

Reviewing the Relationship

Tony ([00:02](#)):

Erica and Sharon are sisters who began a 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 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](#)):

The moment after we have a lot loss, the moment we hear about that loss, our brain kicks into overdrive. And the number one thing that it starts to do is review the relationship. I don't care if it was a significant relationship in your life or a less than significant. If it was your brother, father, mother, sister, that died, or your FedEx delivery guy that died, that you've known for a few years, the number one thing that your brain starts to do is think of all the experiences that you've had with that person over the last 5, 10, 15, 20 years or the lifetime. Its almost just like when you hear people talk about that movie being played in your head, you start playing that movie in your head and we call it Reviewing the Relationship.

Erica ([01:35](#)):

Reviewing the relationship. And the only thing I can think of is the things that come up woulda, coulda, shoulda. It's like your, it goes automatically. I wish I would've done this. I should have said this. We could have had, you know, done this and we had more time. That's that's where you, the focus goes, everything that you wish you had done different, better or more. And it's sad.

Sharon ([02:03](#)):

It it's really sad. It's good. It's healthy though. It is sad reviewing. It can bring up some sad experiences, but for the most part it's really healthy. So one of the things we hear while the griever is trying to do this review, not trying while they're doing their review, how many times have you? And I heard, I mean, if I had a dime for every time, I would be a millionaire right now. I probably wouldn't be doing these

podcasts. You know what they say? Here? You're gonna know what I'm saying. I feel guilty. I didn't pick up the milk last Friday. When he called me to stop at the store, I feel guilty when actuality, what they're probably feeling is regret,

Erica ([02:49](#)):

Regret and grief go together like peanut butter and jelly I've said, cause I I've experienced it. I've I felt that so much with, with the boys. There's so many things I would've changed had I had the opportunity so many ti and then especially when you lose a child, you just go to all the times you yelled at him. And you feel, you, you put that on. Like, I shouldn't have yelled at Austin that time. He told me he forgot how to write his letters when he was 10, even in school since you know, kindergarten.

Sharon ([03:24](#)):

Okay, wait a minute. That sounds like a parenting issue that he did not know how he had a moment of laughs don't yell at my Austin. Forgot out read letters. Oh my gosh. That's funny.

Erica ([03:36](#)):

One of my funniest memories with him and we fought and we fought and I, I almost felt I was gonna choke that child that night. And I mean, I, I went back to that like, oh my God, I was so hard on him. But I mean, Austin was a challenge. He was my little thorn that we, I was parenting. I was parenting looking back now, now that I've done the work and I'm, I'm not in active grief anymore. You can't beat yourself up for parenting jus because just because you yelled or because you got mad or I mean any mother or father or significant person in a child's life knows what that feeling. You know what I mean? They know that feeling, but you're parenting, you cannot beat yourself up for, for parenting.

Sharon ([04:25](#)):

Right. Right. And so you went to reviewing all of your parenting skills with, with both of the boys. Right? All of that stuff came up. What, why, how I even got here is that one, just like your review of Austin, not being able to write his letters ahead of friend a few months ago that passed away and, and during the review he made a joke about me at one instance at a church event, he made a joke and I was really offended by the joke. And he laughed and told like five people, everybody that walked up, he would tell this joke. He thought it was so funny. And I was so offended by it, but I laughed it off and I literally forgot about it. Completely forgot about it. So then I get the call that bless his heart. He has died of COVID. So I get the

call that he's died of COVID. I actually didn't get a call. I saw it on Facebook first and I, I go into my review. I go into my review and the first thing that showed up for me was anger. It was unresolved communication. I never went back to him and had a communication about how that joke offended me and how hurt I was that he made that joke about me and what happens over time, Erica, that we move beyond that. We move beyond that relationship. We move beyond that pain. We stuff that thing down. So what showed up for me first was anger. And then more importantly is the regret, the regret that I never forgave him for that the regret that I never apologized for holding onto that for so long. So I couldn't even get into the the grief feelings because I was literally upset.

