

# ***Grit 'n' Grace — The Podcast for Highly Sensitive Christian Women***

## **Episode #288**

### **Why Asking for What You Want (and Actually Getting It!) Feels So Wrong**

Why does getting what you want sometimes feel **so** wrong? You finally speak up, advocate for yourself, and even win – but then, instead of feeling victorious, you're hit with guilt, second-guessing, or a sudden urge to backtrack.

What is up with that?

Well, in this episode, I'm sharing a real-life situation that left me wondering why asking for what I want feels so uncomfortable; why getting what I want can feel so much worse than just going with the flow; and how this is all tangled up with people-pleasing, perfectionism, and a deep, deep desire for certainty.

So if you've ever struggled to stand your ground, let's talk about how to move forward with confidence – minus the emotional whiplash!

[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 there's something 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 you could join me today, because we're starting a series focused on HSPs and decision-making.

Now my original plan was just a couple of episodes. But over the last three weeks, as I've been researching the possibility of purchasing a new car, I've become my own case study. So this has grown into at least a 4-part series – and possibly more.

Now, just over a week ago, I made a spontaneous video for the members of [the Sensitive & Strong Community Cafe](#), sharing a couple of “Aha!” moments I'd had that morning. Well, that video sparked a powerful conversation in the comments, and I realized that it would make a great starting point for this series on HSPs and decision-making.

So, just to give you a little context for the video – which I'm about to share the audio portion – our theme for the year in [the Sensitive & Strong Community Cafe](#) is “The Best of You” based on the book of the same name by Dr. Alison Cook.

Now, at one point, you'll hear me make a key distinction between “selfishness” versus “selfhood,” which is one of the important distinctions we've already had some *great* discussions about in the Sensitive & Strong Community Cafe.

Dr. Cook distinguishes between selfishness, selflessness, and selfhood like this:

- **Selfishness** = It's all about *me*.
- **Selflessness** = It's all about *you*.
- **Selfhood** = It's about you *and* me.

And she defines selfhood as **Your God-given image-bearing self – your soul made to shine who God is through your life.**

Here are a couple more key concepts from Dr. Allison Cook that we're continuing to discuss:

(And this is a direct quote from her book:) "A lot of preaching in faith communities focuses on Christ's selflessness, but the idea often gets misconstrued. The selfless acts of Jesus were always rooted in the clarity he had about who He was and his larger purpose. Jesus' example is *very* different from the kind of selflessness that comes from not knowing who you are. When Jesus said to "deny yourself," He understood the difference between denying your selfishness and denying your selfhood."

And then:

"Selfhood is what you bring into your relationships. It gives you the courage to show up bravely with integrity, even when it means pointing out hard things or honoring your limits. It's an understanding that in any relationship, two people have perspectives that matter, and *you* are one of those people."

So as we're learning what it means to have a strong sense of self – especially as highly sensitive Christian women – we're pray-cessing three vital questions:

- What do you WANT?
- What do you NEED?
- What matters MOST to you?

Okie dokie – now that you have a bit of the background, here's what I shared with members of [the Sensitive & Strong Community Cafe](#) just over week ago:

[Audio changes]

This morning, as I'm reflecting on where I'm at in the whole car-researching and possibly car-buying process, I'm realizing that one possible obstacle that I had not really recognized to this whole question of, "What do you want?" to recognizing our own individual wants and needs that are part of our selfhood, right? This is not part of selfishness; it is part of our selfhood, our autonomy, our God-given will to express ourselves as who He created us to be.

I had a situation crop up where in order to move forward, in order to gain the information I needed, I had to very specifically ask for what I wanted. And it took me a while to figure out how to do it, how to word it. I felt strange while doing it. I felt weird afterwards.

But you want to know when I felt the worst?

When I actually got what I wanted.

Now, let me be clear, I was *giddy* for about an hour, and that was yesterday; and this morning, I woke up with a sick feeling in my stomach, and I was ready to reverse a decision I thought I had made; I just wanted to avoid the whole situation; never go there again, never talk to those people again; and I'm like, "What is going on, Cheri?"

And I realized that I felt like I had been too much, like I had caused a problem. I felt like I needed to apologize. I felt like if I went back, I would need to hang my head in shame.

And I'm like, "*Why?* Shouldn't I feel like I can strut in there like I'm the victor? Like, I won! I got what I wanted!"

