

# The End of Pandemic

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](#)):

We're coming out of the pandemic. The COVID 19, when gosh, I had to think about that soon seems so long ago, we're coming out of the pandemic. We're coming out of COVID. Some people are still having the mask argument. Some of us have lost our jobs. Some of us are unable to go back to that job that we've had because of our children, because of childcare, because of moving we're coming we're emerging from this thing almost, or worse than when we went into it. There's scars left behind

Erica ([01:25](#)):

Absolute scars and we're coming on where people are just getting to have the funerals that they'd been waiting. So, their loved one passed, and now it's safe to acknowledge their passing and have the public gathering. So now you're going back into reliving the brokenness all over again a year later.

Sharon ([01:52](#)):

Yeah. That part I can't even hardly imagine. No, I can't imagine what that's like. Really not being able to have what we consider the norms. Right. Really be able to have the norms and have that funeral, which in actuality, Erica, the funeral is for the living room. It was for, and for the family and friends that were left behind.

Erica ([02:20](#)):

Absolutely. It's a way for people to come and give their last goodbye and to have had to put that on hold for an entire year and just get to it. I mean, that's a layer to grief. You always talk about how grief has layers. That's a layer that I cannot even wrap my brain around. If we would've had to wait a whole year to bury any one of our Austin, Sharon, our dad Donovan like you. And I just am so sad for everyone. That's having to do that because you've had to fight for your survival this entire year, literally through the pandemic, trying to avoid it. And if you've got it, trying to recover from it. And then now through the

brokenness and the pain only to just have to come to the place where you get to do a formal service a year out it's devastating.

Sharon (03:18):

So, it's our own experience. We're experiencing this right now. We had a cousin that passed away in March of 2020 and try as they may the family to get something together. It was never the right time. We kept getting pushed down out. Towns were closing up a father of four, never got to celebrate the life of someone. They loved honored and cherished. So, we're experiencing this right now. They've set a date coming up here soon in August. But think about it. It's by the time they have their celebration, it's going to be two years later. Imagine that in your timeline.

Erica (04:07):

That's the thing. That's the part where, and I think what's already in your normal, like you said, all the norms of grief and funerals, you have that time period where everybody goes back to their life, right. And you're still kind of left trying to pick up the pieces, trying to figure out your way. What about two years later, everyone has completely moved on from that. And then you it's like as the family through no fault of your own, here you are like, okay, we get to honor him in this beautiful way. And the people around are kind of like, Ooh, I don't want to go back and relive that.

Sharon (04:42):

Yeah. Yeah. I don't want to get back into that again. What are your,

Erica (04:47):

Yeah. Which is kind of enough fair because it's like, it's not any of their choosing that this is happening.

Sharon (04:55):

Erica, you saw our mother and may, it was one year and a half. You never saw her. Yep. And we did put you on FaceTime and you got to look up her nose through the whole conversation.

Erica (05:09):

God bless her. She still doesn't understand how FaceTime works.

Sharon (05:14):

But people were ripped apart. Our sister, Charlene that lives in Arizona was literally by herself. She was on an island by herself. You had other family members in Texas. I had other family members here, but we were separated through all of that. That causes a lot of pain and sadness. That's just been hanging on for a year and a half. And yeah, we're

coming back together, but it's almost like this real weird awakening that's happening in our lives.

Erica ([05:44](#)):

Well, and people are still very fearful because for a year and a half, we've been told no, no, no, don't and then now it's like, go be free, get around everyone. And it's like, it's, there's a little bit of anxiety because it's like, is it really safe? Is it really, okay? Can we go out now?

Sharon ([06:07](#)):

And then the COVID just added to any grief you already had there. It's not like the COVID went away. It just added to any grief that we have. So, we emerged changed people. I think, I don't know about you, but I feel like a lot of people had gone through an awakening of their own experience. I mean, just think about what was going on, right. Floyd to wear the mask, not to wear the mask politics. My job got taken. I lost my job. I now can no longer go in the office. And for some people that was great. I spoke to a woman the other day who wasn't having to drive into downtown LA. And she was like, this is amazing. Right? We emerged as a different people, but even sometimes as a wounded person.

Erica ([06:54](#)):

Well, and I want to add in the people that have had the opportunity to work from home and now they have to go back to the That's a grieving experience in and of itself because now you're taking, you've taken out of the comfort zone of your home, your safe space and thrown back into these office with you don't know who's vaccinated or not vaccinated. And I don't know what the HR policy is on if you can ask or not ask. But yeah, you've got to go now back into a shared space to cubicle.

