

Grit 'n' Grace—THE PODCAST

Episode 239: Real Talk about Pregnancy Loss

Amy Carroll

Today's topic is one that we don't talk about often because it's painful.

Cheri Gregory

Yeah, we're talking with Rachel Lewis today about infant and pregnancy loss, which, to be honest, I've not personally experienced. How about you, Amy?

Amy Carroll

No, I haven't either. But you know, I know so many women who have experienced miscarriage and loss. And you know, I think about our listeners, you know, I'm sure you have a daughter – if you have experienced it yourself, we just want to say that we're so sorry, and we know that what Rachel has to say today is really going to be helpful to you. But also, you may have a daughter or a niece or a granddaughter or a friend that's experiencing this, and I just in the past have felt so inadequate to really compassionately deal with other people's grief. So this conversation is fantastic.

Cheri Gregory

Absolutely. You know, when I was younger, and hanging out with young moms who were having children. I remember one particular woman who experienced a miscarriage, and I did my best to respond to her in what I was hoping was a compassionate way. I meant well, Amy, I really meant well, but I found out afterwards that actually I didn't help at all. And I actually kind of made things worse in trying to say something. I felt so awkward, and I thought 'Well, something's better than nothing.' And then I found out that wasn't true. So it is so

good to have someone here with practical experience and information to share with us.

Amy Carroll

Yes, and Rachel having experienced it herself is the exact right person to talk to us about this.

Cheri Gregory

Well, this is Cheri Gregory,

Amy Carroll

and I'm Amy Carroll,

Cheri Gregory

and you're listening to Grit 'n' Grace—THE PODCAST that equips you to lose who you're not, love who you are, and live your one life well.

Amy Carroll

Today we're talking with Rachel Lewis, author of *Unexpected: Real Talk on Pregnancy Loss*. Rachel Lewis is the founder of Brave Mamas, an online community offering support to thousands of bereaved moms. Rachel is a well-known contributor to Still Standing magazine and Pregnancy After Loss support. She's the creator of *Unexpected*, a four-week grief workshop for pregnancy loss for couples, Rachel has experienced the loss of five pregnancies as well as the unique grief of reunifying a foster son with his birth family.

Cheri Gregory

What to expect when you're no longer expecting. When your baby dies, you find yourself in a life you never expected. And even though pregnancy and infant loss

are common, they're not common to you. Instead, you feel like a stranger in your own body surrounded by well-meaning people who often don't know how to support you.

Amy Carroll

What you need during this time is not a book offering easy answers. You need a safe place to help you navigate what comes next, such as coping with a postpartum body without a baby in your arms, facing social isolation and grief invalidation.

Cheri Gregory

Wrestling with faith when you feel let down by God, dealing with the overwhelming process of making everyday decisions, learning to move forward after loss, creating a legacy for your child –

Amy Carroll

– and unexpected bereaved mom Rachel Lewis is the friend you never knew you'd need walking you through the unique grief of baby loss when nothing about life after loss. makes sense.

Well, Rachel, we are so excited to be here on the launch day for your book, baby. Congratulations.

Rachel Lewis

Thank you so much for having me.

Amy Carroll

You know, there's so much celebration with you and for you on this day. But your book is about a really hard topic. Your book is titled *Unexpected: Real Talk on*

Pregnancy Loss. So tell us how this book came about and came into the world?
Who are you writing this for?

Rachel Lewis

I think initially I thought I was writing it for me. It wasn't. But I went through five pregnancy losses. And so the book is about basically what to expect when you're no longer expecting. I first conceived of the idea when I was walking through my second pregnancy loss. I had gotten a call from the nursing that my HCG numbers had dropped and that this pregnancy would no longer be viable. And so I knew that I was going to miscarry. But my first thought was an ectopic pregnancy. And so this was a very different sort of experience. And I hadn't quite gone through a loss where I was anticipating the loss, if that makes sense. And so I just didn't know what to do.

