

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules

Episode # 118: When to Say Yes and How to Say No

Amy

Cheri, what's the hardest thing for you to say no to?

Cheri

Wow! There's so many. The list is vast and endless. Chocolate would definitely be a hard thing to say no to.

Amy

Well, why would you?

Cheri

Exactly. You know.

Amy

Hello.

Cheri

But, you know, probably the hardest thing is when somebody says, "Hey Cheri, I've got a great new idea I want to run by you." I mean that is like, I'll drop anything. I won't even think at that point. It's, like, ideas! Especially if they're like, and I would love your input. I'd love your thoughts. I'd love your evaluation. I'm like, hang on, a new idea plus you want to listen to me. I am so there.

<Laughter>

Amy

A captive audience. We love a captive audience!

Cheri

Alright, how about you? You're laughing too hard at me. Go ahead, what about yours? What do you have a hard time saying no to?

Amy

The thing I'm having a hard time saying no to is time with people. Which, also, just like new ideas, is a very good thing. However, more and more my schedule looks like a full-time job. And for years, as a stay-at-home mom who worked part-time, my schedule was very, very flexible. I could bring kids along and spend time with people. Not so much now. I'm kind of tied to my desk a lot, but because I'm my own boss I can't say my boss said no. I have to own the no, and it's very hard.

Cheri

Having to own the no, that is so hard!

Cheri

Well this is Cheri Gregory.

Amy

And, I'm Amy Carroll.

Cheri

And you are 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 are processing what we learned from our interview with Crystal Stine, author of *Holy Hustle*.

Cheri

Alright, well, the first thing I remembered from our interview with Crystal is her saying I'm going to do my job, and if someone else isn't doing their job, I'm going to do it for them so it all gets done. And I thought she's one of us. She is **so** one of us.

Amy

Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Well I'm the worst at this with my family, and I want to hear your input, too. I just so resonated especially around this household that I want it done my way in my timing. The 'my timing' part is the hardest with adult sons. You know. Really, I should let them do it their way in their timing. But when everybody is home, I still jump in to try to do it all.

Cheri

You know, I don't know if I've ever told this story, but when my son was seven we were hanging out as a family with my brother and his family, and he was lounging. And when I say lounging, I mean like his legs were over his favorite chair and his back was kind of leaning over the other side. So it was a full-on lounge, and he's like. "Hey, mom, could you get me some water?" And, I was lounging, too. But I hopped up off the couch, and I went to the kitchen to get him some water.

And, my sister-in-law was looking at me with this stare. I could not interpret at all. She was giving me the look, and I needed an interpreter for it. So she gave up on me, and she looked at Jonathon and she said, "Aren't you old enough to get your own water?" And he looked at her, and he kind of just stretched back even more and said, "Yes, but I've become accustomed to my mother doing it for me."

Amy

Oh my gosh! I just sucked all of the air out of the room I'm in. I bet that put a stop to that.

Cheri

I figured if he was old enough to use the word accustomed, he could probably get his own water, but the problem was he never did it in a demanding way. He was always so grateful. He was always so sweet about it. It was just the easiest thing in the world to do. I did not recognize until that moment that I had gotten suckered in.

Amy

I was about to say, man, he was paying the game well right up until the point he torpedoed himself by saying he was accustomed to it. Bless his little seven-year-old heart.

Cheri

I try to remember that phrase when I come into the kitchen and my, well, we won't talk how old my husband is, but my son is 25, and when I find it completely demolished. I start to want to clean up myself. I remember they have become accustomed to me doing it for them, and I think they are old enough to do it themselves.

Amy

As Doctor Phil says, we train people how to treat us. And it's really true, isn't it?

Cheri

Oh, sigh.

Amy

I like the idea of having a no-mentor. So, Cheri, mentor us. How do you say no. What does that look like?

Cheri

Okay, well let's just be clear that I'm really, really learning. But I think the thing that's been so important for me to recognize is, well a couple of things. One, I'm learning to say no immediately. Because if I wait, if I hesitate, then there's false hope building in the person, and they may assume a yes, because I haven't said no. And they might start saying things like, we're so looking forward to it, and then I feel trapped. If I say no immediately, it's done. It's clean. They're disappointed, but not as disappointed as they probably will be if I string them along. Say no now. It's not just say no; it's say no now has been real important.

