

Grit 'n' Grace — THE PODCAST Episode #283

Your Voice Matters: *How to Speak Up with Clarity and Grace*

Do you ever feel hesitant to speak up for yourself? Today, we're taking a deep dive into the messy and rewarding realities of candid communication. From navigating subtle hints to standing firm in your voice, guest co-host Amy Carroll and I share personal stories, practical insights, and a paradigm shift that quite honestly, caught me off-guard.

You'll discover why "clarity is kind," learn how to balance honesty with grace, and gain tips for approaching even the toughest conversations with confidence. So listen in to this candid convo about candid convos filled with wisdom, wit, and the occasional buzz of 'aha' moments!

[Intro music]

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!

Hey friend, I'm so glad that you're able to join us today. If you've been listening for a while, you may remember that back in early November 2024, I was at the West Coast Christian Writers Conference presenting a couple of workshops. Well, during that week, I had a – let's call it a *challenging* experience at the Airbnb I'd booked for myself and 4 of my coaching client friends.

While this “challenging experience” was happening, I reached out to the one and only Amy Carroll for advice regarding how to handle it.

And as the situation unfolded, I told Amy, “We should turn this into an episode of Grit ‘n’ Grace! To which she replied, “Yes! We can talk about candid communication. How do we communicate our wants and desires and needs? And what should our expectations be of others as we communicate that?”

So this is a very “meta” episode – you're about to hear a candid conversation about candid conversations, filtered through my Airbnb guest experience and Amy's Airbnb management adventures!

Cheri Gregory

Amy Carroll, welcome back to Grit ‘n’ Grace. We are so thrilled to have you back again!

Amy Carroll

Well, you know, I'm tickled to death. The only thing is, I'm having an attack of guilt, because I really do feel like I'm getting my cake and eating it too. Is it okay? Really?

Cheri Gregory

Well, unpack that please, because cake is good, so I don't understand the problem.

Amy Carroll

Real good. That's true. No, I feel like I'm getting all the benefits of being part of Grit ‘n’ Grace, hanging out with you and doing the conversations without doing anything else! Like, that just seems too good to be true.

Cheri Gregory

Oh, okay. Well, you know, if you, if you feel a deep need to feel guilt about this, you can do that on your own time, but we're just, we're not going to spend any more time unpacking that here, because our conversation – ironically enough – [laughs] is candid communication. And you are the person in my life, who taught me the value of candid communication.

I come from a long history of coded communication, secret-coded communication, where there was no decrypting device. You just kind of had to guess, right? And so you taught me – in fact, you used that term, “candid,” with me, way back in the spring of 2016 when I first invited you to be the co-host of this new podcast I was starting, and it was so important to you that we both lay our cards out on the table.

So I'm curious. Looking back on that time from almost nine years later, what do you see when you look back?

Amy Carroll

Oh, my goodness. Well, it was interesting to reflect on this, because it seemed so good at the time, but the truth was, is I was just desperate. [Both laugh] I said I needed candid conversations, I was in a season of desperate change. Because I had been living in coded conversations just like you, and they were not working well for me. In fact, they were really starting to bite me in the butt. And I just, I had had it, and so I was in that season of desperate for change. And then, you know, that I've had this in between season where I was really crushed, I was really, really crushed. And during that period of time, I don't think I was very candid at all.

Cheri Gregory

Mmm, more closed?

Amy Carroll

Yes, yes, self protective. So some of it was just being self protective, and a lot of it was fear, because my candidness had – I wouldn't say didn't serve me well, but another person did not appreciate it.

Cheri Gregory

Sure.

Amy Carroll

And so maybe we'll go there today, like, candid conversations; I had a whole long season where candid conversations served me very well, but a lot of it really is contingent on the reaction of the other person; whether it feels good on the other side, not whether it is good, but whether it feels good. But anyway, so I went through that season, and now I feel like I'm happy to tell you that I'm currently in a more healed, and I'm in a confident season, of candid conversations. So those original ones may have sounded confident, but they were really desperation.

But I do feel, I was like, "Oh, I think actually I'm on the other side of being crushed, and I feel healed and or healing," and there's confidence that's coming back in these candid conversations.