So my husband and I, we decided to go to the mall so we could walk around. I'd heard walking around could start labor, so I figured maybe it would start a miscarriage. And while we were walking, we stopped at Barnes and Noble and decided to just look at books and then maybe we get a cup of coffee. And of course my mind was solely focused on pregnancy loss. And so I wanted to find a book that would speak to where I was and actually helped me understand what to expect, especially physically, because I got a call from the nurse, but really the only instruction that I got that day was 'Let us know if you bleed through more than one pad in an hour,' so I just had this big unknown in front of me.

And so we walked through Barnes and Noble. I searched the pregnancy section, which was incredibly painful. But that just shows you how desperate I was to find something that related to my experience. And then I also searched of grief section. And I only found two books that day that could sort of even slightly address my loss. And one of them was titled something infuriating, sort of

– basically like how not to miscarry, which was just salt in the wound, and the other, which actually, I love this book now, but like, it's called *Taking Charge of your Fertility*. And that's fantastic resource if you are looking to try to conceive, but if you have already experienced a loss, it's hard because I was like, I tried to take charge. And that did not work. So I just remember sitting there, you know, with my cookie and my coffee, and I just thought 'I'm going to write that book.' One day, there's going to be somebody who's going to walk into Barnes and Noble, they're going to be in the middle of a miscarriage. And they're going to need to know what to expect from their body, heart, mind and soul. And so I want to write that book.

And that was nine years ago. And here we are today. It hits bookshelves today. So it's been kind of a long journey.

Amy Carroll

Wow, it sounds so needed. And you've already given us a hint that I think it's so important that it's your body, heart, mind and soul, not just your body, which I think miscarriages are often dismissed. And so I'm so excited that you're handling this hard but needed topic.

Cheri Gregory

Yeah, yeah. So speaking of the potential to be dismissive, we often think the measure of a parent's grief is directly related to how far along they were in the pregnancy. And I'll admit, I've either thought or said 'Oh, at least you weren't too far along.' I don't even know what I was thinking; it just came out my mouth, but you say there's more to the equation than we often consider.

So what plays into how a person experiences the grief of pregnancy loss?

Rachel Lewis

Well, what's interesting is that there's been a lot of quite a few people who have tried to do a scientific study to sort of prove that a later like later gestation loss is more devastating and in spite of like all of these attempts at studies, it's not been able to find a direct correlation, which is really interesting. And I think for anybody who does have an early loss who is constantly having to validate, even internally, their own grief, I think it's really helpful to hear science say that may play a small role, but that is certainly not the defining role here.

So how your grief might be related to your gestation and so other things that can come into play would be if there's any kind of infertility involved, whether that is before or that comes after, and that's considered a second major loss if there's any kind of trauma involved which to be honest for many people the loss of a pregnancy is traumatic because it can feel like it's beyond their own ability to cope for many people you know, they want their body to protect their child and here they are in a position where their entire body is not allowing them to, and so that can be a very very difficult experience where you feel like you're you're unsafe or your baby's unsafe. And so that can be a very traumatic loss.

Things that can come into play are How did you feel about your pregnancy? Were you excited about this pregnancy? What was your relationship like to this pregnancy? What were your hopes and dreams for this baby and for this pregnancy? What's your own personal history with pregnancy? Do you have a history of birth complications? There's everyday – as I'm talking about this, there's so many layers of complexity when it comes to this loss. And yet as a society, what we often long to do is just to put each other in these boxes and say, well, this was you know, this was an IVF failure. So that's in a different box here than this 40 weeks stillbirth, and that 40 weeks stillbirth is in a different box, and

this 41 week birth that resulted in death at birth, and that's different than this three months baby that died.

So we like to have these neat, tidy compartments for grief when really that's absolutely not how grief, especially pregnancy loss grief, works.

Amy Carroll

Well. Speaking of grief, I mean, one of the hardest parts of living and the new normal after losing a baby is experiencing grief triggers, or these intense, unexpected bursts of emotion.

So what are some ways a bereaved parent can handle an unexpected grief trigger in the moment and how can they prepare to handle them in the future?