And then remembering I can say no to the commitment without saying no to the connection. And that was so hard for me as I thought saying no was the equivalent of saying I hate you. No, and I never want to talk to you again. Or no, and now I know you're mad at me. It's just no to that one single thing, but everything else can still be yes. And so, I'm trying to learn to say no with that kind of confidence and not act ashamed or guilty, 'cause I use to just kind of slinking away. Because I thought they were mad at me, I acted mad at them. And so it was really, really

bad and confusing. So I am just trying to say the no with candor like you've taught me to, and then just move on as if everything is normal. How about you? How can you mentor us about saying no?

Amy

Well, my memory is terrible, but I do have these things that just stick in my head and change my world. Years ago, one of my pastors said, "When you say yes to something that's not your assignment, you are blocking the person who was actually supposed to have that assignment." That was so freeing for me. I mean I started saying no like crazy after that, because I saw it not as just a way for me to get out of things, but a way for me to open up things for the people who are really supposed to be doing them. That was very liberating. And the other thing was I had friend named Jean, and Jean would always say, "Amy, let me pray about that." And you know what? Jean actually prayed about it. She didn't use that as a way to let me down easy, but she was really going to pray about it. She really did. So now, I really do pray, and I ask God, "Is this my assignment?" And if His answer is yes, then my answer is yes, but if His answer is no, it is so easy to say it knowing that He has somebody else for that assignment. I need to leave it open for that person.

Cheri

Alright, well, she also talked about the difference between striving and holy hustle.

Amy

The deepest pit I ever got myself into with this was my first year of teaching in Burlington. I had taught a couple years before that, about a year and a half before that, but this was different, because it was in my husband's hometown. I don't know that anybody else had any unrealistic expectations of me, but I piled them on myself. So, I was in a school system where my mother-in-law is legendary as a teacher. She's absolutely legendary. She was an incredible teacher, and everybody knew it. And so, I felt like I had to live up to that. So you can just see just the problem that is coming.

Cheri

The darkness of the shadow.

Amy

Exactly. And it wasn't because of anybody else, but I worried myself literally sick. I was having terrible insomnia. And, I remember Barry worked on the same side of town in a different school, in a high school. And I would ride behind him in the mornings, and my eyes were like glued to the back of his car, because I was just following him there. The only way I could get myself there was to act like my car was tied to his.

Cheri

Oh, no.

Amy

I remember it so well.

But one day, one of the teachers that I taught with, she just knew I was in bad shape. And she said, “Amy you know the reality is let’s just say you keeled over and were gone and couldn’t come to school tomorrow. They’d hire somebody the next day.

Cheri

Oh my gosh. Was that her idea of encouragement?

Amy

It was the kick in the tushy that I needed.

Cheri

Yea

Amy

Because I took several days off. I took a mental health day or two, and I got some sleep and just hearing that kind of jolted me and adjusted me, “Like, you are out of control girl.”

Cheri

Those expectations are such a huge part of striving.

Amy

Yes. Yes. Was for me for sure.

Cheri

Well, you know this makes me think of the time I spent ten years in a direct sales company. And what I’m about to share I will not blame on them. I’ll just say I have an addictive personality, and when I saw some of the incentive material for some of the recognition that I could achieve, some of the some of the jewelry I could earn. And then there was the big trip every year. I mean talking about striving. It was all laid out for me. I could go check, check, check, check. I could do it all, and I just became a selling and recruiting machine. And when I had bad months, I still had my eye on that goal, and I began to compromise and make choices. You know, such as, “Oh, I need another thousand dollars’ worth of inventory?” Hmm, I’ll just get a new credit card. I mean really, really bad choices that I would have never counseled somebody else to do. I guarantee you I didn’t pray about them. I just justified them, and they started small and got bigger and bigger, but the end result was, externally, I looked really successful. I got the jewelry, and I had those on-stage moments, and I’ll tell you when I knew that I was in deep trouble was the year of the convention and the announcer was just the worst. He couldn’t pronounce any of our names correctly, and he got us mixed up. And I had my moment of glory that I had worked hard all year for. I was finally getting that moment and the spotlight and I walk onstage, and he announces me with the wrong name. And I’m like I worked all year for this, but even if he had

said the right name, still I worked all year for this? And, I realized it's not worth it. It's not worth it. Going home to all of the consequences of the compromises I had made. It was just so clear that what I was living with was striving.