And I realized this whole dynamic is all made up inside my head, right? [Laughs] Like there's, there's no reality to any of it. My body is having a very typical, programmed, conditioned reaction, first of all, that I was uppity enough to actually put into words, to push back against people in authority, right, people who have typically held a certain kind of power over someone like me, that I even thought I dared do that.

But then the fact that I ended up getting what I wanted – and I still can't put into words why that is so uncomfortable to me, like why it feels so wrong that they said yes to me; there's a part of me that would have almost felt better if I'd asked for what I wanted – because then I could say, you know, I was true to myself. "The best of you," right? Like the best version of me showed up. And of course, as always, I can't have what I want, because that's the way it's typically been.

So I have no big insights or answers for you. I have only questions right now, but I wanted to share the experience in case it sparks something for you in terms of what bubbles up for you as you even think of asking for what you want or asking for what you need *in specific situations*.

I'm in the midst of a very specific situation, right, where I'm literally asking if certain things are possible for a certain vehicle, can they take certain things off, or will they honor a certain pricing, right?

This is my invitation to you: I'm going to encourage you to be in an experimental mindset, to be watching as you're just living your everyday life. Certainly be present; and also have a part of you that is like, "If I were to turn this into a case study, if I were to be an observer of my own life," as you come into situations when you feel your body responding and resisting, like "This isn't working for me," those can be wonderful opportunities to ask, "Okay, if this is not what I want," or "This is what I don't want," or "This isn't what I need," or "This is what I don't need," then to ask yourself just those gentle questions of, what *do* I want, what *do* I need?

And don't worry about coming up with a great answer, just see what happens in the hours or days to come.

And I'm going to leave you with one more little tidbit here. And I think this has to do with knowing what we want and what we need, and one of the reasons maybe why it's so hard; but in this whole process, I am recognizing everything within me *screaming* for certainty, like begging, *demanding* certainty, right? It's that old perfectionism rising up. What I just described to you is people-pleasing rising up, right? But I'm also recognizing perfectionism rising up and it wants certainty. It wants to *know* that I'm going to make the one right decision, the only right decision.

And I've had some wonderful conversations with my son, who – he hasn't been my bodyguard, he's been my boundary guard. He's gone on all of these appointments with me, and I am so grateful to have him there to bear witness and then to process with because he's an HSP too, and he's happy to be my sounding board and to give me his observations.

But we've talked a great deal about the difference between the certainty that the less mature parts of me really wish they could have and the clarity. Certainty versus clarity. And I'll tell you, I have seen in so many ways through this whole experience, how certainty just is not possible for most things on this earth.

Fortunately, certainty is absolutely possible for the things that are of eternal worth and eternal value, right? We can have certainty in God's love for us. We can have certainty in his redemptive power and his saving grace. But with everything else, certainty is a myth. There's even a book called *The Myth of Certainty*.

But I can gain *clarity*. I'm sharing with you this morning one of the reasons I wanted to do it was to reinforce my clarity in realizing I'm gonna go back to that particular dealership. And by the time I get there, I won't be battling this anymore. I won't be battling guilt or shame over asking for what I want and getting what I want. That is clarity that I need to have before I leave the house, and if it rises up within me again while I'm there, I can be certain that it's not of God, like those kinds of things I can be certain of.

And so maybe as you experiment and use yourself as a case study for this whole idea of what do you want and what do you need; keep that in mind, that certainty isn't the goal, but clarity – an emerging clarity – is possible.

And I will also tell you often we need to be in action. We need to be in motion to be able to gain that kind of clarity.

I would love, love, love to hear any reflections back from you of what anything in there that you heard that was valuable, and any questions you might have like, I am going to be a complete open book.

There are some emails I'm going to share with you, between me and the dealership and my son did an amazing breakdown/ takedown of an email they sent me. You guys, I think, are going to find it hilarious, but also *eye-opening* of the reasons why we as HSPs need to *advocate* for the process that works for us, but I'm going to save that for another time.

[Audio changes]

So, when I shared this spontaneous little video in [the Sensitive & Strong Community Cafe](#), there was a flurry of great comments. And I'm delighted that six Cafe members not only gave me permission to share their comments – they agreed to record them so you can hear their thoughts in their own voices!

