

Grit 'n' Grace — THE PODCAST Episode #279

Surviving the Holidays: Help for When Your Heart Feels Heavy

During holidays, many of us feel the bittersweet tension between joy and grief ... especially when there's an empty chair at the table.

Today's guest co-host, Cheri Fletcher, is here to share a glimpse into her journey through the uncharted territory of grief after losing her beloved daughter Annie more than a year ago. Cheri Fletcher offers candid encouragement and practical tools to help us honor our loved ones, navigate heavy emotions, and hold space for mourning **and** meaningful connections.

Whether you're grieving or supporting someone who is, you'll find comfort, understanding, and actionable insights to help you lean into both love and loss during this tender season.

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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!

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Today's guest co-host Cheri Fletcher and I go all the way back to high school! We spell our names the same, and whenever we're together, we call it "The Cheritory."

UNLIKE me, Cheri Fletcher is a **reluctant** HSP ... and she's an extraverted HSP.

In early August 2023, Cheri Fletcher opened her lovely home to several HSP writer friends, including me, for what we called the “[Creative Rest Retreat](#).” We had the BEST time writing and workshopping and walking and talking and hanging out in Cheri’s kitchen.

But one short week after we all hugged goodbye, Cheri texted me that she was in the ER with her 29-year-old daughter, Annie.

What happened over the next 13 days — the time between when Annie was hospitalized and when she passed away — is best told by Cheri herself. So in the show notes I’ll include a link to [an episode of her podcast in which she shares the whole story in her own words, her own voice](#).

Cheri Fletcher is a dynamic writer, compelling speaker, and the host of the "Your Spiritual Game Plan" podcast.

In 2020, Cheri and her husband Todd re-located from Seattle, WA to Cleveland, TN.

They are the proud parents of two recently-married sons, a cherished daughter who passed mid-August 2023, and a loyal canine companion named Libby.

Despite life's twists and turns, Cheri has found comfort and joy in the simple pleasures, particularly the company of friends, walks, and visiting new places.

Known for her hospitality, she warmly invites anyone into her home for a cup of coffee, regardless of the state of her kitchen.

Cheri Gregory

And Cheri, I have been in your kitchen with its black and white checkered floor, and I've enjoyed your amazing hospitality and many cups of coffee. So welcome to grit and grace.

Cheri Fletcher

I'm excited because this has been a bucket list item of mine to be on grit and grace. So thank you. I'm excited.

Cheri Gregory

Well, I am thrilled that you are here. So my first question for you is when I, long ago, first brought up the possibility with you that you just might be a Highly Sensitive Person, you were not happy with me. In fact, as I slid my laptop across the table at Starbucks, you could take the quiz, I was a little nervous, like I was wondering if that laptop might go flying across the room or something. So what did you think it meant to be an HSP back then? And why were you so resistant to the idea?

Cheri Fletcher

I was going to be polite ... take your quiz to prove you wrong, of course. But well, you know, I'm not a sappy person. I'm not highly sappy, which is what I always called it, right? The highly sappy people, because I didn't have a clue what it meant. I thought it was like a highly sensitive meant very overly emotional. And I'm a seven I'm a socialite, and I don't have time for the emotions and the feelings and all of that just, I just don't want to sit and discuss all the feelings. So I just thought, No, I'm not a highly sensitive person. No nonsense. Let's just I don't have time for that. So when you told me you thought I was highly sensitive, I just didn't even understand why you could think that about me well.

Cheri Gregory

And you had a nickname back then, but you think you were kind of proud of to tell tell our friends who were listening what it was. Oh

Cheri Fletcher

yes. Well, my nickname was steamroller. In fact, if you if you were gonna lollygag about something, just move out of the way and let me just get it done. Because I didn't have time. I didn't have time. If you were taking too much time, I just had to get it done and keep going. And one

Cheri Gregory

of the things that made me suspect, you know, because for the longest time I didn't know, but when you told me about how you go close shopping, would you be willing to just share a glimpse into how you do your clothes shopping with our listeners?

Cheri Fletcher

See, you're making my skin crawl thinking about it. In fact, yesterday, just for an example, yesterday, I don't go clothes shopping. My husband yesterday, we were in Atlanta visiting my son, and when we were done, he's like, Oh, look at that over there, there's a really pretty little plaza. And I'm like, no, no. He goes, I just want to look in it. I'm like, Absolutely not. So I sat in the car while he went from shop to shop to shop.