Amy

So just to defend Crystal's title, we are talking about hustle with no holy.

Cheri

Absolutely. No, this is distinctly striving. So, the way she described and defined holy hustle, and you're right, it's important that we stick to the definition she gave, she said holy hustle is all about God and serving others. Outdoing one another in showing honor. It's not about doing more or the most or being better. It's about using our gifts and time and talents to honor God with our work and also with our rest. Looking around at the women that God has put into our lives. So how have you seen holy hustle in your life?

Amy

Crystal expressed some of us are made and wired to be doers. And that's not a bad thing! It's just how we funnel all that energy and work and time that we're using. So I loved this idea of out-honoring each other, and I just thought about, it's that concept that we've heard it applied to marriage, but we can apply it to any relationship. That every relationship that we have, it shouldn't be 50-50, because when somebody is having a bad day then it's you know 10-50. That starts to look a little ugly. So, every relationship should be 100-100, so that when somebody is having a bad day the other person can fill in the gaps. And I think that's what it looks like to out-honor someone is to bring 100% knowing that they're not going to be able to bring 100% every day either and some days you won't be able to, but we're ready to rush in and fill the gaps with grace and mercy and love.

Cheri

I love that. I love that. You're reminding me. I love how she focused on that scripture about out-honoring others rather than competing. You've heard me talk about the rather pivotal moment for me a number of years ago at a leadership conference where it was an improv jazz quartet, and we were learning jazz lessons. I remember watching the quartet. There were four of them, and one of the guys was the leader, and he explained to us that when one person soloed everybody else did what was called comping. I watched just the very subtle head nods and grins between them as they each took turns, you know, like the base would solo and everybody else would comp. And then the piano would solo and everybody else would comp. And I think it finally hit me one day, it's not about who solos. It's about making music together, and I remember watching that group. They all were having so much fun whether they were soloing or whether they were comping. It wasn't about everybody waiting until they finally got their moment in the spotlight, as if that was the only thing that mattered. What mattered was that they were all hanging together, working together, and making music, and I thought that's a picture of the kingdom. It doesn't matter who's in the spotlight or who isn't, what matters is that we're all making music together.

Amy

And what if we applied this to all of our relationships? I think it could change the world. I really think it could change the world. I was on Facebook yesterday, and my friend Mia did this post that she gave me permission to share today. So, I wanted to read it real quick. She said, "I don't speak for all black people, but sometimes as a black woman I'm skeptical about going to new businesses in a predominately white neighborhood. I always try to see if there are reviews from minorities before I go, because I don't want to have a negative experience, aka, I'm not sure if I'll be welcomed." And so then she talks about doing this visit to a restaurant in a predominately white neighborhood and her experience. She says I was dying to try out their fried green tomatoes. I'm happy to report that the entire experience was amazing, and I can't wait to go back. I'm always excited and feel silly for even worrying about this kind of thing. And then she said, "I'm sharing this because some people might not know things like this. I'm not a person who is big on race, but I think it's worth mentioning so others realize even something as simple as customer service and a friendly face can make a difference in their entire community." And I thought customer service, really, we could translate that into every day life as out-honor, you know, being more honoring to people and what she experienced was belonging and inclusion even in a restaurant. What if we brought that into our homes, into our neighborhood, into our churches, into our communities? That kind of holy hustle is something I could really get behind.

Cheri

Wow, I'm feeling really convicted, 'cause I'm thinking that there are times throughout my day when I'm like, I'm on. I'm soloing, and I don't need to provide what you're calling customer service to anybody else. And what you're challenging me and us is to see it all as customer service. Putting in that 100% to make sure that everybody feels seen and heard and make sure that they belong rather than having that sense of being excluded for any reason.

Amy

Well, just kind of my brain is whirring on your music analogy, because you think about those people that are playing in the background that aren't soloing. What if they just decided to do their own thing? Suddenly, instead of this beautiful solo we have dissonance.

Cheri

Yeah.

Amy

And so, honor and customer service and holy hustle. Whatever you want to call it. It counts all the time. That's such a great observation, Cheri.

