

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules

Episode #88: Walking Out Your Unique, Powerful Story

Amy

My doctor cleared me yesterday for cute shoes.

Cheri

Oh, good!

Amy

That was one of the main benefits of my appointment since he did *nothing* else for me. As I — I was like, okay, so the really important question is can I wear heels? He started laughing.

Cheri

The important question was not is my toe broken, is it healing, will I still be able to walk when I'm 80. The important question was can I wear cute shoes this weekend.

Amy

That was essential!

Cheri

Ladies and gentlemen this is class on priorities taught by Amy Carroll.

<Laughter>

Amy

And he totally cracked up and goes, "You can." And I said, "So I will not reinjure my toe?" He goes, "No, if it's sore, take some Advil." That is my kind of answer!

Cheri

You know, talking about feet and toes and shoes is a perfect way to get into our topic of "walk it out," don't you think?

Amy

Ah! It's like I planned it.

Cheri

Exactly. 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*, the podcast that equips you to lose who you're not, love who you are, and live your one life well.

Amy

Today we're processing what we learned from our interview with Trisha Goyer, author of *Walk It Out*.

Cheri

And we totally did not plan that intro at all.

Amy

We did not! In fact, we didn't even have notes. Cheri we did it! We've arrived. Woohoo! Spontaneity.

Cheri

Yes. We're feeling spon-tin-eous! And I don't even remember what movie that's from but I know it's a kid's movie 'cause those are the only ones I can quote. We've broken up from perfect! Let me take a bite of my sandwich; you start talking.

Amy

Oh okay, let's see, what are we talking about today. Here we go. So, there was just so much I loved about Tricia. She's really the coolest girl.

Cheri

I'm going to interrupt and confess something.

Amy

Yes.

Cheri

I liked her way more than I wanted to. I was like, "I'm hoping that she turns out to be dislikable so I don't actually have to pay attention to her book, and she is so real and genuine and likeable. I'm like, darn it!"

Amy

That is really, really funny. See I had no preconceptions about that, so I just liked that she turned up with her hair uncombed. That was great. But one of the things that just really struck me was the power of telling your story. That came out just all through the interview with her. And it was fascinating to me that she started as a fiction writer or maybe she still is a fiction writer and so story is really, really important to her. And then she, in this book, is telling her story. And I think that any time we tell our story that increases our confidence in our calling. I

remember back in college, I was a part of a church that was really evangelistic. And so at Carolina, where I went to school, there's this place where it's the student union and the library and cafeteria and in the center is a dug down place, and it's called the pit. And so people hang out around the pit all the time, and there are pit preachers that come. Most of them were hellfire and damnation kind of guys, pretty ineffective on a college campus to be yelling "whoremongers!" to a bunch of college students.

Cheri

Sinners in the hands of an angry God...

Amy

I'm not sure anybody learned about Jesus through that, but my little group decided we were going to share our testimonies in the pit one day. So I just remember I was so scared. You know, I'd never, very rarely stood up and spoken in front of people before. But they just encouraged us, our pastors, to get up there and tell your story. And so I got out there and told my story, and you know, I have no idea if it was good, not good, whatever. It didn't matter. When I walked away, I felt this sense of power and freedom and confidence that still sticks in my memory to this day. And I just think there's such power in our stories and telling our stories instead of hiding them. You got her to talk about how she hid her stories. Talk about hidden stories a little bit.

Cheri

Well, you know, I'll get to that. What I want to talk about is testimonies, because I spoke for a retreat this last weekend. And I shared just a little bit from a moment from being in the eating disorder unit all those years ago. And, of course, I shared some other personal stories, and got to the end of the weekend, and a woman said to me, "You know, you really ought to consider sharing your testimony when you speak." And I've been thinking about it ever since because part of me was like, "I thought I kind of did." What does it mean to you to share your testimony? This is a question I've been wanting to ask, because I thought I already knew what it meant, but maybe it means different things to different people.