It was the worst thing ever to take me shopping. I cannot stand it. In fact, he clothes shops for me because I can't take it. I can't take the malls. Malls drive me insane. And I was telling you about this experience, and when we'd have to go shopping, he would call ahead, and he'd be like, okay, my wife and I are going to go somewhere, and I need her to have like, three outfits, and you have about 20 minutes with her in a dressing room. She needs a pair of pants and a couple blouses, you know, if you could just have it in the room ready for her. You like I said, you have about 20 minutes with her, and then that's it. She's done. And you were laughing. You're like, "I think you're an HSP..." And I'm like, "What are you talking about? Why does that have anything to do with hating to shop?"

Cheri Gregory

That was such a revelatory moment for me, because most of the HSPs I had encountered up until that point were more introverted or ambiverted, and you're very

strongly an extrovert, which is 30% of the HSP population. But the fact that you have this really super strong personality and don't see yourself as a highly emotional person, although I perceive you as a very deep and caring person, we'll get to that further on. But the fact that going shopping and going to malls is so overstimulating and overwhelming to you that your husband had to warn them that they only had 20 minutes. I was like, oh, okay, that's a sign. That's a sign right there.

Cheri Fletcher

Yeah, I took the test and I think I became, like, your icon. I was off the charts.

Cheri Gregory

Yeah, yeah. I think, I think your score surprised you. And you know, one of the links that I'll put in the show notes is I actually ended up writing a blog post, and it took me about a year to figure out why you were so dead set against being an HSP. And I think this is true for many of us. You had somebody in your life who was kind of like a more of a narcissist, where they made everything all about them, and they were constantly demanding accommodations, and they were so easily offended. And I think over time, I came to realize, oh, that's what you thought HSP meant. Well, of course, you wouldn't want to be an HSP. And I think you came to realize, Oh, that's not what Cheri is talking about at all.

Cheri Fletcher

Yeah.

Cheri Gregory

Alright, well, we're gonna switch gears just a little bit here. Something I have heard you say dozens of times over the years is, I believe that while your roles in life will change, your purpose is eternal. So you lost your daughter. 15 months ago, and so your role as a mother has changed. And I would love for you to just tell us a little bit about Annie Lauren and what your role as her mom looks like now. Yes,

Cheri Fletcher

absolutely. So yeah, never realized when God gave me that line that it would be, you know, so relevant, or that I'd have to really take it heart now. So yes, Annie, Lauren, my daughter, passed away in August of 2023 and she was 29 at the time. So that phrase forever 29 has another meaning too. She was the oldest of of three. Have two married sons, and Annie being the oldest. Of course, she ran the household, and those boys just had to toe with a line, but she she treated them very well. They had a great relationship. They had a constant text thread between the three of them going.

She was a performer. From the day she found her voice. She often scared other babies with what I called early vocal training. They the moms called it high pitched screaming. But I found some old videos of her before she could even really crawl. She had a little keyboard in her room that she would go over and bang on. So she was writing music and sitting at a piano bench. As soon as she could sit down, and she would start writing songs. When she was in time out, she would sing in songs about how unfair it was,

whatever situation she was in her time out. So she she was destined. And she, at age 12, told us that she was going to be living in Nashville someday. And she did it. She did it. She got to Nashville recorded music. So she got to where she was going.

She was very, very compassionate. She would bring people home for meals, for holidays. She'd bring them on vacation. If she knew they didn't have a home. She would bring them home. And I have a text from her on time asking if she could bring someone home for a holiday so just so they could experience what that holiday would be like.

And so because I was always active in their schools, or always had kids over, I actually started mentoring, beginning with youth, young girls, but then eventually moms, and then got into women's ministry and did that actively in Washington, and slowly starting getting back into that here in Tennessee. But one of the things I found in common with the women of all ages was they would be searching for their purpose. And when I started to ask them, like, what would that look like if you found it? Because I just, I don't like when people just randomly throw out things like, well, I need to find myself, or I need to find my purpose. I'm like that just what? Okay, so what's that look like? You have to have an idea if you're going to be looking for something, right?