Erica ([06:12](#)):

Yeah. And that happens all the time. That's what people don't understand when you stuff those feelings or yeah. Time goes by and you forget about it. Yeah. It's still there. Yeah. It is still there. And it's gonna show up whether it would've been that person actually dying. Are you having a similar experience like that then yes. That would've came up and what would've happened, had it been a similar experience? You would've probably gone harder towards the person that made a new joke. Because you were carrying that old pain from the old joke and that's what happened.

Sharon ([06:47](#)):

Yeah. So the other thing that also happens is in part of the reviewing, is that just like when Austin couldn't remember how to write letters and I believe them a hundred percent, he had a moment lapse, momentary lapse. Sometimes what happens is that the thing is really about the thing. We didn't do the really important thing that we didn't do not showing up. I didn't go to their wedding. I got mad at them and I turned my back on them. Or you could be mad at them the day that they die. Right. You literally be in a fight with them the day that they die. Right. That regret and that pain when you're reviewing the relationship and you're reviewing the fight, your mind is gonna constantly go back to that fight. And that argument, I literally, with this friend a a couple months ago, I literally had to consciously look at the other aspects of the relationship I had to constantly realize. And remember that, that relationship wasn't just about that joke that he said, right. Our relationship was really good. Right. It was heartfelt and it was deep. There were other parts of that relationship

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

And not that's one of the, the main things. Hindsight is always 20, 20. Yeah. There's no such thing as a perfect relationship or a perfect interaction. We always, when we're looking back, think of all the things we could have done to make it better, but that's looking back. That's what, that's what hindsight is about. Yeah. When we're in the moment we can't control what C comes out. And that was one of the biggest things for me with Donovan, when I didn't pick up the phone the night before he had his Mo the night, he actually had the motorcycle accident. And I, I stood on that and I stood on that and I stood on that for the longest time. And then it came to me, like you said, our relationship was so much more than that one. Me not taking that call that night. It was so much more than that. We had millions of conversations. We had millions of laughs millions of time. I actually yesterday I have his notebook in my truck and I, we took it when Kayla got her tattoo, cuz we wanted the handwriting and I pulled it out yesterday and I was looking at it and he wrote, it was like this poem and he actually made it a Facebook. I love a good Facebook tribute. Those are, those are the gifts my children give me. And so he had wrote it in the notebook and I read it when I started reading it, I realized it was the post he made and it was all about us and how, you know, he appreciated everything that I did signing him up for sports, putting him in the police, get to that program. I mean, it was just, it was really, really sweet and it made me, it made me com totally smile because that's what I really was. And he knew it. He knew it. I knew it. So I needed to stop beating myself up because I know that he, he knew where we were at and it was more, our relationship was more than me not taking that call that night. And I needed to let myself off the hook for that. And that that's where our active grievers need to underst you gotta let yourself off the hook, give yourself some grace, are there parenting mistakes? A thousand percent? Are there spousal, you know, mistakes, a thousand percent are there us being the kids and getting mad at our mom because you know, she said something dumb. Of course. Just the way it is.

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

Yeah. I'm just wondering if Austin could remember how to write, what kind of poem would he have written for you?

Erica ([10:29](#)):

I got it already. I don't even roses are red. It's are blue. You're like my favorite truck

Sharon ([10:39](#)):

With great wheel.

Sharon ([10:40](#)):

Oh my gosh. It's too funny. Okay. Sorry. I digres. I had to say that was so funny. Okay. So when we're reviewing the relationship, which we all do, no one gets away from not reviewing the relationship. We get to that part that we didn't take care of you. And I know now know most grieverers when they come to us, they're stuck at that part of the reveal. They're stuck right there on that day. So then they start, they call it gr guilt. Most people call it guilt and we show them that it's not, it's probably not guilt because the definition to of, for guilt is with intent to see, to see or do harm. So it's probably not guilt. It's probably regret. Then I say, when you think about that and you feel the regret, what other emotions are coming up for you? I'm sad. I'm so mad. I'm angry. I'm embarrassed. All the other emotions that come up, that's where the grief is right there. So we have to go through the review. We have to, all of us have to go through the review. We have to find the areas. We stop on those frames in our brain that are incomplete. Then we find the emotion that go along with it. And that's when we can grieve.