Amy

Well, I'm so glad you asked, because I've actually, just a couple weekends ago, got to share again, just a message that I wrote for a group one other time about how to share your story in your everyday life. I think some people think, well telling your testimony is just like, "Well, on the day I was born, it was snowing outside, and Lord have mercy on us all." Like, I really don't want to hear that kind of testimony to be quite honest with you. Just a little disclaimer if I'm ever sitting in your audience, listeners. But what I encourage people to do is to think about how God is showing himself in everyday your life and just tell people about it. One of the books that I read in college during that time was a book called *Out of The Salt Shaker*, by Rebecca Pippert.

Cheri

Yes! I have a copy on my shelf! Yes! *Out of The Salt Shaker and Into The World!*

Amy

Yes, yes, yes. And so, what's her last name Cheri?

Cheri

Rebecca Manley Pippert.

Amy

Manley Pippert. Ok. So everybody should go buy it, it's actually been re-released, just several years ago, a new edition I bet...

Cheri

Ok, we'll list it in the show notes.

Amy

It's one of those classic, amazing books about how to share your faith. She just puts the cookies on the bottom shelf, so I love it. But one of the things she talks about is being consistent in our lives, and this really spoke to me because at church...I'm the church girl, and I talk like the church girl. And in my neighborhood...I'm just Amy, and I talk like just Amy. Well, she challenges that, and she says that we should speak consistently no matter where we are. And so I thought, "Oh, well, that means I should dial it back a little at church, not to impress people, and then it means I should bring my faith, which is the core of me, the stories of what God is doing into my everyday life when I'm walking with my neighbor or, you know, having conversations with the barista as their making my coffee," or whatever, just to take every opportunity to share a story and to shine the spotlight on Jesus as the hero. Like, make myself vulnerable and tell about a struggle that I'm having and tell how God met me there. To me, you can tell your testimony in 5 minutes. In fact most people would prefer for us to tell out testimony in 5 minutes. So there you go!

<Laughter>

Cheri

I love what you just said about making it natural. I know for me, I find myself halting and trying to figure out what language to use and that sounds like a pre-decision I need to make. Like, I need to decide am I going to say I'm feeling blessed or it was a miracle or am I going to say it was great luck or am I going to say God really met me here. I mean that decision needs to be made in my own heart, in my quiet time before I ever leave the house, because I love that. I need to use the same words that I would use at church as I would with the barista at Starbucks. And I need to know what words those are, and they need to be comfortable for me. I get halting when I'm like, "Oh, which words should I use right now?" And I hope that's a common struggle that I'm not alone in all this, but it sounds like something I need to wrestle out. I need to *praycess* it and make some decisions and then walk them out.

Amy

The thing about language, that's so funny, is that when we find that language, and that was such a good point because it's true, and we're being our most authentic self in religious settings, we'll be considered under-spiritual and in secular settings we'll be considered over-spiritual. It's just so funny. It seems like when you're authentic you don't fit anywhere, but that's probably a whole different subject.

Cheri

And so, the whole important thing here is that I be true to myself. That's what I haven't quite yet figured out. I love this challenge, to get it figured out, not perfectly, but to figure it out for myself with the realization that I'm not going to please everyone. I'm not going to make everyone happy, but as long as I'm comfortable, and I know that this is what God is leading me to do...because that's the source of my discomfort is I feel like I'm not being faithful. I'm not being authentic in any of the situations. And I'm laying it on a little thick in some situations, and I'm taking the light approach in others.

Amy

Well, that really segues into the other big topic that she addressed, which is what does obedience look like. What does it look like to walk it out? How did you feel about that?

Cheri

I got this huge *aha*, and this is a direct line from her book. "Our greatest moments of wholeness are actually when we're sharing our weaknesses." I'm gonna read it again personalized to our listeners. Just listen to this and say this out loud to yourself: my greatest moments of wholeness are when I'm sharing my weaknesses. That just blows your mind as recovering perfectionists and people pleasers we think wholeness means perfect. And how can wholeness and brokenness go together, except in our weakness God is strong.

Amy

Okay, I'm about to bounce out of my seat now, because this is like one of my heart messages about perfection and wholeness. Did you know that in the Amplified Bible that the word perfection, they add on to it that it is whole, mature, and complete? So it doesn't mean that we're not making any mistakes. It actually does mean that we're whole. The line I used this last weekend is, "Nobody needs my perfection. Everybody needs God's power." And it's when we share....

Cheri

Whoa, whoa, whoa! Say it again. Say it again. Preach, Amy Carroll, preach.