Rachel Lewis

That is an excellent question. I think grief triggers can be one of the more challenging aspects of living in your new normal. I often said it felt like I was walking through an emotional minefield, I just had absolutely no idea when I would just have this very unwanted and unexpected burst of emotion that would just completely derail me for a very long time. And so I found that for me, over time, I started to recognize – sometimes I can start to predict what might cause that trigger. And so not all of the time can you predict, but when you can, what I found to be very helpful would be to come up with a plan, it's kind of like that – you know, when we were all in elementary school, they just say 'Stop, drop and roll.' You have a plan, you know what to do.

So like, if for some reason you were to ever catch on fire, which is actually funny, because I think I walked around most of my childhood thinking this was a common scenario. At any moment, I can't just be on fire, but just having that plan

to say 'I know what I'm going to do in that moment.' And so knowing to like, leave the fire is if you can to get get out of the situation, if you're able to. If you're not able to get out of the situation, and if you're not able to avoid the situation altogether, how can you help tamper down the flames? How can you sort of ground your body, get your body on the ground, get your body present? So employ some of those grounding techniques. Take a look around you and see, what are what are five things that I can see, what are four things that I can touch or that I can feel, what are three things that I'm feeling, what are two smells that I'm smelling, that kind of thing, where you're just trying to get your body grounded and present and remind your body that you're safe. That is a really, really big component of it.

Having a safe word with your spouse, so – or your whoever you're with, to say like, this is a really heavy grief moment for me or you don't have to be able to communicate and a lot of words, but just just have that safe word, where you can say that that word to your significant other and they can know okay, we need to exit this situation, or this is no longer like a good situation to be in, like, let me see how I can help you or let me see how I can help address your needs.

So those are just some kind of some things if you're in the moment, and then again, planning ahead would be having that referred with your significant other, if you know that you are going to be triggered by seeing somebody else's belly, maybe change the times you go to the grocery store, and maybe grocery shop when it's not primetime for every mom out there who's trying to get dinner on for the kids. Maybe you don't go to church in person for a while; maybe you listen to you listen to the radio, or now that we're all live streaming, maybe you do something like that. Maybe you have a plan for when somebody asks you 'How many kids do you have?' So I would have a plan.

I started saying that at the time, I just had one living daughter. And I just started saying I have one daughter at home. And most people would not catch the at home. But for me that was important because I could still acknowledge that there were babies in heaven, and that they, I still counted them in my lineup of children. But I also knew that I wasn't ready to be completely transparent with this person in front of me. I didn't want to have to address this. So I just sort of had these canned responses for depending on how I felt at the moment. And then to recognize that you don't owe anybody anything. So if you are triggered by grief, and you're triggered by this trauma, like it is a biological response.

And so you're not being too sensitive, and you're definitely not being insensitive to the people around you, you are dealing with a body in which it is like you've started a cascade of events, hormonally and chemically. And that's something that you you have to and get to take time out and take time to address without layering that with judgment and shame as to why you just couldn't perform you know, and that situation or why, you know, why would that be triggering to me like sometimes we sort of try to shame ourselves into like saying, well that doesn't make sense even in hindsight, I don't understand why I was feeling like that.

So yeah, it's not something that we necessarily have control of. But when we make a plan for those as we can, we insert a little bit of control back into the situation and even that in and of itself, having that control can help tamper down that trauma response of it.

Cheri Gregory

I love these practical ways to gain agency in a situation that that not only feels out of control, but I would imagine feels like, almost like your body has betrayed you, and you're now stuck with a body you don't know if you can trust.

So speaking of judgment and shame, you say that roughly 50% of the words that are said “in support of bereaved couples will actually hurt them.” That's a really hard statistic to digest here. So would you just share a few examples of words that can hurt and offer us some better options for friends and family members who are listening today?

Rachel Lewis

Yes, I will definitely do that. And in my book, I have an entire chapter that's called Hurtful Words that goes through a lot of these common platitudes. And I think the key with platitudes is that we – I'm going to put myself in the standpoint of a supporter. When I give someone a platitude, it's because I don't know what to say. I maybe am terrified of saying the wrong thing. So I default to something I'd heard said to me. I just am so afraid of silence, that I would rather fill the silence with anything than to just sit with the silence.

