

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules

Episode #50: Vulnerable Friendship — Becoming the Friend We Want to Have

Cheri

So, Amy — you've been working on a "fun" project lately!

Amy

Ha! Yeah. Exactly. We've been re-designing the Next Step Coaching Services website, which has just brought so much angst to my life. Because I'm a DIY girl, but I have no techie skills.

Cheri

Uh-oh.

Amy

It's just disasterous for me to try to do that kind of thing.

Cheri

So ... how's it been goin'?

Amy

Well ... once I relinquished **control** ...

Cheri

Uh-oh ... What ... what was that word?!?

<laughter>

Amy

Hmmmm ... Once I relinquished control to the techie people, it went beautifully. So, I am rejoicing. We have NextStepCoachingServices.com! It's up and running and beautiful!

Cheri

Woo-hoo! And it *is* beautiful!

But, okay, so I have to ask: Were you ever tempted to take control *back* again?
<laughter>

Amy

Hmmm ... I may have written you an email or two about such.

Cheri

Glad to know you're still you. And I'm alone.

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 reflecting on what we learned from our conversation with Holley Gerth, author of *You're Already Amazing*.

Cheri

Now, be sure to listen for Amy's new one-liner. It is so sweet, and so Southern, and so subtle ... and you are going to want to memorize to use the next time someone tries to guilt you into doing something you don't want to!

Amy

So I wanted to start where Holley finished ... I tell you, Cheri, adding that final question just asking them to speak to our audience whatever they're thinking, that has been so amazing!

I hear the word *hustle* now everywhere, but it is so appropriate and it so resonates with me because *hustle* is what I've been about. And what Holley was saying at the end of the interview, well kind of woven all through, was that **we are the most amazing when were *not* hustling. When we're resting in Jesus as the cornerstone because he actually carries the weight.**

And that idea of Jesus as the cornerstone and carrying the weight? That, I don't know why, but that was new to me. I love the new idea because I've been a Jesus girl since I was 10 years old so we're talking about almost 4 decades now and most of us who've been Christians that long have heard a lot of the same ideas repeated over and over again so a new idea is a beautiful thing.

Cheri

Well, we've heard, "let go and let God" so why do you think this hit you so strongly when we've heard that cliché so many years?

Amy

Well was her juxtaposition of saying she feels like it all depends on her. And I'm like *Yes!*

So I have this picture because I'm really visual in my head of Jesus being the cornerstone and the whole weight of the building is on him.

And I'm rushing around the support system. Like this little Tasmanian devil spinning in whirling and hustling around the support system. And I'm doing nothing! I'm doing nothing! It's all wasted time and energy and angst. **All of it!**

So I look busy but I'm actually doing nothing. That was the aha, like "Ohhhhh all of the hustle it's for naught."

Cheri

I love the imagery of Tasmanian Devil Amy. I just think that's such a great visual!

<laughter>

Amy

I talked about how my nickname was not a compliment — it was Action Amy. It came up again this week! Man, I've got that thing pegged!

<laughter>

What I need to work on is resting, knowing that all depends on Jesus not on me.

Cheri

When I think that I'm the cornerstone then there's nothing to let go. Because I'm *it*.

Amy

Um-hm. So now I want to blow up our image for a second.

Cheri

Okay, do it!

Amy

Because I started being really interested, after we talked to Holley about this cornerstone idea. And it turns out it's in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

But Paul, when he writes to the Ephesians, he adds to this. So this is in Ephesians 2:19-20 and he says,

“Consequently you are no longer foreigners and strangers but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.”

So here's the beautiful thing: s

So it all rests on Jesus. We need to cut out the hustle. But we're not completely insignificant. We're not *not* part of the picture. This scripture tells us that we *are* a part; we do play a part of the building.

What we've got to do is merge those two ideas that **we play our part best when we embrace the grace of knowing that we're already amazing**, just like Holly talked about. That we rest in that, we let Jesus be the cornerstone without buzzing all around him, but we are apart of the building, we are a part of the kingdom.

It's amazing!

