

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules
Episode #32: Growing Into the Amazing Authentic YOU

Introduction

(music)

Amy:

Do you ever avoid trying something new because you're afraid of looking incompetent?

Cheri:

Avoiding risk to keep looking good? Boy, that was the story of my life.

Amy:

Mine, too. This is such a struggle for so many of us. One of our listeners put it this way, ***"When I buy into perfectionism and people-pleasing, I come home ashamed, like I've sold myself out. Like I'm not living authentically. Somehow my identity seems tied to looking good. Ugh!"***

Cheri:

Well, I'm Cheri Gregory...

Amy:

...and I'm Amy Carroll...

Cheri:

...and you're listening to "Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules."

Amy:

Today, we're processing what we learned from last week's interview with Glynnis Whitwer, author of *Taming the To-Do List: How to Choose Your Best Work Every Day*

Cheri:

If *you* feel like *you're* so tied to looking good that *you've* sold yourself out? Amy 'n' I have *both* been there. And we've found some *practical* solutions that we're excited to share with you today!

Amy:

When I re-listened to the interview...and everybody should go back and listen again... and take notes! There are so many quotables that Glynnis just kind of casually dropped in there.

Cheri:

Yes!

Amy:

I really need to write them down on cards and wallpaper my bathroom with them. They're just incredible! But the one that suck out to me was, that she said "We define imperfection based on someone else's perfection."

Cheri:

Yeah

Amy:

She said that we needed to put our imperfections in air quotes, because so many times what we perceive as our imperfections, our weaknesses, our flaws...are actually some of our greatest strengths. But she pointed out that they're based on someone else's perfection. And it was this light bulb that went off on my head that once again that comparison is the thing that shuts us down. That it is comparison that locks us into procrastination. It was Glynnis thinking, "I can't write this book as well as someone else." It's me thinking, "I can't speak as well as someone else." Its whatever your fill-in-the-blank is not being able to do it as well as someone else, that locks us into that procrastination. Then she talks about excellence and she says, "excellence pushes us to DO our best; perfectionism pushes us to BE the best." Again- comparison!!

Cheri:

So good!

Amy:

Comparison is so much of the root problem that we as people pleasers and perfectionists have and it is THE root problem of procrastination. I was just fascinated by that.

Cheri:

I totally agree with you. I had asked her what she meant by “discovering your authentic self” and that’s when the whole idea of imperfections in air quotes came out and she said “God cares about what we think and how we think” and I think that’s one of those things that- especially when we’re running around comparing ourselves to everybody else- its not really occurring to us that *no no God made us uniquely and expresses himself through us in a particular way*. If we’re busy being like this person over here, and then morphing into this person, and then quickly changing to be this person, then that part of who He is that He expresses specifically through us goes unexpressed. And it’s so ordinary and normal to us “Well it can’t be important...”

Amy:

Well what I started thinking about was snowflakes. Because I’ve heard it said that every snowflake is unique. And I thought snowflakes don’t fall through the air going “hey! I like the way you look better.” They just are. But we’re like that too, and I thought originals should not compare.

Cheri:

Awh!

Amy:

Originals should never compare. You’re an original. I’m an original.

Cheri:

Okay, Amy you just became quotable. I need to wallpaper MY bathroom with that. Originals should not compare. That makes so much sense!! Because how would you compare?! On what criteria? If its original, you simply celebrate. You simply go “Wow how cool God made you that way. Wow how cool God made *you* that way.” And the “How cool is God?” Because He’s the creator of all of us! We’re not comparing our cool factor with each other, we’re just celebrating that God has done and is doing His thing.

Amy:

*Laughter

This may be an outtake, but I have my blog post for January already planned and the theme is celebrate. And I love what you just said. So we have all these quotables Cheri! Originals shouldn’t compare. And then you added to it. Originals shouldn’t compare...they should just celebrate.

That is so incredible. Ah!

Cheri:

Right there with you! So one of the things that...and I don't remember if Glynnis said it or if I just pulled it out...she was talking about a fixed mindset versus a growth mindset-which is just such fascinating research. And she was talking about those of us who have a fixed mindset; especially if we're perfectionistic...we have something to prove to other people. And she said "Whoa to anyone that doubts" whatever it might be: that we're right, or our capabilities, and I was right there with her. I'm like, "Ohhhh yeah." Because I don't always have to be right, but heaven forbid you should tell me I'm wrong. Ohhhh no no no no. I believe there can be multiple rights as long as mine is one of them.

And what I wrote down is, "We have nothing to prove." And if we're not comparing... if all we're doing is celebrating what God is doing differently in each one of us...then we have nothing to prove. I don't have to prove I'm right. I don't have to prove I'm better. Or just as good. There's nothing to prove. There's just a life to live. There's just moving forward. And that's really exciting.