Um, I started to realize that actually, they seemed to be in a transition period, or they were heading into a transition, and it was scaring them. So a lot of times, if they said, I'm looking for my purpose, or I need to find my purpose, they had either just lost a position, or they were losing a role. They were a senior in high school or going into high school, or they were going into college, or they were going into empty nest, or they were in a job transit. They were always in a transition, and they were there, we were changing roles, and they really thought that that role was their purpose. And so I was thinking, wow, how can we be believing that if we aren't in a role and we don't have any purpose?

And I started thinking about Ephesians 210 where we're told that we're a masterpiece, and how God created us to do the works that he planned for us. He planned something for me. He planned something for you. Cheri Gregory, and yet, as a masterpiece, he didn't ask us to be a replica. And so as a masterpiece, I'm carrying these works that he asked me to do into each role. As those roles end, I carry this work into the next role. You don't make a masterpiece and then just leave it on the floor and say, Well, I guess that masterpiece has to figure out for itself what to do. I mean, as you're creating it, you're you have the visual of where, where it's going to work. An architect has the visual of the whole house before you know how it's going to how it's going to work, how the family's going to live in it. L that is in the mind of the architect as he's creating, and that's how God envisioned us, and the purpose that we have is to display the work of the architect. That's the purpose.

So my purpose is to bring glory to God, to bring glory to the Creator. How I do it is my calling, and I carry that calling. Into my role. So my role in life is going to change, but my purpose is eternal. And so now those words are, you know, meaning a lot more. They're very strong in my own life now, as my role as Annie's mom has changed, I'm still

Annie's mom, but my role isn't active anymore as her mom, it has ended, but my purpose, well, I had that role is eternal, because God is eternal. And as I mothered her, I showed her Christ. And the beautiful thing now that I'm getting to see is all the things that people that knew her are telling me about her, and things that she said to them, and journals that I'm finding where she poured her heart out to God, and you know, people that are IM-ing me from her socials that are saying, you know, Annie prayed this over me, and so I know that my role as her mother has ended, but my purpose as Annie's mom is still eternal.

Cheri Gregory

I love that. And you know, just recently, you posted on social media a song that you had found that she had written that feels like it kind of gave you some reflection back. You showed her Christ in the words of that song, kind of, yeah,

Cheri Fletcher

it was, I found it just the other day, and in the words start out with just so much hate and so much lies in this world or going back and forth, but God calls us to rest and that he just wants us to be still and have faith in Him, and that he will listen to our prayers and he hears us. He is holding us, which is another phrase I love. I hate being told to hang in there, because we are not hanging nowhere. In the Bible, does it say God tells us to hang in there. He is holding us. I always tell people I'm being held and he says that in these words, he is holding us. He just tells us to rest and listen to him. And I thought that's so great in this time right now, with all this turmoil of people not knowing how, how things are going to turn out, you know, here's the words of my daughter coming back to me, God just wants us to rest and and believe and put our faith in Him.

Cheri Gregory

So, so beautiful.

Well, you and I have been friends for a long time when we work together on writing and speaking projects. So one of the things I know about you is you have this mind that is just endlessly creative. You are so good with metaphors and imagery, and one of the things that you wrote in a blog post was grief are the shoes I now walk in. What does this metaphor of grief as shoes mean to you in your everyday life?

Cheri Fletcher

As an extrovert and as someone that you know, if there wasn't a party going on, I was going to create one. And as a hostess and always, you know, loving to have something going on, I think some people, I have gotten the impression that people are waiting for, when is Cheri going to be old Cheri again? Like, you know, when is Cheri going to get back to normal? I have to say I'm not going to like, this is Cheri now, and there's always going to be a component that's missing. I was a runner. I haven't run since Annie passed, but as a runner, it's kind of like I lost my leg, and I don't run anymore. And you can't say to a runner that lost their leg, when do you get back to your old self? You're you're not.

And and so I feel like I get up every day and I put on these shoes, and sometimes they're heavy, they're they're just this heavy shoe that I wear, and I have to get up and walk. I have to get up and do stuff during the day. But these shoes that I'm walking in, I'm walking this journey for the rest of my life in shoes of grief. And maybe some days there'll be shoes I can dance in, and maybe there'll be shoes that I can run in, but there's also shoes that are going to carry me through heavy terrain. There might be a hiking boot their grief. I walk in shoes of grief. And so I see things so differently now that I didn't see before. I hear pain differently. I see pain differently, and I see some things when I'm hearing people talk about issues, I see them as petty. Sometimes because i i I'm seeing them, you know, as I'm wearing these shoes of grief.