Cheri

Yesterday I had one of those Tasmanian devil days. I was going all day and literally got nothing done. Like I had adult onset ADHD. And I was frantic for no particular ... nothing had gone wrong. I just ... the more worried I became about getting everything done the more I didn't get done. In retrospect, a good dose of rest and pray-cessing through the priorities: *What does God want me to get done?*

It was one of those days where there was no pressing deadlines, interestingly enough. And so trying to figure out which of the things coming up down the road I should focus on, I just played with my schedule all day long rather than actually saying, *All right. If Christ is the cornerstone then how would that impact how I approach my day?*

I think that might be why I do better under the pressure of deadlines. Because then I know exactly what I have to do to keep from dying. In that moment it really does feel like it's all up to me. I know how to live that way. But when the pressure isn't on ... I don't know how to live ... when I actually ... have ... the option of rest ... ?

Can we just not to put that in the episode?

<laughter>

Amy

I think that should become for sure!

Cheri

Alright, I love that idea! I love the idea of not admitting that I don't know what to do when things are calm and restful and that I intentionally create drama for myself!

No, we are way off from any notes that I had for today!

<laughter>

Amy

And I'm sure none of the listeners can identify, because *I'm* not identifying! Ha-ha.

Cheri

One of the lines that I love from our time with Holley that applied to yesterday, she said she'll reach out to somebody and say, "I've forgotten what is true today."

I just felt my heart to go pitter-pat when she said that. First of all the ability to just recognize that that's what's happening. And then to have, to be intentional about having built that friend network (that we talked about with Mary) and to have people that she could reach out to to remind her what is true.

You saw some real grit in going first, being the person who goes first in friendships. Talk about that.

Amy

Years ago, I was the women's ministry director at my church in Burlington, North Carolina, and I had this woman he was chronically unhappy. And I considered her chronically whiny, I'm sorry but I did. And she would constantly come to me and complain about how she couldn't make

friends. And I didn't say it, but I wanted to say," if you want a friend, then be a friend." Because I was just tired of hearing it, you know? And I didn't see her making any effort.

And then I moved.

<laughter>

And I moved to a place where nobody knew me, nobody loved me, and — you know — after a move, that's just the state of being that you're in. Nobody knows you're there yet.

And I was in her shoes. I was so glad I hadn't, just snapped at her, "IF YOU WANT A FRIEND, BE A FRIEND!" Because I needed to give myself my own advice.

But it was difficult. It takes grit. It's hard to be the one that goes first to be vulnerable and reach out.

Cheri

I'll tell you something that I found fascinating as I was thinking about what Holley said about, she said, "Being vulnerable ourselves is the best place to start as a mentor."

I would have never believed this to be true if it hadn't been for our intern team. We've had interns now for six months now. I'm looking at my hands going *I can't even do basic math today!* We realized that we were going to have to pull this podcast off the air if we didn't get help. So desperation....

Amy

'cause y'all, Cheri was doing all the work!!

<laughter>

Cheri

That's not true!

Amy

It's true!

<laughter>

Cheri

It's just that a podcast is more work than you would expect. There's just a lot of moving parts to it.

Amy

Yes!

Cheri

So we didn't ask for help or put ourselves out there because we were like, "Oh we're going to be mentor-y and we're going to be leaders and so we're going to first." We did it because we were *desperate*. We wanted to keep doing the podcast.

Amy

We were pitiful! We were like, "help us please!"

<laughter>

Cheri

But there was a lot of freedom in being honest. And because of our intern team and the experience we've had... Now I do believe that God has been incredibly gracious and blessing us the way he has. I know that asking for help doesn't always result, or reaching out to develop new relationships doesn't always end up having perfect results ...

But because we went first and extended our ministry, which I didn't even know we had a ministry but it suddenly looks like we did and do...

Amy

Ta-da!

Cheri

It's had a trickle-down effect to my entire life. It has become so much more normal now for me to put myself out there. To speak up first. To affirm somebody first. To say something I appreciate first. And to ask for help first. To put out my neediness first.

And I'm starting to get used to people counting on me to know what I need and to ask for what I need. A year ago? I wouldn't have even understood that sentence.

Amy

Fantastic!

It makes me think of one of my best friends, Holly. We connected through doing women's ministry projects years ago and at one point she came to me and she said, "Amy I need to ask you a question, would you be my mentor?" And I just looked at her and I said, "No."

And she was like, "No? Are you serious? No, you won't be my mentor?"

And I said, "No and I'll tell you why: because I am so lonely I'm about to die. And I need a friend. Could we just be friends?"

And I know mentors, mentoring is a type of friendship. But it wasn't the type of friendship that I needed. And I knew that she had as much to give and the relationship as I did. So how pitiful is that to say no I'm dying of loneliness please be my friend? And yet, it was what I needed in that moment. I was able to be vulnerable enough to say it, and she's one of my best friends. I'm so thankful for her. So that's powerful about what you're saying about being vulnerable about our need.

