

What Grief Healing Looks Like

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

So recently I've come to a new conclusion on what recovery truly looks like. When I first started doing all of my grief work, I was so hypersensitive to the griever, afraid to make a joke, afraid to laugh in front of a fresh new griever. Not that I was afraid, but I was, I thought of myself as being respectful to the griever. Like they're, they're sad so that I should be sad almost in the sense that I was matching their energy. And I still love that. And I still think there's a place for that. And I still think it's so, so important, but something has evolved over the last couple of years, Erica and I will be in a group, we'll be talking with a griever and all of a sudden she'll just make a joke or she will laugh. Erica will laugh and share a story that gets her giggle going. And sometimes we end with the griever and I'm like, geez, what were you out doing your standup show there? But the truth is that what really happened to me is that it hit me. That Erica is 100% the poster child of what true healing looks like. True healing does not look sad. If you are truly healed from a broken heart, you are living your best life. You're living the best life that you can in honor of your loved one. That's what true healing looks like. And so I've really had to make an adjustment for myself. And it's not that we walk in Erica with the griever and we are just like, joke, joke, joke, joke. It's not like that, but it's okay to laugh. It's okay to have a moment of where I really get you. And I see that because some of the parts of grieving are absolutely hilarious. The things that people say, the things that people do are so funny when it comes to grief.

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

I'm so glad you finally got on my page of comedy grief program and grief healing, and you stopped holding me back geez.

Sharon ([02:31](#)):

You know, and it was, or do you remember somewhere early on, someone said, maybe you guys should do grief comedy. And I was like, what? I was like, offended that someone would even suggest that. And it's not that we're out there doing comedy, but there are other grievers. I think that really wanna say like, what the hell just happened to me? Like they can't even believe it. And it's like, it blows your mind.

Erica ([02:54](#)):

I think the thing that, like, I mean, obviously if you're listening to this and you don't know us, you're like, they they're like cracking jokes with sad people. Like who are they? But I think what people appreciate about us is that we show up 100% authentically ourselves and we are completely genuine and true to who we are. And I think that definitely puts them at ease and it makes them feel more comfortable, whether we're cracking jokes or we are deeply serious and holding their space in a, in a somber position. I mean, you, we do match the griever where they're at. Like, we don't crack jokes with everybody. It's gotta be person who's ready and on that page. But I think they appreciate our authenticity because if we weren't authentic, it's like a dog can sniff out, you know, stuff at the airport, grievers can sniff out fake and they don't trust you.

You have to be safe. Yeah. To open your heart and be vulnerable. You have to feel safe. And we create that space for them.

Sharon (04:08):

Part of it is that the griever is hypersensitive to everyone around the room. Right? Yeah. So all of their senses have just been lit up, right. And their nerve endings are exposed. So if you come in totally fake, they're gonna, they're gonna see it 100% and sniff it out. Just like you said, but just for an example, last night, we did beautiful grief work with a woman who's grieving her mom. And she did her, she did her, one of her homework assignments and it brought me to tears.

Erica (04:44):

Mm-Hmm.

Sharon (04:44):

It was like, I was authentically there with her because I could see her heart and I could feel that and sense that what it was like the mother daughter relationship. And I just went there. If I need to go there and let the tears just flow, then it's okay. There's something happens that happens with the griever Erica and you and I have noticed it. And we almost have it down to a science in the sense that once we start to do the work with the grievers, it is around the fourth or fifth week that we start to see the change in them. We actually see the change in their face.

Erica (05:18):

Mm-hmm.

Sharon (05:19):

And most times the griever will either tell a joke or they will laugh at themselves and they don't see it, but we see it.

Erica (05:29):

Oh yeah. When I remember specifically there was a woman whose daughter brought her to the program and she, every time she showed up her face was so it was like, we were holding her hostage. I used to feel so bad for her. Yeah. And right around that fourth or fifth week, I said something to her and she cracked a joke and I noticed the lines of her face seemed softer. Yeah. Her shoulders weren't as hunched and her like her, she put on a little bit of makeup and her hair was like brushed. And it was just something like, it was so UN amazing to me that I was looking at her, cuz it, I could see this beautiful transformation happening and I commented and sh you know, she didn't even really notice it. And then when her daughter showed up, her daughter said, wow, look at you. You got makeup on today. Like, it was, it was amazing. It was amazing. And I, from that marker, we've just put it on, you know, like we make a little mental note and we can see that in each person that we work with and it's the most beautiful thing I've ever witnessed.