Cheri Gregory

Just listening to I have this image of like concrete shoes and the amount of effort that it must take to move in ways that when you had those light running shoes on, it didn't take that same level of effort

Cheri Fletcher

Exactly. And so, yeah, I think if you know someone that's grieving, just know that they're probably not going to ever be. Who they were before you might just have these heavy shoes on.

Cheri Gregory

You've told me that year number two has felt harder in some ways, and the first year, of course, had all of the firsts. So do you have any insights? Yeah, and it's okay if you don't. But do you have any insights as to why the second year is feeling harder.

Cheri Fletcher

The first year, you're just in shock. You have to get through so much. You have so many, especially if it's an if it's a death you weren't ever planning on. It's not like it was a year of, you know, she died of cancer that was undetected, and we only had two weeks from the time, the time she called us till she died, two weeks like, just, it was not, it was a sudden yes on a sudden death, yeah. And so all sudden, you know, you go from my son, my son's wedding was a few months after, we're in the middle of planning a wedding, and now all sudden, boom, we're planning a funeral and be and a wedding and a and you're just, you just have to get through, and you don't have a choice, and you're just numb, and you're just in shock. You're having to do all these things, and you're just on this auto drive, and you're accepting meals, and you're accepting cards, and you're just it's just such a blur, and there's so many things you don't remember, which is good, but and then all of a sudden, then it's over, and everyone goes on with their life as they should, and time has gone on for them, but time has not gone on for you. And so you're there, and the fog has lifted, and your reality is right there. You're dealing with the fact that you can't call them and you don't hear their voice, and you can't text them and and it just seems like you're watching, you know, her 30 year old friends having babies. And so I think the second year, it's like, wow. This is my reality. This is my life now.

Cheri Gregory

How has knowing that you're a Highly Sensitive Person influenced your experience or your understanding of loss and grief?

Cheri Fletcher

Well, you know, no, like you mentioned, I'm an extrovert, but one of the things that I really loved, learning about myself as an HSP, and working with you all of that too, was also understanding that I have introvert two sides, and I think I remember me telling you this was I kind of thought that there was something wrong with me in my introvert, my extrovert moments, because I would have moments during an event that was at my house, or during a party, or ever I just had to get away, and I'd be like, Oh, I just have to go in my room and get away from people. Or I'd go take the trash out, or I would go wash the dishes, or I would just go to my bedroom. And I think what's wrong with me? Like people are talking to me and I'm not even hearing them because I've had enough, and I have to just go excuse myself.

Cheri Gregory

You were completely overstimulated because you overstimulate auditorially much like I do, yeah, it makes total sense.

Cheri Fletcher

And so I'd like, this is my own party, and I'm having to get away from these people at my own party. And I would go do it, and I'd be like, Oh, okay, now I can come back out, and I think what that something must be wrong with me. And then I'd go back out and I'd be fine. But then when I was learning that through you, I was like, Okay, well, maybe I have, maybe I have some ambivert in here, or I would have an event, and I would love it, and then I'd be like, three or four days of don't talk to me. No, no one come around me. Like, leave me alone. Just don't even call me. Just don't want to see people.

Cheri Gregory

And that's just for our friends who are listening, that is all so normal for HSPs. And for anybody who's not an HSP be taking notes, because this is you're doing such a beautiful job, Cheri, of describing what it can be like.

Cheri Fletcher

And that's how it is with grief. That's how it has been with me. With grief, okay, I don't have any capacity. I used to have capacity to listen to someone's problems. I don't have it at all. My grief is so intense that I do not initiate any conversations. I don't make phone calls. I don't initiate a text. If someone starts in and I know that this is going to be them needing to talk to me, I listen for a little while, and then I I politely find a way to get out of the conversation, because, as an HSP, you absorb, and I don't have any room to absorb. I don't have it. And it's not because I don't care. It's not because I'm having steam roller tendencies. I i have so much of my own pain, and I have to, I have to set a boundary to have room for my husbands and my sons to be there for their pain. I don't have any capacity to even it's not like I don't care about your pain. I just don't have any room or the ability to even hear it. I can't and so. So I, like I said, I do not initiate