Cheri

Yeah. And when you are listening to music, a few wrong notes, and then if they all started doing something different, you'd leave. It would be a cacophony. It'd be horrible. Alright. Alright. I see so many applications to this. We are going to need to circle back around to this, and do

some reporting in. Starting with you. Alright, one other thing that Crystal said that cracked me up. In terms of rest, she said if I sit in a room with a candle, I'm going to fall asleep. I love her honesty.

<Laughter>

Amy

I love that, too. Well, Cheri, what does rest look like for you?

Cheri

Well, I guarantee you it does not involve a nap, 'cause I am not, if you remember, I am not a slacker. I mean, seriously, I have tried to nap. I cannot make myself nap. It's just it's hard. I can't do it, Amy. What does rest look like for you?

Amy

A nap.

<Laughter>

Okay, so I'm just like one of your cats. If you follow Cheri on Facebook, you will see Rafiki and Dusty. And there was the most adorable picture of Rafiki taking a nap with his little head all tucked, and I thought I want to be him. I just want to be Rafiki!

Cheri

My cats make me so mad. I regularly walk up to them and say, "Wake up and do something!" Get to work.

Amy

Well, you're not allowed to come during my naptime, then. But I do identify with activity being rest, too, 'cause I love yard work. I love to get out in my yard and putter around and dig my fingers in the dirt. It's just something that breaks routine. I think, it's rest for me, too.

Cheri

Crystal also brought up a topic that a lot of us struggle with, but we don't tend to talk about. I'm so glad that she addressed it with such honesty. She talked about things like comparison and jealousy and envy. So, Amy Carroll inquiring minds want to know what kinds of women make you jealous?

Amy

Confident and self-assured women make me jealous and also bring up the comparison thing, and I could name some names, but I won't. And it's funny other people perceive me that way sometimes, but I don't feel that way inside, and so I compare myself, but also eloquent women, which may sound like a funny thing coming from a woman who is a speaker and a writer, but I'm the one who reads people's Facebook posts about their children on their birthday. And I'm

like, oh my gosh, where did those words come from and why don't I have any. And so, I told my boys their last birthday, I'm like I'm so sorry, I'm really sorry, but I do love you so much.

Cheri

My children will never rise up and call me blessed, because of anything I've said about them on Facebook. They have risen up and called me a fiction writer, but they've never called me blessed.

Amy

That's hilarious.

Cheri

Well, I'm not going to make any commentary about how confident and self-assured and eloquent I have always thought you are, because that would be denying your reality, but it is funny what people perceive of us versus how we feel are often different.

Amy

Yes. And so, what kinds of women make you the most jealous, Cheri?

Cheri

None, I have overcome jealousy, Amy Carroll.

<Laughter>

Amy

Let me rise up and call you blessed.

Cheri

Oh my gosh, the list is so long. But probably, number one is women who actually have white teeth. No commentary allowed, but yes, and then come women with thick, long, tumbly hair, because I'm allowed spiritual depth I just want you to know that those are the first two things that make me jealous. But really women who know how to make other people cared for, like, they remember and ask follow up questions from like months and years ago. And who give a handmade gift that was made with just the right colors, and they know if you collect caps or cows or frogs. Oh my word, they just make me want to crawl into a hole, 'cause I still don't know for sure when your birthday is. Don't remind me. Facebook will help me.

Amy

Facebook helped me this morning.

Cheri

I don't even know what color I should buy for you when I do buy the belated birthday gift, and then don't even get me started about women who can quote scripture and can just flip their Bible open to their favorite passages, yeah.

Amy

Alright. So now we've got that out of our system, but we know that we can't honor and be envious so how do we intentionally turn envy into out doing each other in honor?

Cheri

You know, this was a really important experience for me. Back in January you went to Colorado Springs for your very first interview with Focus on the Family, and I remember distinctly thinking about where you were and praying for you. And I think a little flutter of jealousy may have started to rise. It got immediately smacked down, because I was so proud of you. I was so excited for you. I just had this sense that I was where I was supposed to be. I was supposed to be at home you know holding down my fort and praying for you and you were exactly where you were supposed to be. I was like, and I felt that way, because I know you and I love you and so being jealous of you is hard. It was like, "Eww, I don't want to be jealous of Amy." And what I've been able to do since then is translate that. When I see people on social media or I hear about other authors that I don't know, and I start to feel jealous of them. I'm like how would I respond if that were news about Amy? What if I knew them? What if I knew that they were doing what God has called them to do, and I am exactly where I'm supposed to be doing what I'm supposed to do? And, it's been a real game changer for me.