Cheri Gregory

I love it. I love it. Well, it, you know, and it sounds like at some level, maybe desperation can be a catalyst to growth, even if it's imperfect in the moment.

Amy Carroll

So good, yes, I think that's true. And I wanted to tell that whole progression, because I want to normalize it. You know, I think so many times when we listen to other people and they're like, "Oh, wow, Cheri and Amy, they really have this candid conversations thing going," eh, ebbs and flows, we're always leveling up.

Cheri Gregory

Yeah, absolutely.

Well, and the whole impetus for what we're talking about today was actually an Airbnb stay. For those who've been listening for a little while, you know I promised that I was going to tell you what happened at the Airbnb that we stayed at during the West Coast Christian writers conference, and that I was going to pull Amy into the conversation, because Amy is now my Airbnb go-to expert.

A day or two into our stay at our beautiful, big, huge, five-bedroom HSP haven house, I reached out to Amy – and I don't remember exactly how I phrased it, but I think my question was something like, "Amy, how many flies are acceptable in an Airbnb?"

Amy Carroll

[Laughing] That was exactly what you asked me. And I was like, “This sounds like a trick question.”

Cheri Gregory

Long story short, when I first got there, and I unloaded everything really quickly, and I was the only person in the house, so I kept shutting the door for safety and making sure it locked behind me. I don't have a lot of stranger danger, but I also like to play it safe and smart. And so I was in the kitchen, and I suddenly realized there were flies landing on the island. They were like, buzzing around the refrigerator and stuff, and then I looked up and there were like a dozen crawling around the ceiling, and they were landing and crawling on the couch and the chair.

And so I messaged the Airbnb host, and I said, “There's a lot of flies in here. Could you let me know where there's a fly swatter?” Because I started hitting them with a folded paper bag. But of course, every time I went to hit that created wind, and much of the time, the fly flew away, and I had to hit like, five times to kill any one fly.

And so here's the thing, I kind of did the gentle hint to the Airbnb host. I didn't want to, like, accuse them of anything. I just, I was willing to solve the problem myself, but I didn't want to be a bother, you know, I didn't want to put anybody out here, I just wanted the problem to be solved.

You told me that maybe five or six flies. Well, within a couple of days, I had killed over 50 flies.

Amy Carroll

Yuck. So yuck.

Cheri Gregory

And we had a charcuterie board one night, we had to keep covering it. And it did kind of become the running joke, but it made me realize, “Oh, this is revealing a larger pattern for me. Yes, I'm so proud of all the work I've done with candid communication,” and yet here I was trying to solve my own problem, and when I

finally escalated it to Airbnb, the host gave me a *lot* of pushback.

And you gave me a lot of really important insight into what it's like being on the other side of things as an Airbnb host. So I'd love to just kind of hear your perspective: When you hear from somebody, how do you respond, and what's the gamut of experiences you've had as somebody who is managing – what is it, a dozen Airbnbs?

Amy Carroll

Yes, yes. So including my house, I am a co-host for 13 –

Cheri Gregory

Wow.

Amy Carroll

– short term or mid term rentals. And let me just say, it's a lot. Today, Cheri and I were just bouncing on and I get a call because we're having an electrical problem. It's always something.

So as you can probably imagine, Cheri, I have experienced already, in just short, six short months, I've experienced the entire gamut of the human condition.

[Laughs]

Cheri Gregory

I'm sure.

Amy Carroll

We have a whole range of things, from people who don't reach out to me at all when I could have helped solve a problem; and I'm never very happy when that shows up on a review, because I have left my phone number multiple places in the house so they can contact me directly, but they didn't.

So that's beyond hinting, that is just hoping somebody reads your mind, right? And that never works.

Cheri Gregory

Yes, yes.

Amy Carroll

And then there are the people that call me and they've already gotten to 90 miles an hour. They're mad about whatever situation there – it is, even if I like, with the flies, I'm sure your host had no idea that that was happening. And you can imagine, in my shoes, if people call me mad, I have to be professional, and I try to be really kind, but I don't want to help them a whole lot either. If they've already chewed me out. I will do my job, and I want to do it well and be kind, but I am grinding my teeth behind all of that.