And then I might feel pressure to make the situation better, you know, because I hate seeing my loved one hurt. That can be one of the most painful things. We talked about trauma response is that lack of control and seeing somebody hurt; as supporters, we can we feel, we can look at somebody who's had a loss like this, and we might feel like this is a threatening situation, this is a scary situation, I need to fix this situation. And so these platitudes sort of jump out of our mouth. And I think the key to them is the fact that while we intend for them to support and comfort our loved ones, what it often does is it hurts our loved one but comforts us. It makes us feel better.

And that is a really hard thing, I think, when we are supporting to recognize that our motivation, what we think is to comfort that person, it really in many ways is to comfort ourselves. I think the idea is, if we can't fix the problem, baby loss is

an unfixable situation, we can't make anybody just go back and put their baby back in their belly or make the baby alive. It's just not fixable. So then we try to fix the person. We try to fix their grief. Right? Because we can't.

Cheri Gregory

Yes. Oh, gosh, Amy and I are both fixers. So we're over here squirming.

Amy Carroll

Yeah, 'cause I'm thinking how many times have I done this? Oh, keep going Rachel, we need to learn.

Rachel Lewis

I mean, it can be a really well-motivated thing. I mean, I really do say 99% of the things that are said are said well-intended, of course. But when we tell somebody, when we try to give them a platitude, let's say the platitude is – let's use the one 'At least you weren't so far along,' just because that's the one that you mentioned Cheri. Not to throw you under the bus at all, this is a really, really, really, really common thing to say. So then if we were walk that in, if we were to work that backwards, if this loss is not as important, if we can diminish the loss, because we can label it and say that it's early, then we can say, then you don't have to hurt so bad. And if you don't have to hurt so bad, then I don't have to hurt so bad, right? I can sit with you and your pain. And if your pain is less than my pain is less. My discomfort is less sitting with you in that.

I have a list of things in here. But anything that starts with 'At least' is hard. Don't say it. If you were to say something like this was just God's will, Jesus tells us to pray that His will happens on Earth, which implies by default, that not everything that happens on earth is God's will. But you wouldn't tell us to pray for that. If it meant that just because something happened, it was God's will. And you know,

really what we're saying when we say that it was God's will, it was that God's somehow decided to implant a baby in your body and create a baby. And you know, for those of us who have been grown up pro-life, like we, you know, we've been taught how absolutely sacred this life is. So then that person might turn around and say, well, at the loss of that life, well, that was also God's will. So God created a baby in me, and then changed His mind.

And all of a sudden, now God is like, why put me through? If it was God's will for this baby to die, why just not create the baby at all? Like, if you just kind of logically play out what you're saying, when you say those things, you can start to hear why that sounds so dismissive to the person on the other end of things. If you were to say 'Just be grateful for the children you have,' okay, if you were to lose a child, would you just be grateful for their child? Or if you lost a parent, how about we say that if you lost a parent and your parent passed away, would it be okay if someone said 'Just be so thankful that you have your dad,' you know, 'Yes, your mom just died, but just be so thankful that you had your dad.' Your dad and your mom, they're not replaceable, right? They're two different entities, two different relationships. So things are replaceable. People are not replaceable.

I did author a chapter – so I'm kind of going through thing by thing here, but I do have a chapter called How to Help a Loved One Through Baby Loss and that's a freebie on my website, unexpectingbook.com. And what I'm doing in the chapter, I kind of delineate all of these things and why they hurt, and what you can sort of see instead. And if you're a griever, how you can respond when somebody says this to you, that sort of affirms the relationship, but at the same time is direct and says, 'This is why this is painful to me.' But in the in the chapter that I offer, I recognize that for someone who is in the support role, they can be also easily overwhelmed. Because they may be emotionally engaged in this loss, while at

the same time, they are terrified of saying the wrong thing on this hand; they so desperately want to say the right thing on this hand.