**Cafe Member A:**

“I resonate with feeling guilty when I get what I want, especially if it involves differences of opinion. Like, I shouldn't have pushed for something – even though it was probably barely a nudge – and that me voicing an opinion caused someone to do something in my favor.

I've also struggled with needing clarity, especially when being around others who don't have that need as much as me, and feeling like I “should” be able to get by with less clarity. I'll have to ponder if any of those situations were actually me wanting certainty, but regardless, I have to be reminded that desiring clarity is not a bad thing!”

**Cafe Member B:**

“So many competing scenarios played in my mind as I listened to your experience. One from my childhood was of my dog Bozo. Bozo was an outdoor dog who wanted desperately to be an indoor dog. Everyday he would sit at the sliding glass door, whining to come in and be with us. Eventually he would tire from his pleas and walk away. That's how I've been so much of my life. I would pursue something, but give up all too soon. I believed those good things were not meant for me, but they were meant for others. I didn't want to be pesky, like my dog Bozo.”

**Cafe Member C:**

“Thank you for sharing this, Cheri! What a journey this has been for you. I'm thinking this must be a regular thing for us! This intense process and battle with ruminating and mulling over things and wanting something *just* right. It can be good but then turn south if we

don't check our alignment with the Spirit. I think my preparation for two upcoming international trips has been this way for me the past two months. I want to make sure all the logistics and details are in place, but I'm having to battle against perfectionism and overthinking. I said to God again today to please help me get all this in its right place and to stop constantly thinking about it. I think what I'm trying to do is make sure the trips are enjoyable, but I may be putting too much weight in them providing something that only God can, like I can find myself doing with earthly things. He is my joy and provision.

Of course, a lot of my planning is because of addressing HSP needs to make sure I'm comfortable during the trips. I think there's some fear that I won't be ok if I'm not in some way. So, I'm wanting the wisdom to know what I need and don't need and for the details and logistics and for what to let go! And the grace and strength to carry this out in love to Him, myself and my family.”

**Cafe Member D:**

“I just finished facilitating Bible Study and during conversation, I said, ‘My prayer life trajectory has been based on the frustration that I rarely get what I want.’ I have a situation at work that has been really challenging: voting is involved and people have taken sides; unfortunately I am the minority vote and I have already resigned myself to the fact that the vote will not go ‘my way.’ But what I want and what I need are different things in this situation. That question by itself is clarifying!”

**Cafe Member E:**

“I can so relate, Cheri! Your putting it into words helps. I thought that perhaps my hesitancy to advocate for what I want also had to do with just not learning to have a voice as a child, but now I see it's huge within my wiring as well.



My youngest is HSP and I can see in her the desire for things to be perfect or she won't attempt to try things. We're in the thick of helping her to voice what she wants, try things and be ok if it's not perfect. It's about growth!

So I guess I need to remind myself too that asking for what I want/need is about growth – not necessarily perfection.”

**Cafe Member F:**

Thank you, Cheri, for sharing this because my brain works the same way. The questions of, ‘How do I do it?’, ‘How do I word it?’, and then feeling ill a little while after getting what I want due to believing that I was ‘too much,’ etc.

I also related to feeling like something must be wrong because I got what I wanted and that's not the norm. I relate so much to all of that.

Much of the stress I've faced, and continue to face, is caused by what you clearly stated, and I quote: ‘This whole dynamic is all made up in my head.’

I needed that reminder. *AGAIN*.

The enemy is clearly the master of illusions, but I'm so grateful that God can and will provide me with the truth and clarity that I need as I consistently commune with Him and as I consistently stay in motion with Him.

I appreciate how you talked about clarity vs certainty. I needed to hear that big time.

I love your son, Cheri! I am so glad God blessed you with him as a boundary guard during this very challenging process.

Thank you again for sharing. It's good to know that I'm not alone.”

Well, as you can probably tell, the [Sensitive & Strong Community Cafe](#) is an intentional learning community of growth-minded HSP Christian women. And I just love all the reciprocal blessings that happen whether we're interacting live on a Zoom call together, or responding to each other in the comments, or just listening in – whatever our schedule permits.

To learn more about the Sensitive & Strong Community Cafe, head to [CheriGregory.com/Cafe](https://CheriGregory.com/Cafe) – or click the link in the show notes!

[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, which includes *asking* for what you want and need – *and* being able to receive it, too.

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

Now, if you're brand new to the whole HSP concept, come on over and 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.**