

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules

Episode 42: Overcoming Overwhelmed — Making Imperfect Progress

Cheri:

You know, we've had over 100 Grit 'n' Grace listeners Email us to tell us about their struggles with perfectionism and people-pleasing?

Amy:

And we have loved hearing from every single one of you!

Cheri:

So, what listener concern are we focusing on today?

Amy:

"I think my biggest issue is my inability to say *no*. First of all, I do not want to let anyone down. Second of all, I really believe that I can do it all. Worst of all, I am chronically overwhelmed and I am failing all over the place. I know in my rational mind that the right thing to do is stop and think and say no to save all of us this failure but my crazy heart and mouth just say yes."

Cheri:

Well, this is 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 wrapping up our OVERWHELMED series by bringing back one of our favorite guests — Kathi Lipp. Kathi is the author of 17 books, a popular retreat speaker, founder of Communicator Academy, and one of the most generous people I have the privilege to call "friend".

Cheri:

If you feel chronically overwhelmed and struggle to say "no," Kathi's got hope, humor, and how-tos for YOU!

Cheri:

Okay! So! This is the day I have been looking forward to!

Kathi:

Oh gosh.

Cheri:

I have been waiting to put Kathi Lipp on the hot seat ever since she put me on the hot seat because you don't put an HSP on the hot seat! What was she thinking?!

Kathi:

You're a professional, girl, suck it up!

Cheri:

Ugh, my favorite phrase!

But the problem is when I said that we were gonna put Kathi Lipp on the hot seat she said, "Bring it on!"

Amy:

I wouldn't have slept last night Kathi. This is amazing.

Kathi:

I just figure everything's editable, you know?

Cheri:

I have asked the *Overwhelmed* launch team for their best scenarios and questions. They know we're putting you on the hot seat to kind of wrap up the overarching series of being overwhelmed.

And so I'm just going to hit you with their questions and see what you come up with.

The first one is they wanted you to share your best (meaning your worst) overwhelmed story and how you would handle it now with the tools that we put in the book.

Kathi:

Okay, so....let me just say I don't have handle everything perfectly by a long shot. I'll give you an example of just recently ... how poorly I handled it and how I'm trying to come out of it.

I recently got some *feedback*, let's just put it that way, on social media. And I did not handle it well. I handled it publicly instead of privately.

What overwhelms me is – and still overwhelms me — is when I'm sharing my heart and I'm shamed for it. So I'm starting off with a heavy one guys. Let me just be honest with you: it really wasn't as big of a deal as it could've been.

Instead of going to the person ... I did take a couple of 'let's get out of overwhelmed steps'. Instead of responding immediately, I prayed. I did some breathing which often helps me. And then I responded poorly. So like we said this is not a magical formula.

Then the person came to me and said, "I want to apologize." And what I did from there was then I started to do some healthy steps.

So I asked for forgiveness. I talked with my husband about it who is somebody who is good to process this with because sadly Roger is someone who is never automatically on my side.

LAUGHING

I mean he is in a global way but when I want to pick a fight and blame people he never will just say "You're right Kathi. You know you're always right." No I'm never always right. So, I talked about it with him.

And then I decided this was the interesting part – ***Do I work on restoring this relationship? or Do I say I need better boundaries in this relationship?*** So this was a really important question. Because I think both of those paths are okay.

And this is a relationship that I want to work on restoration with. And guys, it was tough. But it was good.

And because of this encounter online and her handling it poorly and me handling it poorly and both of us going to each other and confessing to each other and asking for forgiveness and having a really good talk about why that happened. I reacted because I was feeling shamed, she attacked because she was feeling jealousy.

When we figured out the core of what was going on, I now know how to help her better and she now knows how to help me better. So it was restorative, and it was good. But it took ugly to get there.

So I just want to encourage our overwhelmed people that it doesn't automatically go from overwhelmed to zero.