And if I were to give this person just a super long list of things to not do and things to do, and they kind of find themselves tug between like the two of those, terrified of making a wrong move on either end, like just that alone is going to be overwhelming. And I don't really feel like that is going to be the best way that a supporter is going to feel enabled and empowered to help someone else. So what I do in the chapter is I use this definition from Bessel van der Kolk. Have you guys heard *The Body Keeps The Score*?

Cheri Gregory(?)

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Rachel Lewis

Okay. I know, it's such a good one. So you know, he talks about true social support being this this issue of reciprocity. And it's this issue of being heard, being seen, being held, and having a visceral feeling of safety. And Bessel van der Kolk says this is important because as you know, as far as looking at disaster responses around the world, social support is the number one thing that can make a trauma, either they have give them the potential to heal, or, if a social support is lacking, or as bad, it can further traumatize and set somebody back in their healing significantly. So social support and getting it right is absolutely important.

So you know, talk through, am I seeing them? Am I hearing them? Am I holding them? Am I pre-creating that visceral feeling of safety? Am I creating an environment in which healing is possible. So your job is not to heal, your job is to create the environment in which healing can take place.

Amy Carroll

Really, really helpful. And I'm thinking about our listeners, Rachel, because we do have some younger listeners, and some of our younger listeners may be walking through a pregnancy loss or have walked through a pregnancy loss. But then a lot of us are of a certain age; like Cheri and I, we have daughters who may be walking through this, nieces, women at our church that may be walking through this. So this is really helpful.

Here's a question that I think sometimes we don't even think about. But do men grieve the loss of a baby as deeply as women do? And if so, how do they grieve differently than their partner?

Rachel Lewis

So men actually do grieve the loss of a pregnancy. And that is often overlooked, because I think, as we're talking about supporters, a typical thing that somebody who is very well meaning and wanting to support the family, desperately, they may go up to the partner and say, 'How is Amy doing?' We completely don't address the fact that that person is also grieving, and instead, just a bypass, and just ask them to start coordinating the grief care for their partner. So that as far as like society goes, pregnancy loss, it's somewhat considered a bit of an ambiguous loss, but it's also considered a disenfranchised loss.

However, for women, we have a little bit more validity that's been given to our grief, because our bodies are so affected. For men, it's almost entirely disenfranchised. And that is really, really complicated for men that they also have to combat this Western society's ideal of what masculinity is. For instance, one – and I go through in the book about what are some of these traits of masculinity that get directly challenged by pregnancy loss. One of them is 'Men should have

a response right away to a trauma or to a loss,' like they need to be the problem solvers. And they need to be immediate with their ability to problem solve in the moment.

And actually, what studies have found is that men's typical – I'm not trying to like put too much in a box, but generally men's response is this feeling of being incapacitated and frozen. And that is the most common response that men feel in the face of an overwhelming loss like this, but we don't talk about that, right? So men have this idea of what they should be like, I shouldn't be feeling this. I'm a man. I should be feeling, you know, all of these Western ideas of masculinity. And then we add that in that it's a disenfranchised grief. So they have fewer opportunities to talk to each other or to get support. And then we're gonna throw on top of all of that the fact that there's these two distinct grief styles that some study authors came up with, I don't say they came up with it, they uncovered it, they discovered it, and they put words to it to help explain the experience. So one of them is called an instrumental grief. And the other is an intuitive grief.

Cheri, have I not talked to you about this yet?

Cheri Gregory

My eyes just got really big, didn't they?

Rachel Lewis

You and I love these things. So instrumental grief asks 'What do I think about the situation?' And intuitive grief asks 'How do I feel about the situation?' Intuitive grief sort of wants to label emotions, and it wants to reach out for connection and draw other people into that experience, and to say 'I'm looking for this connection here, and we're going to talk about our feelings.' And then intuitive grief says 'I need to do something. I need to like viscerally transform my tears into sweat.'

And so one's on one side, the other's on the other, it's a continuum, all of us in our own grief style, we're going to fall somewhere on the line, very few of us are going to be all one way or all the other.

