

## Grief Shock

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):

So we have it down to a science the shock of the grief wears off anywhere between four to six months, you step the numb feelings of the zoning out, the not being able to feel Erica, you and I call it the zombie state that zombie state will definitely wear off so much so that even when we meet an active griever and they're still in the zombie state, we know that they're not at that very moment, ready to do the deep, deep work that needs to be done to get them beyond the pain. We know what the, when the shock wears off, what you're left with is this deep pain, often a feeling of guilt. You start isolating more. You absolutely get to the point where you almost cannot bear the feelings any longer.

Erica (01:36):

Yeah, it's really, really sad. I remember that. That was, it's awful. What happens is during that time the four to six months period, you're thankfully you're numb. Your brain protects you. So you're numb and you don't feel the full weight and your brain is trying to ease you into realizing this is your reality. I think so. I think it's two things. So your brain is protecting you. And then the more time that passes, the situation becomes more real because in the beginning you can be like, oh, he's at summer camp. He's at work. He's here, he's there. But after six months, you know, no one goes to summer camp for six months. Your situation becomes more real. The shock wears off. And when that pain hits you, it almost knocks your breath out, like, and knocks you off your feet. Cuz it comes in full force. It's so sad when we meet with people then, and they're feeling the full weight of their situation.

Sharon ([02:41](#)):

Yeah. I agree with you. So when, prior to the shock, I just wanna step back what you were talking about prior to the shock wearing off. I think a lot of people think like when we found out Donovan die, it, you think you're gonna be miserable 24 7, but that's not true. You're not miserable. 24 7. You can actually see yourself like laugh at a joke. You can take a bite of cheesecake and it really melt in your mouth and you enjoy it. Those little bits and pieces do sip in the good parts of living seep into our, our life a little bit. And so that's why we say the grief is like in waves. So it comes in these waves. Okay. I think personally that the reason that the grief comes in the waves, because if the full aspect of what has just happened to us were to hit us and our heart and our brain at it all. At one time, we would fall to the ground in the fetal position and stay there for months. Our body can't accept the full aspect of what has just happened to us. And so we go into this zombie state, we become very numb. We're not aware of the feelings. We don't know what the feelings are. Sometimes we're crying. Sometimes we're laughing. Most times we're staring off into space, not thinking about anything. It is a protection mechanism that happens to us, as grievers.

Erica ([04:12](#)):

The body is an amazing thing. I just had this conversation in a different sense yesterday with my physical therapist, since I'm recovering from a hip surgery. And we were talking about how I used to walk. And one leg was literally shorter because my hip was all jacked up. And so I was, I had this weird walk and I didn't know it because my body was compensating for the, what was happening with my hip. It's the same thing in your grief, your body compensates for you, it goes into protecting you. And it definitely gives you little glimpses. Like you said, of enjoying the cheesecake, laughing at a joke. I just talked to, we have a family member that just passed on Friday and I talked to his wife Saturday for two hours and we laughed. We told for many stories and we laughed. And in my, my mind I was thinking, oh, she's she's protected right now. Like her brain is protecting her. And in a few months when that full weight comes in, it's not gonna be as easy to have those moments where you enjoy a, a, a giggle and you enjoy the, the food in six months, she is gonna wanna be in the fetal position. And it's gonna be hard for her to get outta bed every single day. Yeah. And that's what happens. And it's the reality. And we need to understand that you, in, in the first few months you think, okay, you know, I can do this, I can do this. And that's what I felt with Donovan. I could do this, I did this with Austin. I could do this when that pain and came in. I did everything I knew I wasn't supposed to do. Because I just was trying to survive. Yeah. Because it was all I could do. I felt like I was hanging on by my fingernails to my sanity.

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

Yeah. I feel like there's a joke in the hip thing where you walking uneven, but I'm gonna let that one pass. Just, just so you know, I'm giving you a pass right now. Cuz I wanted duly noted that there was a hip joke there anyway moving right on long, we did just have a family member die and we're not sharing that on purpose because it's so new and so fresh and yes, we do know grief and we know what it's like and, and feeling. So I just wanted to acknowledge that. One of the things that happens a lot is that we, we meet a lot of greeters that they start talking about the stages, right. They automat go to the stages. Well I think I'm in denial. I think I'm in anger. I think I'm in bargaining, which we've debunked those every which way that we can, you notice that one of those is not shock. And one of the stages is not when the shock wears off, this is what happens because those stages were never meant the griever. But to me, there is absolutely a moment where the shock wears off. Exactly. Like you described it. And most times that's when we meet our grieving friends, they mostly reach out to us because they're desperately searching for anything they can to get away from this pain. And they're up in the middle of the night, doing all of this search and they're Googling and they're on Facebook and that's how they find our podcasts. And that's how they find our Facebook page. And they mostly come to us through that part. It's because the, the intellectual grief that's been saving them. The, the numbness that's been saving them from feeling this has finally worn off and they get into the heart and you realize they're not coming back. I could fake this all along, but they're not coming back. This divorce is over. We no longer have a relationship. I have to raise these kids by myself, all of that realization, floods in.