Amy

Nobody needs my perfection; they all need God's power. And God's power, 2 Corinthians, flows into our weakness. I coined a little term that I call *Him Perfection*, and it's our weakness combined with God's power.

Cheri

That is so good, and I know that I've said this before, but I have come to recognize that I could be completely wrong and still be alright. And I think that's one of the hardest things for a recovering perfectionist to realize is that it's actually in the midst of the mess that we are real, we are finally recognizing that we are human, and that God can do His work. I had an experience yesterday. I'm also playing around with trying to figure out boundaries, and I was trying to figure out what a bunch of people would want. And I was making assumptions about them, and I was trying to predict. And it was several people with different personalities, and it finally hit me, "Cheri, you're playing God again. How about you play Cheri. And how about this version of Cheri actually goes and asks people what they want and need." And it was... Oh, I'm incomplete here. I have incomplete information. It wasn't an example of brokenness, but it was me realizing I'm finite. I don't know. I don't have the perfect answer. So how about I just admit it and get the input from others, and they all laughed at me because I told them that. I said "I'm calling, because I was pretending to be God and I'm just going to be Cheri, so could you just be straight with me?" and it was hysterical. It was great, because I quit trying to be the know-it-all. I quit trying to come up with the perfect decision all by myself, and it was so freeing. And it was one of those situations that didn't involve sin or anything like that but I was like, "Wow, how much easier would life be if I quit trying so hard to be THE ONE as if it's all up to me?" It's not. It's so nice.

Amy

And well, "all up to me" implies no boundaries, right? So Paul, I love also I think it's in 2 Corinthians. And he talks about having boundaries on our calling. He says, "This is what I am called to do in this situation and no more." That is so beautiful. Like, if we have some fences around our calling, around what does it look like to walk it out. There's some boundaries to that. That means we don't have to do it all. And that also means we don't have to look to anybody else, thinking that my boundaries, my fenced in area, my little part of the kingdom should look just like her little part of the kingdom.

Cheri

Okay, Amy Carroll, you don't need to be so personal now. How did you know I was getting on Facebook going, "Why is she writing that book?" I could have written that book. Never mind I had never thought of that topic in my entire life.

Amy

I love it. I love it. We all do it though, from shoes (like, something that silly). *Well, gosh I don't want to wear flats this weekend when everyone else is probably going to be wearing heels.* How ridiculous! But anyway, but to a book or to the way her kids behave. It's just endless if we don't have boundaries around our calling and recognize what those boundaries are. The Psalm that says, "My boundary lines have fallen in pleasant places". Rejoice in them! Embrace them and be thankful for those boundaries instead of always pushing, pushing past them. You know one of the things you said to Tricia was like, you kind of listed all the stuff she does, and it is absolutely incredible. But I think I might have said this on this podcast before, but I heard a speaker several years ago, she said when we get to heaven, I'll walk up to Jesus, and I've spoken in front of stadiums, in front of thousands, but I'll get the same greeting as the woman who obediently

lead the Bible study to 5, in her living room, does. And it's, "Well done, good and faithful servant." And that just... talk about freeing. It's the same as long as we're obedient. Jesus sees it all the same

Cheri

Well, and one of the things that I love that she pointed out was that there are different seasons for different things and that we don't have to do all the things in the same season. And she pointed out that all the things she's done were over an almost 30 year period, so they feel like, as a reader, you kinda get hit with all this amazingness, and she was so clear all of this amazingness is God not her. It's the result of her obeying God's call on her life regularly. But, you know, I spent some time in direct sales, and I was a go-getter and I was very competitive, and I got some awards, and I earned the incentive trips. But I look back on that entire season of my life, and it was an entire decade, and was what I did wasn't wrong, but my timing was wrong. The impact on my kids, the impact on my marriage... I was gone a lot. And if I could go back to my younger self I would say, "Let's find ways to..." 'Cause I do. I have this entrepreneurial spirit. I didn't recognize that about myself, but I do. It's in there, and there's a certain kind of leadership. And I wish I had found ways to channel those that matched the season I was in. I was doing such big, exhausting things that I had so little capacity left for my family, at a time when, I don't think I should have done nothing, I think that would have squelched me. I would have like exploded and that would have been bad for my family, but there could have been smaller things that wouldn't have taken me so far from home. That ranking, from 1-4, system that her husband shared.

