

# *The Grief School*

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## **Forgiving Yourself**



Sharon: [\(00:02\)](#)

Have you ever had a thought about a time where you needed to forgive someone who had done something cruel to you, or you thought that they were thoughtless or downright mean? And that stinks, right? That totally stinks. Like the thought of having to go there and really think about forgiveness and do the forgiveness. But have you ever considered the time where you had to really forgive yourself? Where you had to really look at the possibility that the forgiveness is for you, that the forgiveness that you need to do is really forgiving yourself for the things you did, the things you said, the things you've held onto. Forgiveness is a tricky, tricky thing. It's a big word that means so many different things to so many different people.

Erica: [\(00:57\)](#)

It is, it's, it's, it's kind of a, a trigger word when you, especially when you bring it up to someone who's in a lot of pain, you will get us such a reaction from them. It's like you gotta tread very lightly when you start bringing up that topic of forgiveness. But even more so for that person that you're having the conversation with. I feel like it's even bigger deal for us, for ourselves. No one is harder on me than me.

Sharon: [\(01:25\)](#)

Yeah.

Erica: [\(01:26\)](#)

Self-Talk that I do to myself on a regular basis, I'm almost like abusive. Like, it's just, it's crazy because we hold ourselves to such a high standard and we want to be the best version of ourselves. We, we beat ourselves up when we don't show up in that manner.

Sharon: [\(01:46\)](#)

Yeah.

Erica: [\(01:47\)](#)

The thought of to forgive myself is so huge because why wouldn't I, why wouldn't I owe that to me? Just like I would want someone else to forgive themselves for something they feel they did to their loved ones.

Sharon: [\(02:05\)](#)

A hundred percent. A hundred percent. So we might be resisting it. You know, we, we we're resisting the thought of forgiveness because we're we're unaware of what forgiveness really is or what the problem really is. Right? So you need to take a deep dive and really understand forgiveness and understand what it really means before you can go into the action. I think a lot of people think forgiveness means that if I forgive you, then I'm excusing the behavior. Right? Then you can get away with what you did for free. And if I forgive you it doesn't, you're not gonna get punished for the thing that you did.

Erica: [\(02:46\)](#)

Correct.

Sharon: [\(02:48\)](#)

When that, if I forgive you, that means I have to forget, you know, that What's that line?

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

I'll forgive, but I won't forget. ,

Sharon: [\(02:56\)](#)

I'll forgive, but I won't forget. I

Erica: [\(02:58\)](#)

Don't have space in the bandwidth to hold onto stuff like that. Once we, you really start learning and practicing forgiveness. Yeah. You don't have the, you don't wanna hold onto the negativity. It's like, eh, it feels icky. Right? You wanna keep that pure heart of leaning in and embracing forgiveness. The thing that where it really, I think part of it breaking down. We have so many people that come to us and not, not for their own self, for their relationship with others. And they, the first thing they do is bring up the guilt. The G word. Yeah. I feel guilty. I feel guilty. So once we define what guilt really is, the intent to deceive or do harm. Yes. Did you intend or to deceive or do harm to the person that you love? And they say no. Well, it's the same way. You gotta look at it for yourself.

Erica: [\(03:54\)](#)

When I was holding myself responsible for not picking up that phone call from Donovan the night before he died, feeling as though I could have given him as his mother and the relationship that we had with each other. I, we were each other's person. I was the person that could talk him off the ledge. I was the person that, I'm gonna use one of our mom's words that could give him food for thought. Give you a little food for thought to make him reflect and not act hotheaded. When he got in the fight with the girlfriend and got on the motorcycle, I could have given him that little nugget. And I did not pick up the phone because I was doing something else and didn't wanna be rude. I held myself responsible. Did I intend to deceive or harmed Donovan? Absolutely not. I love that child unconditionally.