conversations. It's too draining for me to make a phone call, for me to even send out a text, because I'm scared to send out a text or initiate a conversation, because then I'm like, Oh no. What if they want to, what if I, what if I call someone or initiate and then they all said that the flood gates open and they want to dump a bunch of stuff on me, and I can't do it. And so if I'm if the listener has someone that is grieving and they're not calling you or initiating a conversation, check on them. Check on them, because it's too much for especially in HSP, to absorb any of anyone else's pain, and I don't have the energy to be an extrovert right now.

Cheri Gregory

It sounds almost like it's too risky.

Cheri Fletcher

Yes, it is.

Cheri Gregory

You don't know what's going to come back at you, and so because you're holding that space for yourself and for your husband and for your sons and daughters in law. Yes, that if you were to reach out to somebody and hit them on a bad day, and they're like, oh, it's the good old Cheri Fletcher of old. Yes, I'm going to have some catharsis, and I'm going to dump my problems and I'm going to share that's too big a risk right now. Yes, I so appreciate you putting it that way. So you were starting to say that you don't have the energy to be the extrovert you once were.

Cheri Fletcher

And knowing that about myself, I space My my, you know, I've had several friends, which I've been so appreciative that have wanted to come out and and see me and see Annie's resting place. And I love that, because it means a lot that they want to but I've been able to space it, and have been able to say no to some that have asked, because I can't. I just have to have the space and the ability to spend three or four days with one and then have two or three weeks between,

Cheri Gregory

Well, you've said no to me, I'm not threatening to get on a plane to come see you, and you've been like, actually, and then you list the things or the people, and you know, we're working on a time for me to come that will work. But I so value your candor. I so value your honesty, because I would hate to show up thinking I was being helpful, only to discover that that's not what would actually be most beneficial to you at the time. So I'm going to say that I hope for you and others who are listening that the people in their lives are respectful of these boundaries, rather than being judgmental. Because I do think that there can be the pressure to really put on the happy face, because, after all, we're Christians and we don't grieve as those who blah, blah, blah. So what would you say to our friends who are listening, especially those who feel like they should shelve their grief or stuff their grief over the holidays and put on a happy face for the sake of everyone else.

Cheri Fletcher

That's a loaded one. If you feel like you have to shelf or stuff your grief for the sake of anyone, I would give you permission to be kind to yourself in honor of your loved one, to maybe spend this holiday with someone who also misses your loved one, that you don't have to shelf it with, and you don't owe anyone an explanation. Reach it. Yeah, one of the things that that that people feel that they owe people explanations, and you do not owe anyone explanations, and it's not rude, but you just don't you can just say, you know, this year, I'm going to be spending this holiday with so and so, or this year I'm going to choose to volunteer my time at this organization in honor of my loved one. And I'd love to see you two weeks after the holiday and drop it, leave it at that. Don't say because I feel that I can't be myself. No, no, don't do that. That opens the door for their opinions. The more you explain or over explain, you just open the door for their opinions. So just excuse yourself from the gathering in honor of your loved one, and there's nothing they can say because it's an honor of your loved one, and it actually is.

Another thing I've learned about myself is that I have to extend grace because grief is so hard to navigate, and it's, it's, it's so big. In one of my blogs, I described it as a huge wall, this big, huge wall. And one of the things that people have said to me is, I just can't imagine what you're going through. And actually, when someone says that, it's because they are imagining what you're going through, what they're saying is, I can't imagine the pain. I don't want to imagine the pain, but they are actually imagining what would it be like to lose a child. But what they're saying is, I can't even go there with how much pain that would be, and I don't want you to it's terrible. And so it can be a divisive wall, and I'm on one side, and. You're on the other but this wall has windows and it has a door, but it's very, very intimidating.