Amy

Fantastic!

Cheri

If you haven't heard that episode, you need to go back and listen to it, because it was so logical and so reasonable. And I'm like, "I need to do that with my life now, and I don't have kids at home." I love the focus on *is this the season?* And that's just another way of putting, like you said, boundaries and recognizing it may be a good thing but not for right now. It may be a little further on down the road. Well, you've shared a lot of great scriptures already in this episode. I'm loving them! What's the scripture you picked specifically for this episode?

Amy

James 1:22 says, "Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." And I think that was really the essence of what Tricia was sharing with us that we're not supposed to just be hearers of the word. You know, one of my pastors, I met with him. He's a new pastor in our church, and he's the discipleship pastor. And he said, "Let's think about, Amy, the typical Christian woman's week." Like a 'good Christian woman' in quotation marks, that's involved in her church. So, on Sunday morning you go, and you hear a sermon on one set of scriptures. Then you go to Sunday school, and you hear a lesson on another set of scriptures, and then at home you're probably doing your own study on another set of scriptures. And if you're *really* spiritual, you go to a women's bible study, too, and you're doing a study on

another set of scriptures.” He goes, “Amy, think about that, nobody can live that out and they *don’t*.” And I was like, wow, what a picture of how we inundate ourselves with knowledge, and there’s so little walking it out. And that’s what Tricia’s really challenging us with.

Cheri

I love that amount of empathy in his approach, ‘cause I’ve never thought of it that way. Please tell him thank you for me.

Amy

Absolutely.

Cheri

So then, what’s the bad rule for these episodes?

Amy

I actually think we are reusing this bad rule...but that’s okay.

Cheri

That’s okay. We probably need to break it again.

Amy

I guess that’s it. *If I can’t do it all perfectly, I shouldn’t do it at all.* And I think that’s what shuts us down so much.

Cheri

Absolutely. So what’s the truth? The fact we can focus on instead.

Amy

Get out there and engage with your world! Take the truth into the world.

Cheri

Walk it out! I love it. So, where do you see *grit* fitting into all this?

Amy

Well, for me, it takes *grit* to fight the inertia and get going. You know, there’s just something about the first step towards something, and Tricia talked a little bit about that, that’s so difficult. So how about you? What’s the *grace* factor?

Cheri

You know what I love, and she modeled it without even knowing it. When she said that before our podcast she had taken 10 minutes to just kind of get herself in the right frame of mind, I just admired that intentionality. And it was just 10 minutes. It wasn’t hours, and it wasn’t, “Oh, I don’t have time to do it perfectly, so I’ll just fly to the podcast and see what comes out of my mouth.” It was 10 minutes. I think in terms of the bad rule *if you can’t do it perfectly, don’t do it*

at all, the *grace* in this is that often doing it well, being able to engage takes very little. 10 minutes. The next step and then trusting that God is going to reveal the next thing.

Amy

Terrific.

Cheri

Head on over to gritnegracegirls.com/episode88

Amy

There you'll find this week's transcript, a digging deeper download, bible verse art, and a chance to win a giveaway of Tricia's book, *Walk It Out*.

Cheri

Have you gotten your free download permission slips to remind you to break bad rules? If not, they're our gift to our subscribers. Just go on over to gritnegracegirls.com and sign up for our email list.

Amy

And don't forget to join us next week for our interview with Tracie Miles, author of *Unsinkable Faith*.

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 and Cheri

Break it!

Outtake

Cheri

So, you know how your book is about breaking up with perfect? I think I've over broken up with perfect, because as I was looking at the clock I was like, "I'm hungry, but I'm about to podcast." And I actually considered bringing my breakfast and eating it while podcasting.

Amy

You should just do it!

Cheri

I am; it's right here! I'm like, I remember in the days when I was like, "Okay, is the entire house quiet? Do I look good? Do I smell good? Am I 15 minutes early? Is everything set up? Is it all working perfectly?" And now, I'm just sitting here like going *chomp, chomp, chomp*. I'm like, "I'll just edit out anything that sounds too bad."

Amy

Exactly! I love it. I love it.