know for a fact that rivers that are stuck in their brain are one become the detective. They're trying to figure out what's going on too. They're keeping busy. When you were an intellectual brief, you are 100% about keeping busy. And that usually involves being at our job or being the perfect party planner or having everybody come over or the other thing you could be doing. But keeping busy is having Memorial after Memorial, after Memorial, after Memorial. And there's no end in sight because you're constantly doing the memorials, right? Not in a bad way, guys, please don't get offended, but we can get stuck there where it's constantly about celebrating the person and not absolutely doing the healing. The other thing that we do when intellectual grief is we don't let it come past our brain, into our heart. And we cut it off right here and we become strong. We become so strong that I don't care what anybody says. And sometimes when you become so strong, you actually become the jerk. Yeah.

Erica ([15:33](#)):

Yeah. Well, its seeping out somewhere. It is your grief is going to find a way. So, it's going to seep out somewhere and in a, in a maybe a non-helpful way. So, it could come out in anger

and you're just snapping, biting everybody's heads off because you feel so sad and so broken and you don't know what to do with it. And you're not doing anything with it. You're just kind of going after and attacking people.

Sharon ([15:58](#)):

So, here's the number one part that I think people get confused where it would be between intellectual grief and emotional grief. And they'll say to us all the time, but I cried. I cried. I've been crying for six months. I can't stop crying almost as if they associate the tears with the grief tears are I did all the tears or they'll say, I can't cry. One more tier. If all, once I get out of all the tears and the grief will be over, that is such a huge misconception. And they think they've gone into the emotional grief. And that's the biggest lie we can tell ourselves is that because I cried, I did the work I was supposed to do,

Erica ([16:43](#)):

Yeah, no, I didn't cry. And I still was grieving big time. I didn't cry because I didn't want to make other people feel bad and uncomfortable. So, I'm trying to protect them and not allowing the tears to come. But it didn't mean that I didn't feel the pain and the sadness in my heart every single minute, you know? Yeah. The tears mean nothing. It's saying the ugly words, right? It's saying how much it hurts and, and putting, giving voice to the pain.

Sharon ([17:13](#)):

Right. So, tears may not be a sign of grief at all. That's what you just said. You were 100% grieving for the loss of Donovan. Your heart was 100% broken, but yet you weren't crying. So that, so those are the two things. So other thing is that some people say, well, I'm not crying, so something's wrong because I'm not crying. I want to just leave you guys with this thought in tears, tears just are outward sign of the inward emotion. They are an outward sign of our love coming through and bleeding out of our heart. That's all they are. Tears are not a sign of heart grief. They're more of a sign of our love. And they may or may not come. You could be in Costco, walking around, buying the stuff that you need for the event after the funeral and not crying one tear. And that is no sign of a how deep your agreement.

Speaker 3 ([18:11](#)):

And while you're doing that, you're walking around, putting in stuff in your basket that has nothing to do with why you're in this because you're destructed by the emotions that you're not allowing in, so then you get to the cash register and you're like, I don't need this tire flat fixer.

Sharon ([18:34](#)):

Yeah. Or you don't realize what you're even doing there. You're walking around because that's part of the grading. That's the intellectual, it's the zombie state where your brain goes numb to stop the emotions in all protective mechanism that your brain is going to do to help you and protect you from this.

Erica ([18:54](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. The brain is an amazing thing, and it can do a lot of amazing things, but it cannot get you out of

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

It cannot keep you from the grieving. You've got to drop down in your heart. And that's where we work. We work in the emotional grief. We work in the heart; we work in the pain point. That's, what's in the ditch. We often tell our griever we're drumming in the ditch with you. And together, the three of us are going to dig out. We're going to dig ourselves out. That's what's in the ditch down. There are the emotions and the ugly.

Erica ([19:25](#)):

Yeah. And it's so worth it. Once you get out, you really let go of a lot of that old stuff. I mean, you just, the, the amazing, calm and peace that comes with that. I mean, it's oh gosh. It's so worth it.

Sharon ([19:40](#)):

Yeah. A hundred percent. A hundred percent friends. Thank you for allowing us in

Erica ([19:47](#)):

Bye friends. Thank you,

Sharon ([19:49](#)):

Erica, so many friends don't know where to meet us at or where to find out more about us or what they need to do next. Let's give them a tip.

Erica ([19:59](#)):

The easiest way to find us is to click on the link and you will have access to all of our places, our podcasts or Facebook, private group, our webpage and our email.

Sharon ([20:14](#)):

Yeah, exactly. That's simple. And our free blog friends click the link tree in the link below, and you'll find everything you need to know about us there. Thank you for allowing us and for this minute.

Erica ([20:29](#)):

Thank you so much. Thanks for listening to our podcast.