Cheri

Oh I think that's marvelous. And I think, especially since we're in the midst of the series on friendship and mentoring, and sometimes they do overlap. But I think you've just given a great illustration of how they don't overlap.

You're reminding me of somebody who emailed me after a retreat several years ago. It was a beautiful email, beautiful email, just appreciating what I had shared and then she asked if I would mentor her. My first reaction was, "Oh no! Trust me, you don't want to get anywhere near me!"

I was not at a place where I could mentor her at that time. I wasn't at a place where I can give anything in an organized, rational, sequential fashion. I didn't have the capacity for what she was looking for at that time.

So I think recognizing that sometimes there's a blend or a flow with mentoring and friendship and sometimes we can or can't.

And I love that you said no and recognize that what you needed was her friendship. That takes a certain amount of grit!

Amy

It does. And grace too. I keep hearing that woven in. And hopefully there's grace on both sides

because I know that there are women who would experience a no like that as a rejection, a personal rejection. We don't want people to receive it that way at all.

But also something you said about sometimes friendships work out and sometimes they don't. I think there is grace and even understanding that.

We've talked quite a bit about that in terms of expectations that we tend to heap on people and there's grace in not heaping expectations and just keeping those in check.

Cheri

Back to the all or nothing thing. And I think I'm slowly getting better at realizing that there is no BFF who's going to meet all my expectations, fill in all my gaps, meet all my needs, be there all the time.

But God has sent a steady stream of women who each bring something to my life. I feel like I'm Swiss cheese and all those little holes are being filled in one-by-one. And it's almost as if the less expectations I have for them, the more I'm able to receive with surprise and anticipation rather than expectation.

I'm anticipating that God is going to be doing something but I'm not trying to grasp or yank or pull anything out of anyone person. And I think I'm getting better that if somebody does bring something into my life ... at just letting it be, rather than chasing after them to see what else they've got. "Anymore without came from?!?"

<laughter>

Amy

Well, what you talked about with Holley was this Rolodex of friends and this kind of ties into our interview with Mary [Snyder], too.

So I made a little list because I was thinking about ... well it's tied in to Emily [Freeman] too.

Oh gosh, it's just amazing because when we start really embracing people for who they are and appreciating their gifts come and then there is this richness that you're talking about. The filling in of the Swiss cheese. I love that visual! And I think about you in my life, that you get my brain going to get my creativity working.

And Holly, that I just talked about, has this firm but gentle truth-telling gift. She doesn't let me get away with jack. But she loves me so I'm totally able to receive it.

And there's my friend Bridget who is younger than me but her exuberance and zest for life energizes me beyond belief.

And my friend Lisa who has these incredible analytical skills she's the CEO of a company, but she also brings heart to those analytical skills so I love that.

And then my friend Carol who has this passion for teaching and leading women to Christ that inspires me and pushes me forward.

And I could go on and on and on. But each one of those, when I thought about them, I thought about the *different* things that they bring to my life and that's why they're so valuable to me.

Cheri

A few years ago, I would've been writing down some of the things that you said about your other friends. And I would've been like *Okay, I need to become a gentle truth teller to be more valuable to Amy. And I need to develop exuberance and I need to develop analytical...oh, nevermind!*

<laughter>

Amy

And [you would have] felt like a failure instead of the beautiful successful Cheri that you are!

Cheri

The reason that Rolodex thing was so big to me with Holly was that instead of envying other people's skills, to go, *My life is better because I know them ...* rather than feeling like I need to develop all of those myself. That is so freeing. It's so exciting!

There was one other thing that we talked about with Holley or that was said during that interview that you said that I thought it was the best thing ever.

She was talking about staying focused even when someone tries to pressure you into doing something that you know God isn't leading you to do. And you just kind of quipped, "I'm sorry that you're not on board with my mission."

<laughter>

Amy

Did I?

Cheri

You did! Have you ever actually said that to somebody?

Amy

No, but you know I'm almost 50. And the older I get the sassier I get. So I need to file that away.

Cheri

No, no, this is going to be made into a quote that we're going to share with our listeners. I am dead serious. Even if we don't say it in quite those words ... although, I want to. No, I actually want *you* to do it, and I want to videotape it.