Erica ([08:01](#)):

And it's, it's I don't even know. I'm trying to, there's not even a word that really can describe what it is like, cuz it, that, that pain is unbearable. I, I recently spoke to a woman whose son died tragically and she was in that and she thought she was having like a, a panic attack. Yeah. Cause the weight came in, the, the pain came in and she just was like, couldn't catch her breath. And she was like, I don't know what's wrong. And I explained it to her and I broke it down for her. And she was like, Oh my God yeah. It's it's me understanding. He's not coming back. Yeah. I'm never gonna hold him. He's not gonna know his son because she was a grandmother. He's not gonna be here. His son won't know him growing up and moving forward with having a dad, you know, it was just, it's, it's unreal when that moment happens, but it happens for everyone. Yeah. And it's, it's better to know that this is coming than to think that those first few months is how it's gonna be for you, cause it's not

Sharon ([09:08](#)):

Grievers need to talk. And in the beginning stages while they're in the shock, that's mostly what's going on is that they're talking and they're mostly talking about what has happened. And there's two versions of the way the talking is taking place. It's, they're repeating everything that has happened. And they know the time that it happened, the minute that it happened, it's long term, long term grief. They can go at eight 20. I was here. Then I, then I went here. Then the phone rang. Then I answered the phone. They're constantly repeating that over and over again. And they remember every aspect of that. Every feeling that was going on, every thought that went through their head, right? That is supposed to take place. We are supposed to be numb. It is our brain trying to figure out what has really happened here. And eventually the brain loses out and the heart takes over. And you talk about when that pain hits, the heart takes over and the heart kind of goes, Hey, I got this and can do this now. And it starts to jump in and the, all the emotions flood the system, it is at that moment that you're ready to do the action steps that it takes to move beyond this pain. It's at that moment that you're ready to heal your broken heart. And Erica, there is a warning here also because a lot of us move further away from healing. It's at that moment, when we really feel the pain that we, that we move further and further away from the healing. And how do we do that? We do that with different tools that we have around our house, alcohol, recreational, drugs, nail biting sex. We start buffering everything we can to buffer out these emotions. That's why we meet people 20 and 30 years later that never dealt with the pain.

Erica ([11:02](#)):

Yeah. That is so true. It's it's it's hard to describe. And it's as grief specialists and as family members who continue to lose, you know, people we love when you see the realization, the like our, like our family member who has a, had a recent loss when they understand, because when it happens to them. And they're like, oh my God, this is what you went through. Like, I can't even believe you survive this because it's like, you don't know it until you, it happens to you. You really cannot. You can empathize, but you don't really get it until it's in your heart and you feel that pain. The other thing is when it comes in, it's not one consistent thing. You feel, you don't feel sad all the time. You feel sad. You feel mad, you feel you know, bitter, you go through all these things. It's almost like you're having a psychotic break. Because you go through a range of emotions and every day is different. Every day, something different shows up. So when you kind of feel like you have the hang of it, you're thrown for a loop with some new thing that comes in. So that's why people wanna avoid it so much. That's why the buffering comes in. I don't wanna feel this

because it, I feel like a crazy person and I can't manage my emotions. I don't know how to hold, hold on to this and deal with it. So I'm gonna drink this wine. I'm gonna smoke this weed. I'm gonna eat this food and put myself in a food coma. That's it totally makes sense that people do that.

Sharon ([12:42](#)):

Yeah. And then that's how they start to manage their lives. Right. They manage their lives in the full buffering of all the tools they have available to them. You know, let's talk about this. Who do we think are really in the drug rehab programs? Who do we really think are in the alcohol awareness programs or the AA they're grievors. They are filled with grievors. That's who's there. That's what got them in the trouble. In the first place. It is unresolved grief that never got taken and care of it's that childhood that never got finished off that relationship with that dad that I couldn't speak to him because he was always wanting me to act like a man from the time I came onto this earth and we had a tumultuous relationship and then he died and I never solve this. When that numbness wears off, that's what shows up.