And so someplace in the middle is always really great. I have mostly very nice people. We had a, the situation I'm dealing with now is an electrical situation from a house where a large family group was over the weekend, and I probably talked to them ten times, and – but they were consistently kind to me, and I consistently kept plugging away trying to help them. And for the most part, we were able to solve the problem for the weekend.

Cheri Gregory

Okay, so I'm hearing something really interesting here, and you tell me if I'm making it up or if I'm accurate: it sounds to me like if they call you angry, they've turned *you* into the problem.

Amy Carroll

I hadn't thought about that. And it doesn't feel good to feel like I'm the problem, because I am for them, and I want their stay to be wonderful.

Cheri Gregory

Okay, so originally I was thinking that we start by hinting, and then we might make a request, and then we move to demand. You've said there's the hope of mind reading that comes first, like we just kind of magically hope people will pick things up, then we might drop hints, and then we – you know, the preference would be that we move into that candid communication with a request and we're collaborating. At that stage, the problem is a third, third entity that we are working together to solve.

But by the time it turns into that demand, or even escalates into, you know, catastrophizing, anger, blaming, all that sort of thing – at that point, the laser

pointer is no longer on the actual problem, but it's on you as an individual. And it sounds like at that point, emotions are riding high, and that complicates candid communication greatly,

Amy Carroll

Absolutely. And it's – well, for some people, there's – I'm just learning, there are people who just stay angry, and I don't have anything to do with that. But other times, for those of us that, we think we're doing something good by not having the candid conversation, like just dealing with it ourselves or hoping things will change; we think we're doing something good, but what we're actually doing is delaying to the point sometimes where we get to demanding before the other person even knows what's going on.

Cheri Gregory

And so then they're likely to be blindsided, because they weren't given any of these little notices along the way.

One thing that was interesting to me in in other Airbnb situations where I've communicated back and forth, you know, using that kind of messaging system, I've actually thought “This is kind of good, this running commentary on my experience, their experience,” this documentation, in a very neutral way, is establishing, you know, almost a paper trail, but a communication trail, and to be able to go back – I mean, there have been times that I've gone back and I'm like, “I know I told them such and such!” And I go back and I'm like, “Oops, I only thought about telling them such and such!” Right? Or “I know I said that really strongly.” And I look back and I'm like, “Oh, there was couching language all around it.”

And for those of us who are highly sensitive persons, we tend to notice nuances. So like Amy, if you and I were driving together in the car, and you know, you started to fan yourself, and as long as I noticed it, I would probably turn on the car air conditioning. And you and I wouldn't exchange any words whatsoever, because I would just kind of and I probably wouldn't even realize what I was doing. I would pick up on that subtle cue. Now I'm not saying that's better or worse than how anybody else communicates. I'm just saying that for most part, that's my, my normal, that's my baseline, is to pick up on those really small hints. Now I'm not saying I'm a mind reader, it's just I pick up on patterns, right? I can –

Amy Carroll

You know what?

Cheri Gregory

Go ahead.

Amy Carroll

So many times, Cheri, I know that you're addressing kind of some of the downsides to being an HSP, and this is one of the beautiful upsides. So yes, I think it's really important to highlight that.

Cheri Gregory

And you know, same thing, if somebody is a guest in the house and they're sitting with their arms close to their side, you know, the body language might signal to an HSP, get them a warm drink and hand them a blanket sort of thing.

As a result, though, since that's kind of our normal – and I'm not saying we're that sensitive in every single situation, I'm just saying we feel like that's our normal to pick up on things when we need to escalate the noticeability of our communication so that other people will actually perceive it, we can feel like we're being demanding, when to others, we're barely dropping a hint.

And so our fear and worry about how we're coming across versus how we are actually being interpreted, there can be this huge difference between it. To say it another way, it's almost like we prefer whispering and picking up on other people's whispers, but we feel like we have to yell. I don't mean that literally. I just mean we feel like we have to amp things up in order to be heard.