Erica ([11:59](#)):

Right?

Sharon ([12:00](#)):

Right. There is where we can grieve.

Erica ([12:03](#)):

Right? It's it's but it's hard for people to get to that level because they don't wanna feel the feeling. So they stay. If they stay in the memory and just beat themselves up for the thing that they should have said or should have done, then they can avoid feeling those, those feelings. Cuz those feelings are sometimes very, very yucky.

Sharon ([12:23](#)):

Most often yucky. That's why you need to be guided out of this. That's why we, you and I needed to be guided out. We couldn't other out, that's why grieverers need to be guided out because they need to be walked through and in hand what was going on and what was happening and keeping you from staying intellectual. Part of the reviewing the relationship is all in our brain. It's all done in our brain. And that's, that's the thing when you, and I often talk of about the intellectual grief, as opposed to the emotional grief, when we're in the head doing the review, it's 100% intellectual you and I help them to see. Yeah. But there's an emotional aspect to

this. Let's drop down into your heart and see what's really in there. And that's where the pain is.

Erica ([13:10](#)):

Yeah. Yeah.

Sharon ([13:12](#)):

That's where the pain is.

Erica ([13:14](#)):

And that's where no one wants to go.

Sharon ([13:16](#)):

No, exactly, exactly. Who wants to go there? This is why I say we have no friends. It's in the intellectual part of it and that's the part that they need help guiding, guiding towards.

Erica ([13:28](#)):

Right. Well, and if you think about it, we are, we're trained to go intellectual. You know, oh, you've got another angel. You don't feel bad. You can, you can get another dog. Yeah. Don't feel bad. You'll find someone else. You'll meet a new boyfriend, which that's all intellectual. That that's the thoughts for our head. It was his time. It was his time. At least he's not suffering anymore. We're trained to stay in the intellectual.

Sharon ([13:59](#)):

So anybody listening to this podcast right now, that's actively grieving and you are really doing the review of your relationship. You're really looking at all the aspects as the frames are starting to stop on those days. And those moments start writing them down, write them on January 20th, 2017. He and I got into a fight at the parking lot and I never got a chance to forgive him. One day we were in church and we were walking out and we had the biggest laugh. And we went out to lunch and it was so great right down those moments that your brain key of stopping on, because I'm going to tell you my friends, there's something going on there that needs to be taken care of. That's why you keep going back to that memory.

Erica ([14:47](#)):

Absolutely. And if you don't go there, it's just gonna get worse because you're gonna pile on more and more cuz there's it. Depending on the length of the relationship, you're gonna find more stuff that you wish you could change. And it's just gonna keep growing that pain is just gonna keep growing in your heart and it's gonna be harder for you to move forward.

Sharon ([15:09](#)):

And I'm to end with this note, grief is always, always, always about incomplete communication, all the things I never got a chance to say, apologize for. Forgive for. Thank you for, yeah. That has an emotional aspect to it. Not intellectual. And my second final note is that Austin did remember how to write Didn't he?

Erica ([15:39](#)):

Yes, it took multiple sessions, but he eventually learned how to, he remembered how to write the letters.

Sharon ([15:49](#)):

Friends, if you're actively grieving and you need somehow help with reviewing your relationship, feel free to reach out to us. We talk to grievers all the time and we'd love to talk to you too.

Erica ([16:01](#)):

Yeah, don't get stuck there cuz that, that can be very overwhelming. When you get stuck in one place and you can't move forward. It really, really is a challenge. So reach out to us. We'll help you. We'll talk you through it.

Sharon ([16:15](#)):

Have a great day.

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

Bye friends.