<laughter>

When somebody is trying to derail us ... I was talking to somebody earlier this week who somebody had a project they thought she should do, and they kept coming back and they wouldn't take *no* for an answer. And she really got to the point where she didn't know what to do. They have "prayed about it" so they were playing the God card.

Amy

Oh no! Don't pull the God card on me! Unh-Uh.

Cheri

And you know to be able to either say or at least think with conviction, ***I'm sorry you're not on board with my mission.*** I think that's incredibly powerful. So that was one of my big takeaways from our episode with Holley.

And then whole idea of being able to turn down invitations that aren't a good match for me by referring someone else who would be a truly perfect fit. And I've got an opportunity coming up later this week where I'm going to be talking to somebody who's ... we're going to talk to see if I might be a good fit for their retreat. And I don't know them and they don't know me. I am literally prepared to go into this conversation with a list of names in front of me. And I'm going to talk to them about their needs, their vision, the women that are going to be coming, what's going on in their church. And I'm going to tell them what kind of speaker I am, and if that's not what their women need, I'm going to have a list of six other names in front of me so that I can refer someone else instead.

Amy

Fabulous!

Cheri

Comparing that to the years of, "Pick me, pick me, pick me! I'll be whoever you want! You need entertaining? I can be funny!"

No I can't! I am not entertaining—you don't want to bring me in as your entertaining speaker. It would be a disaster.

So there's just so much freedom. And I'm not there yet, but this is the type of person I want to become, if I'm the right fit? Great! But if not? Then I've got a whole list of people to refer instead. That just sounds so much fun.

Amy

Oh, absolutely! And you know it's funny because Lynn Cowell did this for me.

She was in the middle of a conversation with an event planner that has already chosen her. They have a contract. They had everything.

And she was listening to this event planner and in the middle of the conversation, she goes, "I don't think I'm supposed to be your speaker." And the event planner was like, "What?" And she said, "I think Amy Carroll is supposed to be your speaker. Can I connect you?"

Well the event planner was kind of mad, she was kind of mad, which is funny because when we think about when you refer someone you think well they'll be tickled? No, she took it as a personal rejection.

And I think that's a picture too. We have to be open. Like this person who is persistently pursuing your friend to do this thing that's not her mission? She needs to be open to the next person.

That's the grace in friendship. That we're open to the next person. If this doesn't fill our needs, that's okay. It's not an indictment of them.

I'm open, full of grace, for the next person to come in and fill those places I need.

Cheri

And we're back to where we started about letting go and letting Christ be the cornerstone. *Not* being "fixed in stone" with our ideas or plans and how things ought to be.

Amy

Yes, great picture!

Cheri

Well you had a great bad rule that you pulled out of this episode.

Amy

"To be amazing, I have to hustle because it all depends on me."

Mercy, this is exhausting.

Cheri

It is. It is.

And so what is the new focus instead of that bad rule?

Amy

Just a little tweak: "To be amazing, I bloom in the knowledge that it all depends on Jesus."

Cheri

What a difference!

Amy

You know it's spring here so I was thinking about blooming and daffodils and the glory of that.

We are in our glory when we depend on Jesus.

Cheri

Head over to GritNGraceGirls.com/episode50.

Amy

You'll find links to this week's Digging Deeper Download, Bible verse art, and transcript.

Cheri

If you've enjoyed Episode #50 of Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules, would you share it with your friends? You'll find super easy "share" buttons on the web page for every single episode.

Amy

Be sure to join us next week, when we'll be throwing a PARTY to celebrate Grit 'n' Grace's 1st birthday!!!

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!

Amy

Well and I have to tell you, you really might get the chance, in fact I'm believing that you will get a chance to meet all these people soon because I entered this sweepstakes. And you get to take 20 of your friends to a castle in Ireland...

Cheri

Woot-woot!

Amy

I'm going to win! And you're on the list baby! You and Daniel with me and Barry and all these couples that I just mentioned! So hey, we're going to have a grand old time in the castle in Ireland!

<laughter>

Cheri

Do you actually ever win things?

Amy

No. But I enter things all the time and I *totally* believe I'm going to win!

<laughter>

Cheri

Love your optimism! So, we have this on record, and you better believe that I'm not cutting this out of this episode so that when you when there's no way you can back down on me! I'll edit out all the other names, you know, but I'll just leave mine and make it really clever!

<laughter>

Amy

All you other listeners who may have entered, I'm really sorry that you're not going.

Or if you do it you should invite Cheri and I!

Cheri

Especially after that!

<laughter>