And then the problem, of course, is – like you said, if we're doing the hinting – and first of all, we're doing the hoping, then we're doing the hinting, and then we may skip the request stage. By the time we start to really get dysregulated, those high emotions are starting to rise and we start to dysregulate. And then we can go from 0 to 60, from no communication to sudden, explosive communication, really quickly.

So you had some thoughts about what we do when we're starting to recognize that we are becoming dysregulated.

Amy Carroll

Yeah, I think a big thing – it's funny because I had a conversation with my boss this morning about this thing, and I kind of forgot she was my boss, you know? Like, she does cross over to being a friend, which is nice to work with her. But I was highly emotional. I was a little panicky about this situation when I called her and she kind of paused to try to regulate me, which, because I was dysregulated, kind of ticked me off, actually. So I think it's important to pause in this process and maybe even think about your process, Cheri, like, where am I in the process? Have I been hoping and hinting, and now I need to, you know, be candid before, in my dysregulation, that I start to be demanding and explosive?

So we pause to regulate our emotions, to take a deep breath and kind of evaluate where we are in that process and who we're talking to. Because it makes a difference, you know, if it's your friend, you can be a little more dysregulated; with my boss this morning, she actually pays me not to have to deal with those emotions, you know, like, that's my job to deal with them, so she doesn't have to. So I needed to remember who I was talking to. And then we share our needs, not just ourselves, but for the other person, because it's the only fair thing to do.

Brene Brown, who we both adore, she has the thing that she repeats, which is “Clarity is kind.” And I believe that is true to my core. I believe it even more being on the other side of so much feedback, constantly now; and so for an Airbnb situation, if I read in a review that you had a need, that you're mad that didn't get met, and I'm like “But you never asked me,” that's actually unkind to me, right? There's a, there's a consequence, even for me, that my boss might be like, “Hey,” you know, or at the very least, we have a review that was less than it could have been, because I would have helped to address that problem or died trying, you know. [Laughs] It's good to have that, an Enneagram 1 as your Airbnb host.

Cheri Gregory

Yeah, absolutely, you are the perfect person.

Amy Carroll

But also, Barry and I have been talking about this at our house with these candid conversations, and especially in expressing personal needs. And we are

realizing, between the two of us, I think, that there are two things going on. Cheri, we're of the same generation, many of our friends who are with us today probably are of a similar generation. I think our generation was not encouraged to say our needs, and –

Cheri Gregory

[Laughs] Okay, that may be the biggest understatement of the century on this podcast. Needs. What are you even talking about. Okay, go ahead. I will, I will leave the sarcasm on the table here. Keep going. Don't let me interrupt.

Amy Carroll

[Laughs] No, I agree. In certain families of origin, even more so. And to honor our families of origin, I'm just going to leave that right there. But I'm *guessing*, friend that is listening, that you might be feeling that acutely, like “In my family of origin, I was not allowed to express or need _____.” And you may have many blanks, but I'll bet all of us have a few blanks. Even if you had a very loving, supportive family.

And so MaBarryry and I are realizing – here's, here's an example. It's such a, it's such a small thing. The other day, we were getting ready to go out to dinner with some friends, and Barry's like, “I don't want to sit in a booth. I hate a booth. I've always hated a booth. I want to sit at a table.” And my my jaw just dropped, and I was like, “I've been with you for 34 years, and I have never heard you say you hate a booth,” and I always choose a booth, like, what in the world? Well, we got to talking about that, and he, you know, Barry is 6'3”, and duh! It's really not very comfortable to sit in a booth. And now we're, he's 6'3” and older, and has some aches and pains and knees that hurt and things like that. And so I was like, “Okay, you've gone 34 years without saying you'd rather sit at a table.”

I've done the same thing. We're discovering a lot of these things as we encourage each other to express what you need before the demands, right? And he wasn't, this was ahead of time, so it was perfect. I was like, “Of course, we'll ask for a table.” And so it was kind for him to tell me, instead of resenting me when I chose the booth, because I just do without thinking about it. So that's a silly –

Cheri Gregory

No, I was about to say that is the perfect illustration, because there's no morality to it, right? There's no "Oh, but I really wanted burgundy in our bedroom." kind of compromise going on here. It's not even a permanent thing. It was a simple, situational thing where you would be fine with the thing that makes him more comfortable, you just needed to know about it. And you wouldn't have guessed it on your own, because your lived experience is so different than his lived experience. That's a great illustration.