Erica: [\(04:45\)](#)

I would've asked God to take me before he harmed her head a hair on his head. Right. Looking at it from that perspective and also the nature of our relationship, the fact that he did call me for everything because we had such a close relationship. I needed to forgive myself for that. I needed to say our relationship was so much more than that. Our relationship was bigger than that one missed phone call. And he already had all the food for thought. He already had all the nuggets. He already knew not to do what he did, but he did it anyway. So therefore me holding onto that was punishing. Who? Just a minute. Yeah. Yeah. When I came to that point, and it wasn't immediate, everybody knows I fought tooth and nail against it. I was dragging my feet. I wanted to be punished. I wanted to stay in the pit of despair. Cause I felt like that's where I belonged to be. Because I was his mother. I should have saved him. Right? Yeah. I had to forgive myself. Yeah.

Sharon: [\(05:57\)](#)

Yeah. And sometimes, and the, the good part, the good part, the understanding of that, that you don't come to that very fast or easy. It's not something that you come to right away. We, we meet a lot of clients and we know right away the, the one thing they're struggling with is the forgiveness of themselves. Really looking at being able to allow that in and really be able to forgive themselves for whatever that thing is. Let's take a look at forgiveness. Okay. We talk a lot about thoughts, thought. We do a lot of thought work, and we talk a lot about thoughts. Forgiveness is not a thought and it's not a feeling, it's an action. Mm-Hmm. , you don't have a thought. Now the thought is, let me give you the thought for forgiveness. The thought is I can't forgive him.

Sharon: [\(06:48\)](#)

I can't forgive her. I can't forgive myself. That's a thought. But the action step of absolutely doing it, doing the forgiveness is an action step. Forgiveness is selfless. It's a selfless action that you take you the griever take for your heart. It's selfless to forgive. Forgiving is for you. Right. It's not for them. And forgiving yourself is for you. It's not for anybody else. We forgive. So we can move beyond the pain of that thing that is holding us back. We are hurting no one by holding onto it. We're only hurting ourselves. We are hurting no one and no one is getting punished. Because let me tell you, if he had an affair and he is outliving his life and he's dating all the women in the world, and you're holding onto that bitterness, you are only punishing yourself, he ain't getting punished.

Erica: [\(07:49\)](#)

Yeah. That was that thing. And I, I love it. It was, it's like the resentment is poison. Yeah. You're drinking hoping that they'll die, you know? But we are the ones poisoning ourselves. And that's what the bitterness is. It's that bitterness, that resentment. You could feel it. You feel it in your spirit

Sharon: [\(08:10\)](#)

When you don't give forgiveness. You are giving up hopes and dreams and expectations for a better tomorrow. You are choosing to stay in the and the pain and the brokenness when you don't choose forgiveness. And, and trust me, friends, I'm throwing out a bunch of lines here, but part of recovering is also looking at if there's any forgiveness to be done. Part of doing the healing is also looking at the forgiveness. And I think that that also throws people for a loop. When you don't forgive yourself, you keep the past alive in the forefront. You, you know, I was talking to someone the other day and they kept saying to me, yeah, but that's in my rear view mirror. Like, it's okay. I understand that happened, but I'm not bringing it into the, into the forefront. I'm not taking it with me. That's in the past. Forgiveness is keeping the past alive.

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

Yeah.

Sharon: [\(09:07\)](#)

Keeping it in your everyday life.

Erica: [\(09:10\)](#)

Yeah.

Sharon: [\(09:11\)](#)

Not forgiving is unre is unrealized demand that the past did not happen. It's like, okay, I'm gonna pretend like it didn't happen.

Erica: [\(09:22\)](#)

Right. Right. And you, that you'll get stuck in that. You get stuck because you're, while you're pretending, your body knows it happened, your brain in the secret compartment that's back there still knows it happened. So all of your actions moving forward, you're still acknowledging without acknowledging that it happened. . Yeah. . So, you know, there's no perfect circumstance, event, relationship, situation. There's nothing that's perfect in this world.

Sharon: [\(09:53\)](#)

Yeah.

Erica: [\(09:54\)](#)

And hindsight is always 2020.

Sharon: [\(09:57\)](#)

Yeah.

Erica: [\(09:58\)](#)

It's easy to sit when you're doing the reflection of the relationship and, and pinpoint all the things you could have done differently or better or more of always that will, that's guaranteed. When you and I come to our final day, Sharon, we'll still find things. Even though we do this work and we know what we know, we'll still find area and things where we could have tweaked a little bit.