It goes from overwhelmed to ugly behavior to praying about it to walking it out to resolution to good. And so it's not a straight path. But the tools helped me.

Cheri:

Oh that is so good. Listening to you, my first response is, *I want to go through something like that*. I mean I don't want to go through the mess, no I don't.

I want the end result.

Kathi:

Cheri you and I often get the end result. We don't have to go through a fight to do it. You and I will talk about something, and you always come back and say, "You know the reason I did what I did was because of x or y." I feel like your brain is constantly processing on this stuff.

Cheri:

Well, that would be true.

Amy:

Yes, that is Cheri. And she's willing to own it, and that's what's so powerful about your story. Is that, ***you don't need better boundaries when everybody is willing to own their part.***

Kathi:

Exactly. Exactly! Oh that's so good!

Cheri:

Is that like, quotable?!

Kathi:

Yeah that's totally quotable.

Amy:

So you chose the right one. But sometimes you don't know if you chose the right one until after the ugly conversation.

Kathi:

Well and after the first exchange, I was still at, "I need better boundaries." And then she came ... it was interesting ... she's reading *Overwhelmed* and some other books and it's just kind of kicking her and it's like, we can still learn we can still grow.

And I'm grateful for this person in my life because she walked through it with me and valued the relationship. I'm grateful.

Cheri:

And what's occurring to me is my tactic has tended to be: I don't want to engage in the hard conversations so I avoid conflict.

Avoidance is not boundaries.

Kathi:

No, it's so true. Avoidance isn't boundaries. Avoidance is what's going to happen three or four times before you blow up at the person. And say, "You did this, this, this, this." They have no idea.

Cheri:

And then they might need to set boundaries against me!

Kathi:

Exactly. And so, you know I'm grateful I went through this. But it was really tough at the time.

Amy:

So I was going to ask the one, she said, "In reference to the planner and not living a life of playing catch-up, any tips about how you can catch up so that you can start **not** playing catch up?"

<LAUGHING>

How does that work?

Kathi:

Yeah, so I would think there are a couple of different steps. Look at your coming week. Let's just say so don't be overwhelmed, I was going to say look at your coming month, don't look at your coming month, look at your coming week.

And look where your automatic *yes's* are. We all have them. You know these things that I've already said *yes* to. And I know for me, I feel like if I said *yes* 12 years ago, I'm still committed.

And I think we need to re-evaluate our *yes's* on a regular basis.

There are just some things that we outgrow, or our life can't say *yes* to them anymore.

So if you are feeling overwhelmed, what is it that you are saying *yes* to because you want people to like you? You want to be in a position of authority or power? You want people to respect you?

And so if we're working and we're obliged out of any sense other than that God is calling us to that position, then it needs to be re-evaluated.

And so this could be commitments you've made outside of your job – extra stuff you've decided to do ... maybe your kids' school ... maybe church commitments.

And I'm not asking a bunch of women to go and quit a bunch of stuff that they're supposed to be doing.

But do we not have faith that God who has called each of us into his service has enough people for what He wants to accomplish if we show up for what we are supposed to do?

Amy:

Freeing. That's freeing.

Kathi:

And let's just say ***if you're feeling overwhelmed all the time, I guarantee you that there's stuff on your calendar that God has not put there.***

Amy:

I've experienced that. This week you know I had that realization. I just added one more thing, and it tipped me over the edge. ***And sometimes it takes tipping over the edge to know where the edge is.***

Kathi:

Right! Because if you're able to put everything on there and everything on your plate and you're just walking along and everything's great, we get the sense that we can take on more.

And we have to experience that pushback in order to make those clarifying decisions. You're absolutely right Amy.

Cheri:

Alright this one I think is somewhat related. She said, "The tools and tips in the book are great. But do you ever still have **one of those days** when you feel a sense of overwhelmed threatening to drown you? If so, what are the main strongholds you cling to help you pull yourself back out of the deep?"