Amy Carroll

It was really good. And we had just a calm conversation about it.

I got feedback from one of our owners. She came back to her house. It was her family home, so she had some emotions involved too, that I had to realize. And she sent me a very long list of things that she felt like, were wrong with the house. And at first I was real defensive, you know, because I want to do a good job so, so much. So this is when clarity is on the other foot, like it's not you being clear, it's somebody being clear to you. So I had to, I had to pause and regulate, because I did, I felt defensive and like "I'm doing my best for you and you're just emotional," and – that's how I *wanted* to respond, my sassy self came out; but then I gave it a day, you know, and regulated and thought, "Oh, it is her family home. She has, she has a lot of – she wants this to be good for people, because it's been so good for her."

And when I responded to her, I quoted Renee Brown. I said, "Thank you so much for that list. I'm going to go through all of it and fix those things. Clarity is kind in this transition." And it felt so good, you know, to be able to not only work on my own candid communication, but be able to receive candid communication. Because I tend to be, I tend to be defensive. It's my, it's kind of my go-to.

Cheri Gregory

Absolutely, yeah.

You know what?

That sounds like a good topic for a future episode: how not to take things too personally, and what to do when we have the bodily reaction of defensiveness.

One of the things that I have just started to understand about when we're trying to consciously make these changes is that they're going to take time, right? It takes time to change old habits, because you and I have talked over the years so much about rewiring our brains. But I'm starting to understand now that I'm starting to understand the importance of interoception, really listening to my entire body.

Here, we're retraining our bodies out of really old muscle memories, like muscle memories that go decades back, and we're creating new muscle memories, and our bodies are going to keep reacting as if it's the past, even when our conscious minds are like, "No, it's the present. I'm okay. I'm practicing new skills."

And our bodies are going to default to those old muscle memories that are just like deep in those cells, and it's just going to take some time. And so we can almost feel like, "No, I really want to do it this way." And our body's like, "Nope, we're playing it safe. We're doing it the old way." And that tug of war is not a sign that we're doing anything wrong. It's a sign that we're growing and it's a sign that our bodies need time to catch up to our brains, especially if our bodies have felt unsafe or been unsafe for a long time.

And so the importance of compassion. Receiving a letter like that couldn't have been easy, but I know that you know you've done work on being able to sit with the gentleness of Jesus, and you know, kind of calm and either re-regulate or stay regulated. And I love that you were able to have that response, that much more mature response, which is then going to be not just retraining your brain, but is also going to be bringing your body along with it. But it takes time. It's not easy.

Amy Carroll

Well, that's what Barry and I were discussing, like this messy middle. Always, whenever we're changing, there is always, always, always a messy middle when we're learning these new skills. So, yeah, I think we need to have that conversation, because I feel like I need it, because I also am paying a lot more attention to my body and realizing she's been ignored for so long she doesn't even know what to do with that.

Cheri Gregory

Yeah, absolutely well, and you're bringing me to the kind of the rest of my Airbnb story. When I finally did reach out – and I will admit I took too long, because I just kept expecting them to reply, and I didn't want to be a bother.

Amy Carroll

Well, they should have. My boss requires me to reply within minutes, so those of you listening, you know, yeah.

Cheri Gregory

Well, I went for four days without hearing, and then I reached out again, and then I escalated it to Airbnb. They tried to reach my host, and they ultimately gave me a – I'm going to say, a significant, it wasn't huge, but it was appreciated – corporate refund.