Sharon (06:39):

I think it, I think it's absolutely amazing. And it is the reason that you and I keep going.

Erica ([06:45](#)):

Yeah.

Sharon ([06:45](#)):

The other thing that happens is when we notice the change, sometimes we'll mention it. Wow. You look different today. You look beautiful. You brushed your hair, right? So the devil is brushing your hair. And sometimes the grievors are re the grievors are resistant to admit that they have noticed a change. Sometimes they're resistant because they feel, I believe outta respect and love for their their, their loss that they should stay in the pain. And that's not true.

Erica ([07:18](#)):

Right. Oh my gosh. That is so, so true. It happens often. We have had people we have worked with over zoom and we don't even get to see their faces. So that makes it a little bit more challenging, but you could hear it in their voice too. Yeah. There's a lightness where they first come and it sounds you could, you know, physically hear the shaking in their voice when they're talking or they talk in low tones. But after that fourth or fifth week, we could hear there's a lightness to their voice. There's a joy there. They are laughing and it is more genuine. Like, I can't even tell you, it's such, that is, it's like a drug because for us, it's like, oh my God, like it's happening, it's happening. And we just get so excited for them, but they do resist because they do feel, unfortunately, society makes you feel bad if you start to feel better. And I don't know why that is. You would think that we would promote health and wellness. But what we see around us happening on a daily basis, especially since the pandemic, we don't promote healing and wellness. We wanna promote sadness and darkness and despair. And it it's it's so it's so tragic.

Sharon ([08:40](#)):

One of the things that you, you say all the time is I'm living my best life.

Erica ([08:48](#)):

Yeah.

Sharon ([08:48](#)):

I'm living, I'm living. I'm not the same woman, mother and friend, sister that I was prior to my boys dying, but I'm living my best life in spite of what has happened to me, go a little deeper with that. What does that mean? I'm living my best life.

Erica ([09:07](#)):

I am still doing all of the things I would be doing. If the boys were here, I am traveling. I am anyone who follows me on Facebook knows that I hatch ducks. I am hatching ducks. I am a

Sharon ([09:21](#)):

Crazy bird lady.

Erica ([09:24](#)):

I am as with my peacocks, I'm with my cows, I'm doing every single thing I would be doing if they were here with me. And like, we just had Erin on our show who does healing yoga. She has grief yoga. She feels her daughter's presence. Every time she gets that yoga mat out. And that's how I feel. Every time I have a new experience or I'm walking at the field with my cows or hatching my baby ducklings, I feel my boys because they they're happy for me. They wouldn't want me to be that cocoon of a person that couldn't get outta bed.

Sharon ([10:05](#)):

Yeah.

Erica ([10:05](#)):

They know how much I love life, how much I love people. And I think it would, it, I think I would be doing like a dishonor to their memory to just shut down and not live. And that's my message to the grievors we work with. I remember when we finished a class recently and the wait, the lady said what now? And I said, go live. I think that's the best tribute you could give. Whoever you are grieving is to live, live for them because they're not here.

Sharon ([10:42](#)):

Yeah.

Erica ([10:42](#)):

So live and have new experiences in their honor. Yeah. Love for them, you know, laugh for them. And that's, I pretty much the philosophy that I've adapted. And I cannot tell you how many times Louise and I have been, it could be at a bar. Like we we'll just go to a bar and eat, you know, not, not like go drink in a bar, but go to a restaurant and just walk right to the bar. So we don't wait. You know, it's easier to get two seats at the bar and you meet the most interesting people while we're sitting there waiting for our food.

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

Yeah. You're in a bar.

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

No, I mean,

Sharon ([11:14](#)):

That reminds me of a joke. One time I was in a bar. No, go ahead. Go

Erica ([11:17](#)):

Ahead. Two grievors walked into a bar, that is a good joke. Anyway, that's a

Sharon ([11:24](#)):

Good joke.