Men tend – so again, generalization, not applicable to everyone – tend to go more toward this instrumental grief of 'I need to have this measure of control, I need to viscerally do something with my body, I need to have time to think about what I think about this loss,' and a lot less need to discuss feelings and connecting with other people necessarily through this loss. But what do you think about traditional grief support, we really only address the intuitive, right? We tell each other like, in order to process this healthfully, you need to gather in a circle with other people, and you need to talk about your feelings. So we say healthy grief support is and so we're completely invalidating this whole other style of grief, which is as valid, like they've discovered it as healing, it works the same purpose, as is intuitive, they are on the same playing field.

But our society is just not even prepared to embrace this style of grieving. So not only are we diminishing the loss, but we're also diminishing this entire style of grieving. And we're not supporting that through it. So those are just a couple of sort of aha's that I had as I was reading through the book, and then it just as I sort of learned about all of this, I could see how this played out in my own marriage and my own partnership throughout our losses. And I was like, dang it, I wish I knew.

Cheri Gregory

For sure. This is really helpful for me, because we've just had a loss in our family. And I'm just thinking to myself, I mean, the last thing on earth my husband wants to do is sit in a circle at all, you know, facing other people, let alone talk about feelings. So this contrast between what's expected and what's actual, I want to

just pivot just a little bit here to the topic of our relationship with God when we're in loss. And you say that your faith in God took a pretty direct hit after you experienced the loss of your ectopic baby Olivia.

Could you share with us what you learned about asking questions and wrestling with your faith following the loss of your babies?

Rachel Lewis

Yes, well, I think as soon as – I mean, just very broadly speaking, if you're in the church realm, or you're in the Christian space, if that's kind of where you're at, there are all of these messages that have been ingrained about the role of loss in our life. And we often look at loss as a sort of test for many, many years. I have degrees in Bible and theology. Even with that, for many years, I came to the book of Job, and I sort of saw the book of Job as sort of this example of the perfect sufferer, right? Like we read through chapter one. And we read that Job did not sin with his lips, and it was that like, oh, I don't want to sin with my lips when I'm in the middle of a loss, or that feeling of pressure I'm already starting to put on myself, right? And we love his response so much. He says, you know, the Lord has given, the Lord has taken away, blessed to be the name of Lord. We love that so much like we're like cross stitching it into pillows, like writing songs about it, putting names on it, and we sort of fail to account for the fact that the book of Job is not over yet. Like we're in chapters one and chapters two. There are 42 chapters to the book of Job.

And if you're thinking okay, if we're coming to the idea of Bible by saying this is God's written word for all of humanity throughout all time, and it is complete, if we know the reason in chapter two, why Job suffered? And if he had the perfect response in chapter two, and if there was nothing else to glean from Job, why in the world are there 42 chapters? That is a lot of real estate, if there's so few

answers, and even in theology, like I was always just sort of taught like, well, there's a lot of questioning and a lot of going back and forth, and a lot of conversation between Job and his friends.

But really, almost none of it is anything that we can particularly use, because there's all of these truths and untruths and half truths, and it was just so confusing to me. It's like, why would God even include that? And I realized, you know, when all is said and done, by the end of the book of Job, Job had actually accused god of wrongdoing, right? He let loose his limit. And at the very end of it, if you're – all of this questioning of Job and his friends, more than 38 chapters of this, at the very end of it, Job gets this response from God, where yes, it's not delicate, and it's nice, yes, it seems to be very direct. But at the end of that, God says, okay, let me show you who I am. And Job leaves that experience with a greater knowledge of who He is. Job actually says, okay, I had heard of you before. But now I see You, now I know You. And that is enough for Job to say 'I don't have any more questions.'

That – he never got the answer. But he just saw more of God, whereas the friends who were so full of answers, they didn't have time for the questions, God had his harshest words. And they did not get to see more of God. They were not included in this sort of Revelation. They didn't leave this experience saying 'I now feel closer to God. And now I understand God.'

So for the longest time, I thought loss meant having the right words. I thought it meant having the right response and not sinning with my lips. And I thought it meant that I gave glory to God, and that He would be more more glorified, I guess, in the sense if I just said everything I thought He wanted to hear, even if it wasn't how I felt. And what I realized is that, instead, God was literally holding space for my wrestling. Like if we need to have a picture of how God holds space

for us, like look at those 38 chapters in Job, see how much real estate He left for just the wrestling, where there were no real answers.