And the host did offer me a refund, but they wanted to make it clear that if I accepted this little refund, that the compensation was offered “with the hope of resolving any concerns in a way that feels fair to both parties and avoids negative reviews. We hope you understand so we can move forward with a shared perspective regarding your stay.” And I was like, “No, we do not have a shared perspective regarding my stay.” Because they also lectured me that flies aren't pests, and they also implied that I was the one who let the flies in. And we had spent our entire time there checking trash cans – like, our big joke was, “Where's the body?” Like, there were that many flies. It really felt like they were multiplying inside the house. And I did not appreciate the implication that I – like, what am I the pied piper for flies, Amy? Like, I showered that morning. Like, how would I get that many flies into the house if I even wanted to? I mean, it was just so weird.

And so it just also felt kind of like gaslighting to me, like they were trying to shape the narrative. And I'm like, “No, not at this age. That little bit of money you're offering is not worth my voice.” And so I declined the hosts offer because they wanted, I felt like they were trying to buy my silence. And working with you, I realized “I'm not even going to mention the flies,” so my review just says that there was a problem, and that my disappointment was with their lack of communication, and that I was very disappointed by their insinuations that I was the cause of the problem.

My review ended up being removed.

Amy Carroll

What?

Cheri Gregory

I got an email from Airbnb saying they had reviewed it and that they, there was no documentation, and they removed it. And I was so ready, Amy, I was like, “Oh my goodness, I have so many other things to do, it is the holidays. I'm just going to let it go.” Next morning, I woke up, I'm like, “I'm not letting this go. They took away my voice. This is all about candid communication.” My *body* would not let it go. My body was like “We're being silenced, and we're going to put a little more effort” – I didn't become obsessed by it. I didn't become dysregulated, but I'm like, “No, I put time and care and effort and thought” – and I talked to you, and I'm like, “I'm going to fight this thing a little bit more.”

And so not only was my review reinstated, they researched it, and they said it was accurate, *and* it was important that others have access to it. Right after my stay, somebody else left a review that was similar in terms of the non-communication, and they had noticed that my review had been suspiciously removed.

Amy Carroll

Oh, wow.

Cheri Gregory

So it was just so fascinating. And I don't mean to be like, “Oh, I was part of some kind of conspiracy,” or anything, but I was like, it was important to me to not just brush this off. And for many of us, just many of us with histories of people-pleasing and perfectionism, it's so easy to be like, I don't have the energy. It's so hard. I'm not going to win. In my case, they might not have reinstated the review, but it's important – even for those of us who as HSPs, we may have less bandwidth – it is still when it came down to it, I made the choice, and this is a hard choice; I made the choice, at least I thought I did originally, between money and having my voice heard.

And then Airbnb did give me that same amount of money. So I did appreciate that. But when it came down to ‘Am I going to put a little more time in or just let it

go with my review removed?' I decided it was important, and it was, it was because all of me wanted to be heard.

Like that twisting in my stomach, that shoulder starting to tighten up, I was like, "Oh, this is all of me saying 'our experience mattered, and we're going to go ahead and fight for that review to stay there.'" It was important, and I feel vindicated.

Amy Carroll

Well, I hear something very important in this, because we both know we've talked a lot over the years about how change doesn't come all of a sudden, change comes from step by step by step, doing the small things over and over and over again. And what you just said, I think – well, first of all, I think it's new for you. Cheri Gregory, and I'm so proud, it like, brings me to tears, that you're convinced that your voice has value.

Cheri Gregory

Oh, okay, okay. Fanning my face.

Amy Carroll

I'm crying too, because I'm like, 'Do I believe my voice has value?' Listeners, do you believe your voice has value? And it was more than the dollar value.

Cheri Gregory

Yes.

Amy Carroll

I just think that is crucial. Candid communication comes from that belief and, and it comes without so much emotion, because the emotion is about trying to convince our small voice has value. But if we believe it and we're already convinced, then the emotion is more level.

Cheri Gregory

And you know what, you're absolutely right. I fought for that review for me, it wasn't for anybody else. It wasn't to prove a point, it wasn't to get them back or anything like that. It was, I needed to know that I was fighting for my lived experience, and there was something inside of me that needed to know that I

would put up just a little bit more fight before putting closure to it and moving on. So you're right. Yeah, my voice had value to me regardless of the outcome, and that is new. You're right. You're absolutely right.

Amy Carroll

I love it.