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

But you, you know, we really have met the most interesting people and we'll be like laughing and cracking jokes. And someone will say, how many kids do you have? And we share our story and their faces. Like, they look like we've just electrocuted them. Cuz their faces are just like in shock. And they can't believe with the the chemistry that he and I have, the amount of laughing we do together that we've shared this tragedy. Not only one but two and even like you and I have the joke of maybe we shouldn't talk about both of the boys. Maybe we need the two of us have the same thing. Was that too much? I was

Sharon ([12:11](#)):

Tell you don't just stand on the stage until people, both of your boys die. They won't get it. It's too much. And, and actuality is that we separated for the hear

Erica ([12:24](#)):

Yes

Sharon ([12:24](#)):

Person. That's hearing the message. We honestly are protecting them. And so we separate the messages. So quite often it happened organically, but I'll often share Austin's story and then you share Donovan's story and that's to protect them because people are just taken aback. It's so much.

Erica ([12:43](#)):

Yeah, it is. It's true. I mean, it's funny. Cuz even Louise says the same thing. I think that was too much. We shouldn't probably say look at the voice. We should ease into it. And it makes me laugh cuz it's like now he's, he's seeing it on his own. What you and I have seen for a long time. And now he's beginning to see it, but it's who we are. We, we have a light about us, a light within us that comes from our boys. We, it radiates out of us because we carry them with them every single day, everywhere we go. And no matter where we are, it just, we can't help it. It, it, it just comes through us and we radiate love and healing and light and positive energy. And that is honestly what recovery looks like. It's, it's heartbreaking for me to see people trapped in their grief and not able to find their own version of recovery, whether it be through this program or through healing yoga, talk therapy, whatever it is,

Sharon ([13:54](#)):

Right.

Erica ([13:54](#)):

You have to find your recovery because I feel you're cheating yourself. You're cheating yourself out of living.

Sharon ([14:02](#)):

So one of the things that does happen in the, especially in the beginning, we don't wanna eat anything that tastes good. We don't wanna enjoy a TV show. We don't wanna laugh, especially that gut wrenching laugh because, and we often hear grievers, explain it this way. I feel guilty. I

feel guilty. And we've heard women say that they don't wanna have sex. And men say that all they wanna do is have sex. It doesn't matter what it is so many times for the griever, if they're truly enjoying their life or enjoying a moment, even just a small cup of vanilla ice cream can send you into a spinning guilt episode, guilty episode.

Erica ([14:52](#)):

Yeah. I think it's, it's human nature for us to want to find reasons to make ourselves feel bad. I don't know why we are that way. As opposed to finding ways to make ourselves feel good and feel better. Right. But especially after you have a grieving experience, you feel like you need to not live. You need to not laugh. And one of my, and I never attributed this to grief before, but one of my favorite scenes in a movie, well, there's two still Magnolia where they have that moment at the, at the cemetery.

Sharon ([15:28](#)):

Yeah.

Erica ([15:28](#)):

Where the friend cracks a joke because it was so heavy and so deep in that moment of grief for Sally field's character laugh. Yeah. And they laugh and they laugh and they laugh. And there's also another one with Carrie Bradshaw sex in the city. When she gets stood up at the altar by her fiance and they go on their honeymoon, her, her and her girlfriends go on the honeymoon and she asked them, you know, will I ever laugh again? And they said yes. And she said, when? And they said, when it's really funny, and then her friend accidentally eats or gets the water in her mouth and has the monos revenge and can't hold it. And she has an accident and they laugh their butts off. And it's like that genuine gut wrenching, you know, from your heart belly laugh. Those are my two favorite because it is possible. And you do need that. You need that.

Sharon ([16:28](#)):

So, and that, okay. So that's a really good point. People think that when they're grieving, they're only gonna be,

Erica ([16:35](#)):

Yeah.

Sharon ([16:36](#)):

Sad, broken in the bed crying. And the truth is all of the emotions show up when you're grieving the sweet, the sour, the good, the bad, the ugly, it all shows up. There were moments right after Austin died where people were saying.

Erica ([17:02](#)):

Where you going?

Sharon ([17:03](#)):

They were saying the stupidest things and making the stupidest remarks. And we're four sisters, okay. We are four sisters. And all we could do was go in the corner and laugh. So here's Austin who has just died. And you know, someone walks in the room and says the funniest thing, and we just burst out laughing. I want you to know that at the exact moment, when you realize you have a major life changing event in your life, there is still gonna be humor there. There's still humor. And to this day, one of us can just make one of those comments. And we all just burst out laughing.