Sharon ([07:24](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. So, something else has happened. You and I just did a, a weekly Wednesday on it is that we're getting calls on suicide off. Almost every call we're getting right now is on suicide. And why do I mention that? Because we are emerging as a hurt soul brokenhearted. That's what we're emerging as. Yeah. We went through this together collectively, but some of us went through it alone and the pain just got worse.

Erica ([07:58](#)):

And for me personally, and I feel, and we've mentioned this on past podcasts you know, you started doing the meditation. I started doing the meditation. There's, there's a sense of like, self-reflection that we've gone through. And definitely the spotlight has been put on a lot of us that are in pain. When you just have downtime, you can't go see your mom. You can't go see your cousins on the street. You're just at home thinking about how much you suck. You know what I'm saying?

Sharon ([08:29](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. But and because you go into your brain and you start rationalizing it all completely in your brain intellectually, and you start breaking it all down that way. So, I think what a lot of people don't, we don't know where this is going to end. Right. We don't know where this is going to end, but we know one thing for sure, we need to be talking about it, whatever space you're in post COVID, you need to be talking about. There were grievors that never got to handle their grief or work on their grief because they were isolated. That grief is not going to go away.

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

No, it definitely doesn't go away. And just like at the beginning of COVID where it was heightened because of what was going on globally, it's going to be heightened with the end and everyone being thrown back into the mix. And it's just, everything is going to go up and be elevated. The one thing we do know for certain is that the amount of mental health issues that people have recognized, or that have developed because of the pandemic that is also up, that is we got to be aware, and we have to normalize being able to say, it's okay to not be okay.

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

So, in 2020, we lost 586,000 people to COVID. If we take that and multiply it by six, at least each family member has at least six grievors, right? At least six grievors. Cause you have, you know, the parents and then the kids that's the least amount. I'm not multiplying it, but that's millions of grieves left behind, right? T

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

I think worldwide, we lost over 2 million people. So, it's not just, you know, a United States problem. This is the world. The world is grieving and has grievors as a result of the pandemic.

Sharon ([10:32](#)):

I agree with you a hundred percent. I agree with you. So, we've got the loss of the jobs. We've got the loss of the pain. We got the isolation, and we emerge with significant mental health issues. And here's the other thing, my friends, here's the other thing that's so important. I have, we've had grievors friends, family, everyone reaches out to their insurance company to get help with their mental state. And one gentleman I just spoke to on Friday, went through his insurance and he was given three sessions. Right? Tell me what you can solve in three therapy sessions.

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

First of all, you got to figure out if you like the therapist or not to trust, you know, is this a safe space where I could speak my truth? And that takes more than three sessions to develop that rapport.

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

Three sessions. And that's all they're going to give them. So, everybody gets a little bit, you get three sessions, you get three sessions, you get three sessions, everybody gets three sessions and you got to figure it out. Whatever comes out. How about the people that have been their substance abuse went up? Overeating one up. I don't know about you, but I got my COVID 20, you know heart disease has gone up. We emerged; we emerge as broken people. We're broken. We got the first place to recovery is admitting that our hearts are broken. Yeah. It's changed in our lifetimes have changed. Right. Tony and I just put our house on the market, but I can't even believe like how many people are moving. They're trying to make big changes and preparing for; in case this ever happens. Again, we have many friends that are trying to get near their children, making sure they're close, which is exactly what we're trying to do so that this ever happens again, we're set up in a different situation.

Erica ([12:32](#)):

Right. Yeah. And that's the thing, everyone is all the moving pieces are coming back at the same time, which is so that's what, something that you know, with travel, everyone wanted to delete, the airports are booked. You can't get a flight. The hotels are packed. You know, it's like, we want to be free. And everybody at the same time at the same moment. And it's just, yeah, the world is different. It's a different, different place.

Sharon ([13:00](#)):

People are coming out with financial difficulties now that they never had before. Right now, the other thing that has happened is let's say you are one that believes time heals and you lost somebody or had a divorce 20 years ago and you've been, it's been manageable, and you never talked about it, or you never dealt with it. Or you never went through the tunnel of pain, which we call it the tunnel of pain to get to the other side. Guess what emerged in the pandemic that divorce, that pain.

Erica ([13:37](#)):

Yep. And there was no place to go. You just had to sit in it because you couldn't go out and meet your girlfriends for happy hour to talk about it. You were in your house having happy hour by yourself at 10:00 AM.

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

Yeah, exactly. Exactly. So, I guess what we painted the picture here is of how much lack, hurt and pain we're experiencing. It doesn't mean that that has to be the end. This awakening time needs to show you, that you have work to do you have work to do on your

heart. You have work to do on your thoughts. You have work to do on your emotions. It ain't over for us. It's the beginning. And it's time for us to be aware that we emerged Erica, even you and I have immersed is different people. Yeah. Our businesses in a different place, we're approaching things differently. We need to become aware. That's the first step of recovery is becoming aware that this is going on.