And so there's some people that just, they just look at it, and maybe they're maybe the misunderstanding is the people that are just standing there looking at this wall, maybe me, as the griever, is thinking that they're asking me to shelve my feelings because they just don't know what to do. They're just like, uh, do we approach this wall? Do we look at the wall? You know, there's a window in the wall? Do we look in and see if Cheri is okay? And then if we see she's okay, we just walk away and go, Okay, she's fine. I saw her. Like, they don't know how to approach it. They don't know what to say. You know, some people say, Well, I haven't wanted to say anything because I haven't wanted to make you hurt. Well, I'm already hurting. You know, you don't have to tell me I'm in pain. But they just don't know, yeah, and so maybe I'm perceiving that as them wanting me to Shell fit, and that's not what they're wanting at all. They're just like, I have no idea I'm awkward and I don't want to say the wrong thing. I don't want to say something stupid. Yeah, and so extending grace,

I've had a couple friends that I could tell that that's how they were, and I said to them, did you have any questions about Annie's cancer? There's still people out there. I've had people that have had such weird stories that they've heard. Well, I heard blah, blah, blah, and I'm like, Oh no, no, no, no, let me tell you. And then they're like, Oh, thank you. I just I didn't know how to ask, and I didn't, and they were so relieved, and they wanted to know but, but they didn't want to come up and ask me. And I could have gone

on thinking, Well, man, so and so didn't even ask. You know, there might be people that want you to stuff your feelings, but they might, then might be a misunderstanding. And so the holidays might not be a time to bring that up, but I would say for the holidays to survive them. Yes, what is best for you? And if you feel like that loved one is someone that isn't comfortable with your feelings, maybe take them for a walk later and just ask them how they're feeling about your loved one passing and but I think, don't. Don't ruin a relationship over it.

Cheri Gregory

Well, this leads beautifully into my final question here, which is: You made some really intentional choices as the one year "Annie-versary" approached, and you developed a really practical tool as part of that. So tell us a little bit about that.

Cheri Fletcher

Yes, we call it the "Annie-versaries". We wanted to go on a vacation and go somewhere we had never been as a family and create some new memories. You know, we had a tricky year with Annie's passing, because Annie passed in August, and Charlie got married in November, and I just have to hand it to his beautiful wife, Mary Beth, you know, for a bride to have to do all of that when his sister's larger than life, and to have to plan this wedding and go through with it, and she marched down the aisle to one of Annie's recorded songs, Yeah. And so I was trying to navigate all the emotions and all of that stuff, but yet make it a fun vacation. But I didn't want my both my boys' brides feel awkward. You know, it's just so hard when they're with their newlyweds, both of them.

I sent out an email and just said, "Hey, we can talk about Annie anytime during this vacation, but we don't want it to just be focused on Annie, but I do want to take one one night and just have a time of reflection about our year, where we can share some things about our year. And I wanted it to be meaningful, but not like a family counseling session. And I didn't want to use a book or a study guide and make it really formal or feel like it was a forced lesson on grief. I wanted something simple to help guide the conversation, but not have bullet points or journal discussions, and I didn't want the wives to be overwhelmed.

And so since Annie had passed, I had received a lot of cards, a lot of books, a lot of texts and phone calls. And of course, one of the phrases I common phrases I get from people is I just don't know what to say. And I get it because we're always looking for something to eliminate my pain, but you can't do that, but there's a lot of things that helped alleviate it. And so I'd been putting helpful words that people had said to me. I'd been writing them down because I had received a lot of Bible verses, some people had been still to this day, texting me a Bible verse every day. Prayers had been sent to me, like written out prayers, either in emails or in cards. Then I'd kept them, and then I had people ask me some really awesome questions, people that took time you. To ask me very thoughtful questions, because some people had just started to get to know Annie, and they wanted to get to know her more, and they wanted to get to know sillier sides or funny sides. And I kept those questions because I thought those were really fun, or

some questions they wanted to know, like, how did you come up with her name, or just fun things, sure. And so I started to write some of those down.

I thought, you know, we like to play card games when we go on vacation. So what if I took these questions, some of the Bible verses and some of these questions that they asked me, and turned them into conversation cards? Oh so good. And that would make our reflection time a little less complex, yeah. And some of them, you know, were questions like, Okay, what secrets Can you tell now? Like, you can share, yeah. And, of course, that led to some though, well, they were sharing that they'd be like, Oh, that was at one time. And then we could, like, share. Or, you know, is there a song that comes on the radio that makes you think of her or, you know, just little things like that that we could share, and then we could have some laughter. Of course, we could have some tears. What are some characteristics of Annie that you hope you can carry on in your life and that you want to share with your kids and stuff like that?