Erica ([17:43](#)):

Well, Lauren, your daughter, Lauren posted this week. Something like I'm not the person to come and sit by in a serious situation. Because I don't know why we are this way, but as a family collectively, it, it definitely runs in our DNA. We will find the humor and no matter this, what the situation is. So don't sit by us if you need be serious. But this is true. There were times I remember us putting our heads down and our body shaking and people thinking we were huddled together, crying, and we were really cracking up laughing. Yeah. At these, I don't know, unfortunate words that would just come out of people's mouths. And that's when we really realized people don't know what to say in the grieving events. And thankfully, because it gave us that little bits of humor that we needed

Sharon ([18:36](#)):

Yeah. Well, I believe that laughter is healing also.

Erica ([18:40](#)):

It is.

Sharon ([18:41](#)):

The laughter is healing. I just, I, I was so afraid of offending anyone. And the truth is we see it when you need us to be there for you and be your total support. We're there for you. But when you need to laugh about it, sometimes I just need to get this energy out through laughter that's okay too. And I think that's the thing we're saying is that true healing is all of the emotions. It's not just sad.

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

Yeah.

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

That's what true healing is ultimately.

Erica ([19:12](#)):

And I think that's what stops people from wanting to do this work. They think it's going to be miserable, sad, extremely somber. And it, no one wants that. So that I think that's what keeps them from making the phone call is I don't wanna be that I don't wanna be miserable. Or if you've gotten a little bit of ways out like a year or two from your grieving event, you're like, I don't wanna go back there. I don't wanna go back to that sad place, but that's our point. We don't

force you there. We can stay in the light and the silly and the comedy of it and still do the work that we need to do without taking you to that dark place that you've gotten yourself out of.

Sharon ([19:57](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. 100%, 100%. That brings me to this moment I wanna leave on is that Donovan's funeral. I was in such a bad place. I walked away and left you and I think you gave 850 hugs

Erica ([20:15](#)):

Oh, are you referencing the sea of hugs?

Sharon ([20:18](#)):

And I didn't realize that was going on because I just, I just wanted to run away. So here I am, I run away and you're like, oh, Sharon's gonna come get me in a minute. Sharon's give me in a minute. And people just kept coming and hugging you and hugging you, which really takes your energy. I might. So I apology for that.

Erica ([20:38](#)):

And it's so funny it wasn't just you, you left me and Louise left me and I kept thinking, any minute now. That's the thing because you, you realize you're not the only one that's grieving, like, because we are such an amazing family. Like all of us, we have these tremendous people in our lives that show up for us and they were all grieving. So it was just a little overwhelming though, to be the recipient of all the grief.

Sharon ([21:14](#)):

Yeah.

Erica ([21:14](#)):

Many people were just falling into my arms and God bless them, sharing their most amazing interactions with Donovan. Oh. And, you know, just touching my spirit because what I'm able to see now, not at that moment, because it was absolutely overwhelming, but now that boy was everything his father and I wanted him to be. Yeah. And that's what I learned in that moment that he touched so many people, he was a clown, he was a saver, he was a giver. And he was everything we wanted him to be. And I relish in that. And so I do love it, but yes, in the moment I was thinking and he actually

Sharon ([22:01](#)):

Got a really good joke. So, you know, he had a funny sense of humor as well.

Erica ([22:06](#)):

Oh my God. Oh my God. So many, so many stories about Donovan that I could share, but yes, it was, but it in the moment, yeah, I was truly overwhelmed and just kept hugging and kept hugging and kept hugging and hearing people saying, you know, all the things that they say. But

yeah, that was my ultimate takeaway. Years later, not in, not then, then I was like, someone help me.

Sharon ([22:31](#)):

Yeah, exactly. So we're gonna leave the, leave it here. At that final thoughts of Donovan and with this thought your healing will show up with every emotion and just be okay with it. Just be okay.

Erica ([22:47](#)):

You gotta write it out because ultimately again, we we've all said it. You won't be who you were before, but you can get pretty darn close cuz I know I,

Sharon ([22:58](#)):

Yeah. Bye friends.

Erica ([23:01](#)):

Bye friends. Thank you.

Sharon ([23:09](#)):

You're the host.