Kathi:

Oh, all the time. You know this is not a book that says "follow these three steps and you'll never be overwhelmed again."

My purpose in writing the book—and I didn't really figure this out until Cheri and I finished the book—is ***when you're overwhelmed, how to fight your way back to peace.***

And so yes, so the things that I hold on to are

One, recognizing the size of my plate. I am not one of these people who have unlimited energy. I know people like this. They get up early in the morning and they stay up late at night and they can – you know they get joy from working on projects. And that is not me. I love sleep. Sleep is my happy place and I know that I need that to be restored. And even on the craziest of days, I allow myself rest.

And the other thing is 100% Sabbath. Sabbath is I will fight, kick and scream for a Sabbath. And I was never like that before. So the beginning of the week and the end of the week are very important to me—not just spiritually but mentally and physically.

And so yes, I still get overwhelmed. But I can get back to a place of peace. And I'm saying *no* more than I've ever said before in my life. And my *no*'s are freedom. When I say *no*, often times I'm initially sad because I feel like I'm disappointing somebody. But my *yesses* are joy-filled. Like I feel called to those *yesses*. Instead of *well I'll do it because nobody else will do it*. So many of our *yesses* are martyr *yesses*. And there's joy for nobody. There's a temporary relief of right person who's asking us. But then, they get to deal with *you*.

<LAUGHING>

We've all had them in our lives. And we've all been that in our lives. So I love dealing with people that give me qualified *nos* but joyful *yeses* because I know that they are all in, and I love that.

Cheri:

Say that again?

Kathi:

People who will give me qualified *nos*. Like, *I've thought about it, I've prayed about it. This is a no, but I still love you Kathi, I still want to do things with you, I still want to...* so it's a firm no. It's qualified. But then there's a joyful *yes*. There's nothing I would rather do, and I'm not doing all these things I shouldn't do, so I have the freedom to do the big *yeses*. And I love that. I love working with people like that.

Cheri:

I love that distinction. I love that distinction.

Amy:

One of the things you brought up was Sabbath. This was a great question we got. This woman talked about how she had prepared for the Sabbath, she was like all into the idea of the Sabbath, and then the Sabbath came, and she has a 2 year old. Who kind of wrecked the Sabbath. She's asking, so, she said, "Is this really an internal thing? Or an external thing? Or how do we deal with a Sabbath that still has you know, people involved?"

<LAUGHING>

Kathi:

Pesky humans getting in the way!

Okay. So let me be completely honest. I embraced Sabbath fully and without reserve when my kids were older. So I get that I have not done it like this.

But here is what I will say. It has to be a physical manifestation as well as a spiritual, mental, and emotional.

And I know with a 2 year old, nobody is saying you get to lock them up in a closet until Monday morning. I get that.

But here is what I would say. When I was a young mom, when the baby slept, when the 2 year old napped, I was running around doing dishes, I was making sure laundry was going.

And so I would say that one time that week, that's when I get to rest. I get to do what it is that is restorative and filling to me.

And the other thing is I'm trying to prep throughout the week for my Sabbath. So I'm trying to get meals ahead. I'm trying to say I can do laundry on every day except for my Sabbath.

Because what it is it's saying, you know that mental list that's hanging over you all week, there's one day you get to be free for much of it.

And so there's still the day-to-day stuff to keep the humans alive. We understand that needs to happen.

But as much as you can, pulling back on that practice. And here's what I think is so great when you're trying to do this when your kids are little is that they get to see the different kinds of mom. They get to see the 6-day-a-week mom, and then they get to see the Sabbath mom.

And so maybe the Sabbath mom likes to sit on the floor and play with the 2 year old where the 6-day mom is really making sure that all the things are done. Because there are so many things that need to be done! I get that.

But to say, okay is there something special we could do on Sundays? Even if it's putting a blanket down in the living room and eating on...I know I'm saying this with a 2 year old and people are like you're crazy! I get it.