So it made it less of a counseling session for the boys, it made their wives able to join in. They could pull a Bible verse and read it out loud and share. And my one son that lives out in the west, still, he was like, Can I take these home with me? And I've had several people that have said, how can we get these cards? And I just thought, these are great, not only for families that might be grieving, but also for friends of mine, that if they want to know what to ask me, if they want to know what Bible verses to send me,

I've also kept notes of actions that people have just taken, because the worst thing you can ask a Griever is let me know what I can do for you Sure. Yeah, I don't, I don't know. I don't even know what I need. Even two years later, there's days when I'm walking in circles in my house, and when someone calls and just says, "I'm going to the dry cleaners. Can I grab yours?" I'm like, "Yes: here!"

Cheri Gregory

Well, and I know that you've put together a PDF with some samples of the questions and our friends who are listening, if they go over to your website, they can sign up to be on your email list, and they can then get a download that they can print and cut these cards out and use them themselves.

Cheri Fletcher

And my emails are very sporadic right now.

Cheri Gregory

No pressure whatsoever. Totally understood.

Well, as we're wrapping up here at this time of year, is there some special memory of Annie that's just kind of coming to mind and lingering with you right now?

Cheri Fletcher

Well, Annie and I used to make so much fun of Hallmark movies. It's always either his wife has died or her husband has died. One of them is always rich and one of them is

always poor, and they one has a kid and needs, you know, if he's a widow and and the girl comes to town, he has a daughter that needs a female to do our hair for something, and we would always just make fun of them and how silly they were. And we'd be like, of course, the mother's dead, or, of course, and we'd always predict the ending, or, you know, the secret we would make fun of the cookie contest because the secret ingredient was always vanilla extract, or something stupid like that and so, you know, those are the those are the things I miss a lot. But Christmas was was always her absolute favorite. Thanksgiving was her favorite meal. Christmas was her favorite holiday.

In fact, today I was so excited because I found on Facebook marketplace one of her little Hallmark things that she was she always had to have in her room, this little set from Hallmark, and she had broken the toe off one of them. And I found it on Facebook marketplace, and I picked it up today. Oh, so I have it all. I have a new set. It's all perfect. I'll keep her broken one because of nostalgia. But of course,

Cheri Gregory

Oh, I love that. I love that. Well, you know, I have an “Annie” too ...

Cheri Fletcher

Yes, Annemarie!

Cheri Gregory

... so we will pick a Hallmark movie. Actually, you can let us know a Hallmark movie that we could really have some fun with. And we will do that during the holidays. We will sit and we will be, we will be movie critics in memory of Annie with a Hallmark movie this season, perfect. Thanks for sharing that absolutely.

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Cheri has titled her conversation cards — Move Beyond “I Just Don’t Know What to Say” and you can download a sample set at: <https://cherifletcher.com/grief-cards/>

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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 — even as you’re experiencing the very real tension between joy and grief.

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 — <https://CheriGregory.com/hspquiz/>.

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

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Cheri Fletcher

I was at a church one time. I was a visitor, and these two ladies I was ... I got to the class early, and these two ladies were talking about somebody, and they're like, "I don't know. I can be talking to her. And then all of a sudden, she just is zoned, and I don't think she hears a word I say."

And I said, "I'm so sorry. You don't know me, but I bet your friend's an HSP."

And they're like, "What?"

And I said, "I bet she's absorbed enough, and she's just trying to process what you've just told her, and she can't absorb anymore. They're like, "Oh!"

Cheri Gregory

I love that you've become an advocate for HSPs!

Cheri Fletcher

I just felt bad for whoever they were talking about, because I'm like, "I'm **so** that person!"

Cheri Gregory

When other people just don't understand us, many of us try to "fix" our sensitivity ...

But no so-called "fixes" are ever going to work, and here's why:

You're NOT broken.

God did **not** make a mistake when he created you.

He wove sensitivity into your DNA — ON purpose for HIS purpose.

If you want to learn more about what it **really** means to be a Highly Sensitive Person — in the nitty gritty of your everyday life — "[**Growing Sensitive & Strong**](#)" is the life-changing program that moves you from "what's wrong with me?" to **comfortable** and **confident** in who God made you as a Highly Sensitive Person.