Sharon: [\(10:21\)](#)

Yeah.

Erica: [\(10:22\)](#)

That's always. But we need to be able to just acknowledge I am an imperfect person. Yeah. My intentions were, I always had the best of intentions. They were pure. It just didn't get delivered in that way. And I sometimes we can say to the people that our clients, I can say, give yourself some grace and they will receive that better than if I say, you have to forgive yourself. Yeah. Cause they will go ballistic for the F word. Yes. But would I say nobody

Sharon: ([10:58](#))

Likes the F word?

Erica: ([11:00](#))

They don't. I love a good F word. I do. I love a good F word. But when we present it as though, how about you give yourself a little grace, they definitely will receive that. Like, you're right. I should give myself a little grace. But don't you say that F word.

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

Yeah. When we're not willing to forgive ourself for something that went wrong, something that went wrong, something we said something, we did something we wish we had had done better. Sometimes the thing is just we can't forgive ourself for the thing we wish we had done better. We put a box around our brokenness and we jump into that box and we stay in that box and we can't find the door to get out of that box because we're stuck in the box of unforgiving.

Erica: ([11:46](#))

Yeah.

Sharon: ([11:47](#))

Yeah. It's a lonely place to be in the unforgiving box.

Erica: ([11:52](#))

Whereas even when you have a situation where you're other people around you, no one is holding you responsible except for you. No one is looking at like, going, shame, shame. You know what I mean? But that in our minds, that's how it's playing out. It's like we're on this walk of shame and we need to have that thing whipping ourselves because how dare us, we're the only ones doing it.

Sharon: ([12:15](#))

The forgiveness. E especially if it's direct at you. If you gotta forgive yourself for something is 100% about you, most of the times it's not about the other person or the other thing. It is 100% about you. And so the forgiveness is gonna free you not them. Right. It's not gonna, it's like you're gonna, you're gonna drink from a new cup.

Erica: ([12:39](#))

Yeah. When, when the person that if, if the forgiveness for forgiving yourself comes from a situation where your loved one is passed on and you can't have the conversation cuz sometimes you know your person, you just have the conversation with your spouse or whatever, and you resolve it, and then they're able to verbally let you off the hook. Like, I never thought that, you know, it's usually a misunderstanding. Well, when the person is not here, you can't have that conversation when you know the relationship. That's why, like for me, as with the boys, I was their mom. Nobody knew those children better than me. They came out of my body. You know, I knew when Austin was trying to pull out a fast

one, you know, the other people wouldn't catch it, but I would catch it. I knew when Donovan was trying to get attention from his, his lady Harem, because I'd see a post about something. I'm like, oh God, there he goes, trying to get attention.

Erica: ([13:34](#))

It's easy to look on that and say, they wouldn't want me to, to be punishing myself for this. They wouldn't want me to be feeling responsible for this. They would know that it was an accident. That wasn't my intent. Because, you know, the relationship, when you have a loving relationship, when you have a less than loving relationship, it's a little bit more challenging to go there because you have a lot of negative that's in, in the way. I have a lot of positive that's in the way. So I'm drawing on that positivity. So when you have a less than loving relationship and you're trying to go there, then you have to look at yourself. You really have to take a long look at yourself because you know your intention. My intention was never to be evil or hateful or make them feel bad. That wasn't my intention. I was hurt and I wanted them to see that I was hurt and acknowledge and validate. That's different.

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

How long did it take you to come up to the conclusion that you needed to do some forgiving work in your work with Donovan?

Erica: ([14:49](#))

So honestly recent, it was very recent where I came really to a 100% complete. Definitely through our healing work that we did. I, I dived into it a little bit, but embracing it fully and 100%. I just finished writing my memoir. So I'm very proud of that working on getting it out there to the world, hopefully very soon. But when I worked on the Donovan chapter, because it was me taking a full bird's eye view of our complete relationship from day one until the end date, and really seeing who Donovan was and the role that I had with him. So it was like, you know, me sharing stories of our stuff that we did, just me and him. It's really just, it's my story. So just me and him. And same with Austen that I came to, that I really came to the parts of. We've really had this amazing relationship and connection and it, our journey together was awesome.