Amy

Wow, that touches me so much, and I mean I received a blessing from that, because I think I mention in another episode that we did that I called you from the potty at Focus on the Family.

<Laughter>

Cheri

You did.

Amy

But I think I did that. You were the first person I called, Cheri. I mean I could have called anybody, but I called you, because I knew you would celebrate with me. And so you already had that pattern set in my heart. That's such a blessing. Well, and mine is similar. I had a friend whose book came out right after mine, and let's just say her book was doing a little better than mine or maybe lots better than mine. And, oh my gosh, every single day I was just feeling that nasty feeling of jealousy and envy. I just sat down one morning with the Lord and was like I do not want to feel this way about my friend. What can I do? And He told me, pray for her every day this month and tell her you're praying for her everyday this month. And I think she was going through hard things, too. So it was a blessing to be part of her journey, but also it diffused the jealousy. You cannot pray for somebody and continue to be jealous of them. That's a good little practical tip about how to break jealousy in our lives and out honor the other person.

Cheri

What scripture have you matched with these two episodes of us talking with Crystal and talking about holy hustle?

Amy

So, the scripture I picked out was Matthew 5:37 where Jesus says, "But let your word yes be yes and your no be no, anything more than this is from the evil one." That's really strong language, right? That's the Holman and the holy hustle thing, you know, we can get so caught up in just hustle minus the holy and so we say yes to everything. That's how we get ourselves in that pit. You know how you got yourself into the pit with sales, and how I got myself into the pit with teaching is that we just said yes to everything. And so, I love that Jesus said let your word yes be yes and your no be no. Basically, He's saying you should say no to some things, girls.

Cheri

It sounds like saying yes, but meaning, no, I'll cancel later isn't scriptural.

Amy

Wow.

Cheri

Okay, so what's the bad rule and what's the truth, the fact we can focus on

Amy

The bad rule is: I have to say yes to everything. And then the truth, I stole one of your little phrases or borrowed it: my goal is a pray-cessed yes. And I love that term that you've coined: pray-cess. That our yeses can be yes and not be just hustle, and our yeses can be holy hustle. When we're honoring other people, we're honoring our own schedule and our own calling, all of that. That's what brings the holy in is the pray-cessed part.

Cheri

Absolutely. So, what do you see is the grit in all of this?

Amy

Well it's so funny, because I've gotten so good at saying no that I realized that recently that I have defaulted to no, like, I am just so happy to tell you no. And I am going to say no to just about everything, but the pray-cessed part is I was thinking through that is what I really need to commit to. 'Cause there are times when God wants me to say yes not to add to my hustle, but to add to the holy.

Cheri

Absolutely

Amy

Do you have grace in all of this?

Cheri

I think that grace is remembering when somebody tells me no, it's not about me, and that God must have somebody else in mind. And recognizing one way to out-honor others could be to be very gracious when they say no rather than resentful, because back to that whole idea of expectations and striving. I can tend to be really frustrated when somebody says no, because they ruined my plan. And the plan included them. In my mind, they already said yes. What's wrong with them?

Amy

Exactly.

Cheri

So, the grace here is being open to how the Holy Spirit is leading and trusting that the Holy Spirit may have been leading me, but the Holy Spirit is leading the other person, as well. And trusting that God is going to bring other people or other inspiration to make His plan so that His plan for our holy hustle is what will come to fruition.

Cheri

Head on over to gritngracegirls.com/episode118.

Amy

There you'll find this week's transcript, our digging deeper download, the Bible verse art, and a chance for a giveaway for the book *Holy Hustle*.

Cheri

If you don't already belong to our Facebook group, we would love to have you come join us. Just search for Grit 'N Grace Girls on Facebook. We will be continuing the discussion of holy hustle in the Facebook group.

Amy

Be sure to join us next week when we'll be interviewing Jennifer Dukes Lee, author of *It's All Under Control*.

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 & Cheri

Break it!

Outtakes

Cheri

Amy just hasn't gone back to kindergarten; you've gone back to being a two year old.

Amy

Yes! That's exactly right. No! No! That's the way I see it.