Amy:

That's so great.

I do not have a lot of regrets in my life. I don't believe in living in regret, however, I do have one big regret and its tied into that whole idea. Which is...I haven't just *procrastinated* because of comparison and because of my perfectionism. I have actually avoided doing new things *at all* because of my perfectionism and my comparison and this need to prove myself. One of the masks I realize that I've worn is *competent*. So anything that I cannot do competently, I don't do.

Well Glynnis said, "Everything we have is given to us in seed form."

Cheri:

Yes I love that!

Amy:

It's so true!

And yet if you have this fixed mindset, if you believe you have to prove yourself, if you believe you have to be competent...you don't try many new things, because you don't accept the seed form of it. Which makes you look incompetent really often, and sometimes foolish, and at the very least you look like a big ole newbie while you're doing it. So I have just avoided trying new things!

Cheri:

I am allergic to the word *newbie*!

Amy:

Ha! Yeah it makes you think of Urkel doesn't it? It just brings you to Urkel. So I just wouldn't try new things and I think that's my big regret. Its how many things have I missed out on in my life that could've been tremendous joys, great blessings, because I was unwilling to be incompetent for at least a time?

It makes me sad to think about it. But that's okay; I am turning over a new leaf.

Cheri:

Okay you're just spitting out these quotables... "Because you were unwilling to be incompetent for a time." That's amazing! And you talk about seed form and you're making me think of when I was a kid and I used to try to grow little broccoli plants and carrot plants...first of all you bury the seed and then nothing happens, but then when it starts to sprout, do any of us ever look at a brand new baby plant and go "Oh... You're incompetent."?

Amy:

*Laughing
Good point!

Cheri:

"Wow you're underwhelming. You gonna grow up one of these days?" I mean at least for me I look at it and I am amazed. I am amazed that what started out as this tiny pebble basically has turned into something green and growing. It is a miracle! What if...okay, okay, I am going to say something so completely revolutionary for me...what if we could look at incompetence as miraculous? As evidence that God is working in our lives?

Amy:

I love it!
It makes me think back to the years when I worked for a community college and I was teaching. One of the things I did sometimes was substituting for ESL classes- English as a Second Language. I loved that. And when I worked with these students, I had so much admiration for them. They had moved to a new country where they didn't know anyone, where everything- all their traditions were different. And now they were trying to learn this new language. When they made mistakes, when they had a funny accent,

when I couldn't understand them, I did not pick them apart. I got excited for their successes, as I did that (this is sort of my process for realizing where I am and where I was) I thought back to my days in high school French class, and I resisted speaking French because you know, *Bonjour* sounds ridiculous!

Cheri:

*Laughing

Its especially cute with the southern accent! Oh my gosh!

Amy:

I was always a hick speaking French!

Cheri:

*Laughing

Oh that's the best thing ever.

Amy:

So I just didn't. But its like your broccoli plant analogy...I'm not picking these people apart. I had such admiration for their courage in doing something new. And what if we gave ourselves that grace? And what if we acknowledged the courage in ourselves by doing something new, or starting something were afraid of, or finishing something we were afraid of not being good enough. And we applauded the courage in us and we applauded the courage in the people around us, instead of picking ourselves apart and picking other people apart.

Cheri:

One of the things that Glynnis said is we have this vision of how things should be done right, which sounds so much like your pictures of perfection. And so we put things off until...and I realized that I end up with lots of things...and I don't think I'm procrastinating them- of course I'm not procrastinating them! I'm not putting them off indefinitely...I'm just waiting until I have all the information. I'm just waiting until I have all the equipment. And there's always some legitimate *something* that's missing! And one of the things I've been trying to do better more recently is just make the decision. Just do the thing. Do I really need that extra piece of information? Do I really need that extra piece of equipment?

I have a virtual assistant and I asked her to send an email from me. And then I said, "well go ahead and send me the draft so I can- scratch that. Write the email, send the email." Because I realized I was adding this unnecessary extra step and I'm like, "If this is ever

going to get done, I need to stop putting obstacles in my own way, and I just need to" ...in this case I needed to trust her, which she has proven herself trustworthy. And I realized I think its possible to be a procrastinator without thinking I'm a procrastinator. I just think I'm being wise. I'm just doing the right amount of research, and I'm really procrastinating. I'm putting it off.

Amy:

Mhm. Yes. Well hey! I want to give you some kudos though. Because girl we have done this whole podcast by the seat of our pants!

Cheri:

Oooh!

Amy:

We are growing in that, you know!