Sharon: ([16:04](#))

That's great. That's really great. And we'll definitely, we're gonna have to do a whole podcast on the book when it's ready so everybody can see the book and, and hear. Yeah. And that is not the answer that I was expecting. So that's really interesting. So from my perspective, from the outside looking in, one of the things that struggle you struggled with in the first year that Donovan died and kept you stuck was that forgiveness. And that when you, when you were finished the work right there at that one year part, well, a lot of it was that you had hung onto the not forgiving yourself

Erica: ([16:34](#))

Of him. I hadn't forgiven him. Yeah. Yeah. That was really where I was stuck and struggling with forgiving him for leaving me. Yeah. Or you know, not listening to me, because that was, that was the thing that you and I came to especially, I saw it play out with the other children too. As a parent, I get stuck in my rightness.

Sharon: ([16:59](#))

Yeah.

Erica: ([16:59](#))

So that, that was a lot of it. But really, really getting to the end of it was, I think just looking at the whole thing. Oh, picture I can, I can let myself go. I did the best that I could. Yeah.

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

Yeah. Okay. So what about how long did it take you to come to the, for forgiveness of having to forgive him for like you were telling in the beginning, not picking up the phone call. How long did you think it took you to come to that end of the forgiveness?

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

Yeah, that part was, was around the year part. That, that's the part that I really came through first. Because looking at the relationship and knowing that, like I said, he already had, I had given him the food for thought. We had countless conversations. We had, our relationship was, was close. And he knew he had all the tools he needed to make the right decision. He just unfortunately made the wrong one and got caught up in the moment as we all do. Yeah. And that is something that I don't hold him responsible for anymore.

Sharon: ([17:57](#))

And I ask that, ask that question for a specific reason. And here's the deal. We are not so naive that you and I think that we are gonna do a podcast unforgiveness and everybody's gonna run on and forgive themselves. . We're not, that's not what we're saying. What we're saying here is consider the thought that maybe the part that you have to do is some forgiveness of self. Maybe the part you have to do is forgive yourself for the things you didn't say. Maybe the part or the work you have to do is the really forgiving yourself for holding onto this for so long. Sometimes the forgiveness is is that vague, and that's the forgiveness that needs to be done. So consider the thought is really what we're trying to say here. Think about forgiving yourself.

Erica: ([18:44](#))

It's a very important thing to do because like we said, we're the ones carrying the poison. Yeah. At the end of it all, we're the ones holding the poison. And you wanna, you want to release yourself from that.

Sharon: ([18:57](#))

Here's some of the things about forgiveness that we know to be true. It's very empowering to do the forgiving work. It's f empowering to get one to get there to the idea that that's what you need to do. But two, absolutely. Doing the work. Forgiveness also means that you're taking charge of the happiness and of this journey. You are taking control of this journey that you're on, and you're able to allow in any of the emotions because you've done the forgiveness work. And more important, I think the most



important is that forgiveness will set you free. Yes. It sets you free from that box. It sets you free from the pain. It sets your heart free, it sets you free and onto this healing journey.

Erica: ([19:41](#))

That's the best feeling that the freedom that comes with forgiveness is amazing.

Sharon: ([19:48](#))

So the first step is consider is to consider forgiveness. The second step is to examine all of the areas that you think you need to do the forgiving work. And then three, really understand forgiveness and do the healing work so that you can be set free. That's it.

Erica: ([20:04](#))

Sounds so easy. . Easy peasy, . Okay.

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

If you're struggling with forgiveness, join and follow us in our Facebook group. Subscribe to this podcast, reach out to us. Set up a, a, a tell us you just wanna talk about forgiveness and we'll break it down even more. Forgiveness is the work that definitely can be done over time, and we would be honored to do and talk to you about forgiveness.

Erica: ([20:32](#))

Absolutely. All right. Bye friend.

Sharon: ([20:35](#))

Bye.