

Grit 'n' Grace — THE PODCAST Episode #277

### 3 New Habits to Help You Thrive as a Highly Sensitive Person

Welcome to Grit 'n' Grace — the podcast for Highly Sensitive Christian women.

I'm your host, Cheri Gregory.

Are you tired of the *overthinking*, *overwhelm*, and *exhaustion* that come with being a Highly Sensitive Person?

Are you ready to stop worrying that something's wrong with you and start understanding and nurturing yourself as an HSP?

Together, we'll build resilience, practice self-compassion, set healthy boundaries, unlock your creativity and learn to embrace — not fight! — your God-given sensitivity.

Let's dig in!

Now one of the *worst* labels anyone can give a Highly Sensitive Christian woman is to call her “high maintenance”. If you're at all like me, you've bent over backwards — and even probably tied yourself into a pretzel — trying to **prove** people wrong ... trying to show them how *low* maintenance (or better yet, *no* maintenance) you can be.

Or at least **pretend** to be.

But here's the thing: all of our **proving** and **pretending** ... that's just a recipe for *barely surviving*.

So today, we're going to take a look at some new habits for truly thriving as HSPs.

Now I just got home from the West Coast Christian writers conference, and I'll be sharing with you some new things I learned about *traveling* as an HSP and *attending big events* as an HSP very soon.

Today, I want to dive into our topic — **3 New Habits to Help You Thrive as a Highly Sensitive Person** — with a little bit of a story.

About a month or so ago, I went to the swimming pool to swim laps. Now my old swim goggles had completely fallen apart, so I took two pair of goggles that my husband and son had been singing the praises of.

Now because my husband and son loved these goggles so much, I decided to give

them a try. And can I just say: it was the worst hour-and-a-half I think I have ever spent in a swimming pool!

No matter how many times I adjusted them, they leaked. My eyes were burning from the chlorine. I could not get into a good rhythm of swimming my laps because I had to keep stopping to adjust and readjust and switch goggles and switch back to the others.

I was in that pool for twice as long as usual, but with literally none of the fun.

Here's the thing: a brand new pair of goggles that I had ordered for myself were sitting in my bag on the bench just outside of the pool.

But did I get out of the pool to go grab them and use them? Oh, no, I was determined to force my face to fit my menfolks' goggles, no matter how miserable it made me.

The next day, I went back to the pool, and I used my brand new goggles, and guess what? They fit perfectly. No leaking, no pain. I flowed into a lovely swimming rhythm right away, and I had a great swim. Instead of trying to force myself to fit, I found what actually fit me.

Okay, so let's unpack that little story a bit.

Most of us didn't know that we were HSPs growing up, so we fell into the habit of conforming to what was "normal" for everyone else around us. Now that we know we're Highly Sensitive Persons, Habit #1 is: **Don't force fit yourself.**

In fact, **STOP force fitting yourself.**

Like, how wild was it that I tried to force fit my own face into the wrong masks? Like it's *impossible* for me to change the shape and size of my head, and yet, there I was treading water in the deep end, trying, for all I was worth, to force fit my face into a mask that it did not fit in.

So **Habit #1: Don't force fit yourself.**

**Habit #2** is to **Find what fits you.**

When we try to force ourselves to fit, we're assuming, "Something is wrong with me."

So instead, we can start asking, "What do I actually need?"

And yes, that word *need* still makes me want to hyperventilate into a paper bag. But here's the thing: we're grown-ups, and grown-ups are not just *allowed* to — but we are *supposed* to — recognize and take care of our own needs. Or at least take initiative to make sure that they get met.

So that day in the pool, if I had paused to ask, “What do I actually need?” it would have been so easy to find what fits me, because my new swim goggles were just 30 seconds away.

When you stop assuming, “Something is wrong with me” and start asking, “What do I actually need?” you’ll begin to **Find what fits you**.

Now I’m going to take a little longer with Habit #3, because it is so important.

Many of us have experienced a cookie-cutter approach in church settings. But when you read the gospels, how do you see Jesus treating people? He treats each person as an individual, and his approach to each one is custom fit to their specific needs.

I want to share a blog post I wrote many, many years ago; it always serves as a vital reminder to my HSP heart. It’s called “How I know God Gets Me.”

I’m used to people who don’t quite get me.

I spent my first 21 years with a mother who regularly said, I will never understand why on earth you would want to \_\_\_\_\_”

- spend so much time at the stables
- make a spectacle of yourself on stage
- leave the house when your room is such a mess.