Cheri:

It is amazing how quickly perfectionism falls away, when you have no other choice but to be imperfect!

Amy:

Oh but that's a good strategy! Because how do we overcome being paralyzed in this procrastination? We tell somebody we're going to do something because goodness knows we perfectionists are going to kill ourselves trying if we told somebody else! So we go ahead, we set a deadline, we tell somebody, we force ourselves to move foreword. And as we force ourselves to move forward the beauty of that always is that the good things that always happen moving forward are reinforcers that say "Hey this is going to be okay"

Cheri:

Well and the other thing is: do it with somebody.

Amy:

Mhm.

Cheri:

So if you're going to have some fringe failures, you might as well have somebody to help laugh and joke and...I mean if I had tried to do this podcast on my own, I would've quit long ago. I would've said years ago but we haven't been on air for that long. But because I've got you and you're so encouraging and you are able to tell me, "Cheri that was good enough" and I trust you and I believe you, its like okay if Amy...because I know you would tell me the truth. I know that if something was really terrible, you would tell me "Cheri that needs to be redone." And so that's given me a lot of freedom to know that you are both giving me the fun and the lightheartedness but you also are my safety net in both ways.

So I think telling somebody, but also doing risky, scary, possible failure things in a community. In a safe community, because as I think we've talked about in other episodes, for recovering perfectionists especially people pleasers we can go find the most critical person we know. That's not who we should be taking our risks in front of. That's not who we should be trying to partner with. Especially on something low risk. I mean, if this was high risk...if this were something life or death, I would want the most analytical person I know. But I've listened to some of our first podcasts- we're better now than we used to be- but you know the older ones aren't *bad*, they're just "oh we were learning, we were growing."

Amy:

They're seeds!

Cheri:

They were seeds! I LOVE it! They were seeds! And you know without planting the seeds, nothing grows. Nothing grows. And I think that for so long I held onto my seeds and I said, "I have plants. I have plants!" And I didn't have plants. In my head I had plants, but what I had in my hands were seeds and its hard when you've got a mind full of imaginary perfect beautiful plants and a handful of seeds and so taking your practical steps to telling somebody, getting somebody to partner with you in some small way even or building a team around it and starting to plant the seeds, one at a time if necessary. And enjoying the miracle and seeing them grow! It's exciting.

Amy:

And that picture of course brings to mind the scripture where Jesus says, basically, I don't have it in front of me...unless the seed falls to the ground and dies, it never becomes a plant and so much of what we're talking about is a dying to self.

Cheri:

Yeah

Amy:

I mean so much of what we're talking about and what I'm confessing that I wouldn't try new things because I'd look stupid...that's just pride. It's just pride and it was a dying to that self, a dying to that pride...that opened up a beautiful new world for me. And I mean I still fight. I still have to fight that pride; I still have to fight the fear of looking stupid. But it's a dying to self that is so worth it.

Cheri:

And on the other side of the dying to self is of course the *new* self. The renewed and reborn self and what struck me so much in our interview with Glynnis is especially since I was that A++ extra credit gold star student in school, and then I became a teacher so I still have the school mentality...I'm still in graduate school, and I realized "Oh my goodness, I have spent my life looking for the outside authority to tell me who to be and how to be and really the only outside authority on that is God. And it's an internal authority because we are God's temples and we have the Holy Spirit in us and so on the other side of dying to the self that is so terrified is the discovery of who God actually created us to be. We don't lose something worth having, when we die to self we lose something we don't need and what we get instead is who we always wished we could be but we can't be on our own.

Amy:

The verse I mentioned is John 12:24 in the New Living Translation. (New Living Translation)

"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels--a plentiful harvest of new lives."

Cheri:

To help you remember this verse, we asked our friend Sarah to create a coloring page for you. So you could have some fun with it and put it up as a visual reminder.

Amy:

How awesome! I love a coloring page!

Cheri:

From these two episodes, the bad rule we need to break sounds a lot like this:

To compete in this world, I have to measure up to others and be the best.

Amy:

The fact we can focus on instead is:

Originals shouldn't compare. They should just celebrate.

Cheri:

Be sure to stop by [Grit n Grace Girls . com / episode32](http://GritnGraceGirls.com/episode32)

You'll find This week's Digging Deeper download, the transcript of today's podcast, a link for you to join our Grit 'n' Grace Girls Facebook page

Amy:

We hope you've enjoyed Episode #32 of Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules! Join us next week, when we'll be talking with Wendy Pope about her new book, *Wait and See*.

Cheri:

For today, **grow your grit ... embrace God's grace ...** and when you run across a bad rule, you know what to do, go right on ahead and...

Amy 'n' Cheri:

BREAK IT!