But just doing something different to break up the Monday through Sunday. And saying *we are committing this day to different*.

So I understand that it's going to be a growth process to find your own Sabbath, especially when you have little kids but there are ways to do it. I honestly believe that.

Cheri:

I love your idea of finding ways to make it special and do things that aren't done any other day.

Kathi:

I even do that for me and Roger and it's just the two of us. But we went through 11 years of marriage never having a special breakfast, but now it's like one day a week and I'll make French toast or something like that. And it's just that this is a day to linger a little bit. And maybe it's more mental than it is anything else but it's a day of calming and quieting and lingering.

Amy:

And maybe she can negotiate something with her spouse. When I think back to my childhood on Sundays, we said it was family day. We did go to church on Sunday mornings but the rule was you could go play at a friend's house or have friends over any other day but Sundays. On Sundays it was just our family.

One of the things my dad did a lot was he would take my brother and I, and we would go swimming—we had an indoor swimming pool at the university near us so we would go swimming. And when I look back, that was my dad's way of doing something fun with us, and engaging, and it was relaxing for him, but it gave my mom a break.

Kathi:

Yeah, your mom was like, WOO-HOOO!!!

Amy:

I know! Yeah, my mom just never really went swimming. And as a child I was like, "Why doesn't she like to swim?" And now I know my mom, she was like, "Hallelujah the house is quiet!"

Cheri:

Well and Kathi I think your point on that is so important because when you said, once a week when the kid is down for the nap mom can **not** do all the frantic work—I started hyperventilating like, "No, no, that 's when you [finally get things done] ..." But that's the point. That's when, whatever is restful for her, she can do for herself. And I'm betting that there's a lot of our listeners who are going to think, *well that's lazy. That's being a slacker.*

Kathi:

Yeah, no. It's trusting God with your time. And you know He's not messed up when he *says I want you to have a Sabbath*. God did not make a mistake. There was not a little typo.

Sabbath is so much about trust.

It seems so weird, but it really is one of the hardest ways to trust God. To say *God, you're going to accomplish what I can't, so I give you this small offering to say I'm going to rest and trust in you and that the worlds will not fall apart if it's not on my shoulders.*

Amy:

That's an amazing thought. The thing that I thought of that piggy-backed on that, is why do we say, "Oh my gosh its so hard to take a Sabbath." What a gift! What a gift from a God that says *Don't work today. You really need to rest.* Why do we resist that? Isn't it crazy?

Kathi:

It's because the world tells us that *it's all up to us*. It really does so we're having to fight the world.

You know, we looked at it, the guy gathering wood on the Sabbath ... he was doing it for what he felt were good reasons. Obviously he was trying to provide for his family. And God said, "But I told you! I told you I was going to provide for you. So why the hustle? Why do you feel like you have to hustle seven days a week. You know? I know you're not lazy. You're hustling 6 days a week. But the seventh, **instead of hustle, trust.**"

Amy:

Head over to GritNGraceGirls.com/episode42 where you'll find some great freebies from Kathi and Cheri, this week's Digging Deeper Download, Bible verse art, and transcript.

Cheri:

We hope you've enjoyed Episode #42 of Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules!

Amy:

Join us next week, when we'll be talking with Jill Savage, author of *No More Perfect Marriages*.

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!

<outtake>

Kathi:

I'm the worst writer. I just need to...

Amy:

I love that a woman with ... how many books?

Kathi:

17

Amy:

...17 books says, "I am the worst writer."

Cheri:

You know you're not allowed to say that any more. Or any more after this.

You're allowed to say, "I'm not a speller" and "I'm not an editor." But you're not allowed to say "I'm not a writer." Not in my presence anyways!

Because I will rise up, and I will tell you you're wrong!

Kathi:

I do like to write, but you know when it's like, "that blog post is due Tuesday" it's like, uuugggghhhh...!!!