Erica ([13:38](#)):

Absolutely preach sister preach. If that is so true every time. And you know, I I've shared this so many times, I'm a reality TV junkie. Every time I see a situation where someone gets in trouble with their substance abuse or with any type of buffering behavior, it always starts from some sort of trauma. Always. Always, always. So you're right. The people in AA are grievors. The people in the food programs are grievors. Yeah. They are people who don't never learn how to manage their grief. And they brought in all these unhealthy behaviors to help numb the pain because they're going, wanting to go back to that feeling of numbness. They're trying to get back there and this is the way I could do it. I'm gonna drink this bottle of wine. So I don't have to feel sad anymore. I'm gonna snort this cocaine. I don't know if that helps. I don't know I'm but yeah, you're gonna get in trouble. You are gonna get in trouble and you're gonna end up having some sort of addiction problem.

Sharon ([14:40](#)):

GTS, Grieve that Shit. We say it over and over again. Why would you wanna go through life? Life is hard enough as it is. Why would you choose to go through life with all this unresolved grief and emotion stuck on you stuck on you there? Oh my gosh. Look at this my dragonfly earring just flew off Donovan. Anyway just know that the shock and the numbness is going to wear off. It is going to wear off my friends and it's okay. It's supposed to, it was designed that way. We're not getting outta here without grieving. We're not going to get outta here without having these

experiences. And it was truly designed that way to wear off as to giving you the signal. Okay. It's time to start the work,

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

Yeah. Yeah. And the work is life changing. You gotta take those, the correct action steps. To heal your heart. And it is so, I mean, I, I say it all the time. I am a walking billboard. That it is true.

Sharon ([15:50](#)):

Yeah. Well, and that it is part of why you and I crack jokes in our podcast now because I was like, we can't, you roll your eyes on me. I'll slap you

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

Now you'll allow it.

Sharon ([16:05](#)):

It's actually, we're not selling grief. We're not selling pain. We are selling healing. We're offering you the answers to healing. What is it like to walk back into your full life? You and I just in between the two podcasts here, we were complaining about our husbands.

Erica ([16:25](#)):

I think Louis has listed the podcast.

Sharon ([16:29](#)):

And why did he do this? Why didn't he do that? He could pick up a vacuum of sometimes or whatever we do, you know? And the truth is our life's not perfect.

Erica ([16:39](#)):

Right?

Sharon ([16:39](#)):

We didn't grieve our relationships and our broken heart and our life get perfect. We still gotta go to the bank. We still got, nobody goes to the bank anymore. We still gotta go to the grocery store. Nobody does that anymore either. Aren't

Erica ([16:50](#)):

You grocery grocery there?

Sharon ([16:52](#)):

You don't have it delivered.

Sharon ([16:54](#)):

No, I live in the country delivers to me. I'm just kidding. I go to the grocery store. Isn't that phone off girl. We still have to we still have fights with our husbands. We still have fights amongst ourselves. Our life is not perfect is what I'm trying to say. We, our life goes on, but why wouldn't you want your life to go on without all that, that heavy baggage, the backpack full, the pain, all of that stuff that was left behind from him. Why wouldn't you want that? Grievors? I, I, I want you to understand something, friends. This is not going to kill you. We don't go after it because we think if we go after it and we feel the pain it's gonna kill us.

Erica ([17:33](#)):

Yeah. We have family members that die.

Sharon ([17:36](#)):

Yeah.

Erica ([17:36](#)):

And we're we still feel grief. Yeah. We still feel pain. But the, the truth is, and it's in our business name. Healing starts with the heart.

Sharon ([17:48](#)):

That's where it starts.

Erica ([17:50](#)):

We gotta do it. What are the alternatives? What if I never would've done the work to get where I'm at today? I would, I don't even know who I would be. I definitely wouldn't be funny. Thank goodness I did the work. I bring the

Sharon ([18:04](#)):

Funny,

Erica ([18:04](#)):

I bring the comedic timing to this podcast. Now that you allow me to be myself.

Sharon ([18:11](#)):

No, next time I'm gonna make the hip joke. You know what I was just saying, telling somebody last night, Erica's the walking billboard for what it looks like to be recovered.

Erica ([18:19](#)):

This is it. I mean, you, you still wanna live. We still have a lot of life left to live. Why didn't I yourself from being able to enjoy it? I don't, I just didn't wanna be

Sharon ([18:32](#)):

Because we don't think it's possible.

Erica ([18:33](#)):

Yeah.

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

They don't think it's possible. And I'm you guys, this is where we're gonna leave you at recovering from grief in a broken heart is 100% possible. Getting back to living again is 100% possible. Being able to look at their pictures again is 100% possible. Joking and laughing and telling funny jokes about them is 100% possible. You don't have to stay in this pain. Why would you make that your choice?

Erica ([19:04](#)):

Yeah. No. Choose life. Friends. Please choose life.

Sharon ([19:09](#)):

Thank you friends.

Erica ([19:11](#)):

Bye.