Cheri Gregory

I find myself coming back to Romans 15:18, whenever I'm pray-cessing communication challenges. It says "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." That first phrase, "If it is possible," acknowledges that some situations are beyond our control. The next part, "as far as it depends on you," emphasises my own responsibility to do my personal best in each situation. And in the phrase "live at peace with everyone" – according to one commentary, the original Greek word for "peace" encompasses not only the absence of conflict but also the presence of harmony and well-being.

Whew! For far too long, I had a lop-sided understanding of peace. I believed it only meant the absence of conflict. And I was so conflict-avoidant that I self-silenced. Many of us have been conditioned to believe that "peace" at any cost is all that matters. But my friend, that is not true. Your voice matters. And speaking up about your wants and needs and desires is vital. It is a vital contribution to the harmony and well-being of all your relationships – especially your relationship with yourself.

If you're ready to stop self-silencing and learn how to recover and use your God-given voice, I'd love for you to join me in the Sensitive & Strong Community Cafe.

It's the learning community I facilitate for growth-minded HSP Christian women. It's a safe space where you can gain new tools and develop new skills in a supportive and encouraging environment. You'll also discover what it feels like to be truly understood as a Highly Sensitive Person – maybe for the first time in your entire life.

To learn more about the Sensitive & Strong Community Cafe, go to CheriGregory.com/Cafe. And of course, you'll find the link in the show notes for this episode.

[Outro music]

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 – especially when it comes to finding and using your God-given voice.

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 that link in the show notes.

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

So less than two weeks after Amy and I recorded this episode, I had an opportunity to put everything we talked about into practice.

I became aware of something potentially available to me that I suddenly realized I really wanted. And I needed to talk with my husband about it.

I shared the whole story – details and all – with members of the Sensitive & Strong Community Cafe in a training video. Here's a short, condensed clip from that video with two of my top take-aways:

The two ahas that I had from that were first of all, I almost didn't say anything to him, because I was like, "Well, he's just going to say 'no' so I'm not even going to bring it up." And then I realized, "Oh, that's called self-silencing!" If I don't actually say out loud to the significant person in the situation or in my life, then I'm going to keep wanting things, but stuffing it down so fast, like it's going to rise up, and then I'm going to smash it down, and that's going to do really unhealthy things to me.

It's another way of saying self-abandonment, and the other person who doesn't know about any of these things is going to think I'm fine because I'm never saying anything, and that's not honest. That's not truthful, because I'm going to end up resentful and bitter and angry, and because my body is going to know that I have

legitimate either needs or desires that aren't even being interacted with in any way, shape or form.

And I was like, "Oh, I've got to be careful about this!" because it was so automatic for me to be like, "He's just going to say, 'no' so don't bother." And I was like, "Wait, I think I need to revisit that."

And then the other thing I did was, I was like, "Well, it's not even worth trying, because I'm just going to get disappointed." And the 'aha' I had in the midst of that was, "What if being disappointed isn't the worst thing in the world?" I realized, "Wait, it's okay to want something, even though I might not get it and I might feel disappointed, I can still choose to want it and even enjoy the experience of wanting it."

And that was a new thought to me, the idea of separating these two things out, to actually want it without the disappointment being the worst thing in the world. And then the other thing that came into play was, "How can I go ahead and want something without getting my hopes up?"

Disappointment isn't the worst thing in the world. I can want what I want. And also I need to guard and be careful and set a personal emotional boundary against getting my hopes up.

That's kind of the bottom line on the on the disappointment thing was just kind of both sides of the 'I really want something, and it's important that I recognize that I want something,' otherwise my body is going to advocate for me sometimes in ways that are not healthy, like I'm going to have a pint of Ben & Jerry's, eaten with a fork, you know.

I love sharing these kinds of in-process vicarious mastery experiences in the Sensitive & Strong Community Cafe – complete with the context and details – so we can all learn together as HSP sisters in Christ.

If you're ready to stop self-silencing and learn how to recover and use your God-given voice, I'd love for you to join me in the Sensitive & Strong Community Cafe.

Just head to CheriGregory.com/Cafe or click the link in the show notes.