And I realized that God already knew how I was feeling inside. So if I were just to spout the words that I didn't mean, that would mean that I was trying to sort of placate God, right? If I had a relationship, let's say you and I had a relationship, and there was sort of a spat between us, it would be a greater testament to the strength of our relationship if I went to you, and I was like, Amy, I need to sit with this for a bit. You really hurt my feelings. This is what you said, this is how it felt to me, and I need to process this. But I'm just going to trust that you and I are okay enough that we're going to make it through on the other side of this, than it would be for me to say, hey, Amy, everything's good, we're fine, right? Because the relationship that doesn't have strength is going to be the one where you feel like you have to say, I'm fine, I'm fine.

The relationship that is actually strong, is the one in which you can be honest, and the one in which you can say 'I'm going to be direct with you and tell you exactly how I feel and how I think, and I'm going to just trust that we're going to make it to the other side of this.'

Amy Carroll

That is that is such a great picture, because healing comes in the wrestling. And it doesn't come without the wrestling, because if you and I were in a spat, and you took that stance, we would never heal, it would always be there. So beautiful.

So Rachel, there's so much here, but what closing words do you have for our friends who are listening about grieving in general, and specifically about grieving the loss of a child?

Rachel Lewis

For those of you who are grieving a loss, I would want you to know that you are not alone. Your feelings, whatever they are, they are valid, they are real. You get to carry your grief however, and however long you need to. That there's no test here, your loss is tragic. It's not a test, and you have nothing to prove to anyone or to anybody. The loss of a child in pregnancy is a very real loss. It is a death, and it is nothing less than a death.

So just know that you're not alone, know that you are being held, you're being seen, you are heard and that those of us in the grief community we are doing the best that we can to give you that visceral feeling of safety and support. And for those of you who have not experienced this kind of loss, I would say become grief literate. Become pregnancy loss grief literate, because if you haven't had someone close to you yet experience a loss, hold on, it will be coming. They expect about one in four medically confirmed pregnancies to end in loss. And so like you were saying, maybe you didn't experience it personally, but maybe you're at the point in which your nieces or nephews or your children, these people may start having having to experience this kind of loss.

And so become grief literate, you could start with the chapter that I have, How to Help a Loved One Through Baby Loss. And then obviously, I stand by my book. And so I always say read my book and find out what this experience is so you can become better prepared to be a true support. And so that you can be the kind of person that creates an environment in which healing is possible.

Cheri Gregory

Become grief literate. Wow, that is such great, practical advice.

Amy Carroll

Very, very practical. And you know, I think our friends will appreciate it if we tune in to really what Rachel said. And for those of you experiencing your own loss, we pray right now that Rachel's words have brought you comfort, and made you feel not so alone.

Cheri Gregory

Well, friends, we sure hope you've enjoyed listening to episode number 239 of Grit 'n' Grace—THE PODCAST as much as we've enjoyed making it for you.

Amy Carroll

And we want to say a big thank you to Rachel Lewis, author of *Unexpected: Real Talk on Pregnancy Loss* and her publisher, Bethany House.

Cheri Gregory

Check out our web page at gritngracethepodcast.com/episode239.

Amy Carroll

There you'll find this week's transcript, a link to order *Unexpected: Real Talk on Pregnancy Loss*, and a link to Rachel's website, which has some great resources related to her book.

Cheri Gregory

If you've enjoyed this episode of Grit'NGrace, would you consider leaving us a review? You'll find a super simple video showing you how at gritngracethepodcast.com/review.

Amy Carroll

Next week we've invited Rachel Lewis back for our follow up convo about her book *Unexpected: Real Talk on Pregnancy Loss*.

Cheri Gregory

For today, grow Your grit,

Amy Carroll

embrace God's grace,

Cheri Gregory

and as God reveals the next step to live your one life well –

Amy Carroll

we'll be cheering you on! So –

Both

take it!