Erica ([14:35](#)):

Yeah. And to give yourself some grace, don't be so hard on yourself. This has been a struggle for everyone. Like we said, worldwide, this has been a struggle. So, give yourself some leeway and know that we're going to get back to our rhythm eventually, but it's just kinda, we gotta go through another like growing period where we were just figuring things out,

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

Going through the growing period here, get together with family and friends. Talk, do a session of do a grief, do a grief session yourself, get your family and friends together. And just talk about what it was like that year. Just talk about what you went through. Some of the thoughts that you had invite people over for dinner and share that moment process. That moment is going to be really important that you share what that was like. I don't know about you, but this keeps happening to me. I almost can't remember that. It's like, it was so out of the moment, like, I don't remember. I don't talk about it. Like that whole year is just missing from my life.

Erica ([15:46](#)):

Well, it was, it was legit one of the most miserable years for everyone collectively. So yeah. It's just like, now that we're kind of getting back to our norm and our routines. You do, you just put it behind you. We're like, that was terrible. Let's not talk about it anymore.

Sharon ([16:03](#)):

You did something I thought was really great. Recently Jordan just graduated, and you invited the entire family out. The family, like guys I'm talking five or 600 people.

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

Well, I just wanted a family heavy. Whoever could make it. Let's like our mother came. And like you mentioned, I hadn't seen her in over a year and a half. I wanted her to get together with the aunts and the cousins. I just wanted family to feel safe and to have a good time.

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

And was there a lot of COVID during that? I didn't get to go. Cause I was working. Some of us have to work.

Erica ([16:41](#)):

One of us has to keep this business afloat. I honestly, I don't think so. I think there was mostly conversations of the now like what everybody's doing now and just enjoying being together.

Sharon ([16:57](#)):

And like, you guys got the music on, and people got on the dance floor, and you had great food and great time. It was like, it was Jordan's graduation, but it was also a celebration of emerging. I think that was great. I mean, I seriously thought it was, it was so awesome. The, honestly, the reason that my husband and I didn't go is because we were putting our house on the market. So, we had all this stuff to do, but Hundreds of family members flock to your house from all over.

Erica ([17:27](#)):

It was, it was really a good time and we enjoyed it. We loved having everyone. It felt like home, you know, to have everyone Charlene had to having my other sisters here. And my brother, you know, that was, you know, Yolanda would not get off the dance floor. And she's like, you miss my favorite song. Every time I would walk away and I, what song was it? She said, all of them, like, I don't care what song, just get out of here. Dance just be with me. And it was so funny. I mean, we laugh till we couldn't laugh anymore. And it was, I loved it. I loved every minute of it.

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

You didn't call it this, but it wasn't end of COVID party. It's kinda like what I'm talking about. Get together with your family and friends. Talk about it. Talk about the pain. Talk about how difficult it was. Re-Emerge and celebrate life, celebrate being together, celebrate that you still have each other.

Erica ([18:21](#)):

Absolutely. And that we made it out. I got COVID I think out of our whole family, I'm the only one that got it. I mean our immediate, I got into September, and I survived. So yeah, if you had it and you're healthy now celebrate that, you know it's unfortunately there are a lot of what'd you say over 500,000 that didn't make it sadly.

Sharon ([18:46](#)):

So, if you are grieving a loss due to COVID and you haven't had your celebration of life, have your celebration of life, consider having your celebration of life. The celebrations of life are for us, for the living. If you are suffering in your heart is broken from a loss due to COVID do your work, get out there. Do your work? You've got to go through the tunnel of pain. There's no other way around it. And we got to tell you that I wish I could share a coat

this and make it seem like, oh, just sit with Erica. And I, and you'll feel better. That is a bunch of BS.

Erica ([19:23](#)):

Well, and we, as a society are trained to move on. So, you're still in pain because this terrible thing has happened. And society as a whole is not going to look back and give you a second thought, no, you have to do your work. It's up to you.

Sharon ([19:39](#)):

Yeah. Also, on that, on this note, you can't just have a celebration and act like you're not in pain. You got to do both. You got to go, you got to experience the pain and have the celebration friends. I hope this helped. I know we're all going through something kind of crazy and weird, but I really hope that this helped

Erica ([19:55](#)):

Absolutely! Bye friends. Thank you,

Sharon ([20:00](#)):

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 ([20:11](#)):

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

Sharon ([20:25](#)):

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 ([20:40](#)):

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