And I’ve spent my life having friends tell me, “Oh ...

- just stop overthinking so much
- just let it go and move on
- just look on the bright side.

And I get it.

In our best moments, we realize that God made each of us different. But in the everyday ordinaries of life, we’re quick to forget.

Even when my friends and family members don’t quite get me, I know that if push comes to shove, they’ve got my back.

So yeah, I’m used to being different ... but oh how I *hate* feeling “high maintenance”.

The spoken words seem so innocuous:

- Other people have it far worse than you, you know.
- Well, once you accept this is just how life is ...
- You know, you're thinking about it all wrong.

But here's the thing, the underlying messages are isolating.

- Everyone's got problems; you're no different
- Even a five-year-old could handle this
- What's wrong with you?

These are the opposite of the two magic words of connection:

*Me too.*

And they all boil down to two minimizing words of rejection:

*You're alone.*

I hate feeling “high maintenance”.

I long for someone to **get** me ... rather than **dismiss** me.

A number of years ago, I was invited to read scripture for church. So I read and re-read Luke 13:10-17.

*Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.*

*And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight.*

*When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, “Woman, you are set free from your ailment.”*

*When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God.*

*But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, “There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day.”*

*But the Lord answered him and said, “You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water?”*

*And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?"*  
*(Luke 13:10-16 RSV)*

I just love how Jesus juxtaposes the Pharisees willingness to untie their beasts of burden each and every day, including Sabbath, with the Pharisees **unwillingness** for a daughter of Abraham to be untied from her burden — the burden she's carried every single day for 6570+ days.

*Without* a single Sabbath day of rest.

And my word nerd heart geeks out over the way that Jesus transforms something as simple as *rope* into this complex metaphor for *untying* and *bondage* and *burdens*.

I ponder:

*He's got her back, all right!*

And I personalize it:

*He's got me, too.*

And then I see something I've never noticed before.

One word leaps off the page of Scripture and straight into my heart.

One word makes me gulp for breath.

One word moves me to tears.

It's the word **long** — as in “eighteen long years”.

I know it's just one little word. For itty-bitty letters.

But here's what gets me:

**Jesus didn't have to say it.**

He could have just said “eighteen years”.

He could have used that all too familiar “You-are-SO-high-maintenance” tone that says (without actually saying)

- What's wrong with you.
- Even a five-year-old could handle this.
- Everyone's got problems; you're no different.

But he didn't.

Instead, he said, "Eighteen *long* years."

This one word tells me that God gets

- how hard we've been trying
- how overwhelming this burden has become
- how worn down, how worn out I am feeling

He knows how I long for someone to **get** me, not dismiss me.

Jesus' inclusion of this one little word assures me it's not just that He's **got** me.

He **gets** me, too.

So **Habit #3** is to **remember that Jesus never takes a cookie cutter approach**. His connection to you is custom-fit to your specific needs.

The three new habits to help you truly thrive as a Highly Sensitive Person:

**Habit #1: Don't force fit yourself.** In fact, stop force fitting yourself.

**Habit #2: Find what fits you.** Stop assuming, "Something is wrong with me" and start asking, "What do I actually need?"

**Habit #3: Remember that Jesus never takes a cookie-cutter approach.** His connection to you is custom-fit to your specific needs.

Now, if you're a Highly Sensitive Christian woman who is pouring way too much energy and effort into proving (or at least pretending) that you're not "high maintenance", I'd like to invite you to check out [The Sensitive & Strong Community Cafe](#).

It's a safe place to be reminded regularly of the tender, custom-tailored way Jesus connects to you as a unique individual. It's a safe place to practice **not** forcing yourself to fit. And it's a safe place to learn how to find what fits you by learning to listen to the valid needs of the HSP brain and body that God has entrusted to you.

And I can promise no one will ever call you “high maintenance” in [The Sensitive & Strong Community Café](#). As Sensitive and Strong Sisters in Christ, we all **get** each other and we've **got** each other's backs!

Well, thank you for listening to Grit 'n' Grace — the podcast for Highly Sensitive Christian women.

I hope this episode leaves you feeling encouraged and equipped to thrive.

Be sure to follow in your favorite podcast app and share this episode with a friend.

If you're brand new to the whole HSP concept, come take the “Am I a Highly Sensitive Person?” quiz — you'll find the link in the show notes.

**And remember: God created you sensitive; in Christ, you are *always* strong.**