

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules

Episode #183: One Thing You Need to Know About Self Care

Cheri:

So Amy, I understand that you got two of the same Christmas gift last year. In fact, you got the exact same thing from two different people on the exact same day! So, tell our listeners about this.

Amy:

Yeah, you know, you start thinking "There might be a message involved here..."

[Laughter]

So, but I'm thrilled actually the message that was sent. I got the Enneagram 1 book by Beth McCord from both you and my friend Carol on the same day.

[Laughter]

Cheri:

You sent me a picture and my first thought was "Oh, good it arrived!" And then I saw there was a gift bag and I was like, "Crud, somebody beat me to it."

And I knew it was - it was scheduled to arrive later that night.

Amy:

People who know me well and love me did an intervention.

[Laughter]

Cheri:

Well, no.

[Laughter]

Well... maybe. But, you know, to cover the - any, any traces of intervention, I must say that I - this was my Christmas gift to my closest friends, so.

Amy:

Oh! I love it.

Cheri:

You got a 1, and Michelle got a 2, and Denise got a 5, and Kathi got a 7. And then I bought almost the entire library for myself. Like, I immediately bought the 2 for myself.

I bought that before I got you the 1, just so you know, like I inter- I intervened with myself. It was an auto-intervention.

Amy:

It's good good stuff.

Cheri:

Well, this is Cheri Gregory.

Amy:

And I'm Amy Carroll.

Cheri:

And you're listening to Grit'n'Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules. The podcast that equips you to lose who you're NOT, love who you ARE, and live your one life WELL.

Amy:

Today we're catching up at the end of our January sabbatical.

So we've been listening to you, our listeners.

Cheri:

Woop! Woop!

Amy:

We became the listeners. And we wanted to ask you what kinds of things you wanted to hear about.

One of the things that came up is how to balance servanthood to Christ and family, but still do self care. When is it okay to put yourself first?

Cheri:

Woo! Big guns. They came up with a big question. I'm like, couldn't we start small?

But, here's the brilliant thing that we're at least going to attempt to do in this episode. Okay. Like, we knew we wanted to talk about the Enneagram, and I'm like, I think we can process these questions in terms of our Enneagram numbers.

Like, you're going to represent the ones, which is basically you're representing the reforming perfectionist because the Enneagram 1 is called what?

Amy:

The Perfectionist, or some people call it The Reformer. I like The Reformer better. I was like "No, I, I broke up with perfect."

Cheri:

That's right.

Amy:

But truth is, is it's a continuous struggle.

Cheri:

And then I'm going to represent the twos, which according to the cover of my book, says The Supportive Advisor. Doesn't that sound so much better than people pleaser?

Amy:

Yes. I like that much better.

Cheri:

Way better than meddler.

So we're going to have you start out by telling why the 1 book has been so impactful. Why it's hit you so hard – other than the fact that you got hit by it by two friends on the same day.

[Laughter]

And, also, we'd kind of like to know what you did with the extra copy. Like, did you regift it anonymously to someone who really, really needs it? Do tell.

Amy:

I can't tell on air! If it shows up in a brown paper bag in your mailbox, you might know who it's from.

[Laughter]

Cheri:

Okay. Talk to us about – cause you kept texting me and sending me pictures. So talk to me about the experience. Talk to us about the experience of reading this, 'cause it's not like you didn't know anything about the Enneagram going into it.

Amy:

Right. But I have, I have taken a deeper dive here recently.

And listen, it was so funny because Beth McCord, who is the author of these little books that we're going to talk about, she had a devotion with Proverbs 31 yesterday. And I was like, "Oh, let me go read the comments, 'cause some hater is going to be on there."

And sure enough, they were on there. So can we just say, if you don't like Enneagram, you can turn off this episode now, but please don't email us.

We are Jesus-loving women who see Enneagram as simply a tool. And when I say I've taken a deeper dive, I've kinda decided I've – I've been diving enough. And so anyway, but –

Cheri:

Well, and one of the things I love that Beth says is she says, the Enneagram is a tool; only Jesus transforms lives.

Amy:

Yes.

Cheri:

And I think that's such a vital premise.

Amy:

Yes. Said so well.

So I read *The Road Back to You* back before, right before Christmas, I've been listening to some podcasts and things. So, I had just kind of a, a very basic understanding of Enneagram. Then I read *The Road Back to You*, had a little bit more understanding, and then I read Beth's book; and these little books are so great because there's journaling in them.

And I think between *The Road Back to You* and the Enneagram type 1 by Beth McCord, I feel like I've gone through some therapy, no joke. Like it's, it's a cheap version of – of really taking a look at yourself, your strengths, your weaknesses, some red flags that you need to pay attention to.

And it's been just incredibly, incredibly valuable. So one of the big things for me, and it's so classically perfectionistic, is that I always tend to see the downsides of my personality. It's kind of all I can see.

I can't do it perfectly, you know?

Cheri:

Yeah. You're always the one with the, "Yeah, but..."

Amy:

It's true. It's really true.

But, so here's the, one of the gifts that Beth has at the beginning of her books is she says, "I'm thankful for you because..." for every type she tells why. So let me read it for the ones cause it's gonna minister to the perfectionist right now.

Just close your eyes and, and absorb this. She says, "I'm thankful for you because you are incredibly principled, always wanting to be fair, objective, and ethical. Truth and justice are your primary values and you have a strong sense of responsibility, personal integrity and higher purpose that I greatly admire."

Cheri:

Okay. I'm tearing up because she's describing you to a T, and I'm like, "She loves my friend Amy! She knows her so well!"

Amy:

It does describe me to a T.

And when I read it, and even as I'm reading it out loud, I was choking up because there are downsides to those things, but it's so beautiful to read. No, but there are upsides too. And there are people who value those things.

And that just really, really ministered to me.

Cheri:

Hmm. I love that.

Amy:

And then the other part of the book that was just so incredibly valuable was to also look at the downsides, but what she referred to them as is rumble strips.

Cheri:

Mmmhmm.

Amy:

Now, most everybody probably knows what rumble strips are. They're those, those grooves that they put on the side of the road. So if you're going to sleep or not paying attention, you get that b-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r sound. It's warning. And I, it was so helpful to me to think of the downsides as a warning.

Cheri:

Rather than evidence of abject failure.

Amy:

Exactly. That, that if I start to sense these things happening in my life and I'll read some of them, if I start to sense these things, I don't have to fall into shame immediately.

I can use them as a warning. "Hey, you're starting to get in an unhealthy place. What's going on here?" And start to, to kinda question and seek God about why, where I've run off the road, the rumble strips are happening.

So, for Enneagram ones, for reforming perfectionist we kinda talked about the best part when I read that I'm thankful for. But at our worst, we're judgmental, inflexible, dogmatic, critical of others, uptight, controlling, anxious, jealous, fixed on imperfections.

Holy cow! Yes. I can be all of those things. Some of them more than others.

But when I start to feel that way or hear myself saying things that reflect those downsides, I can use those as rumble strips.

Now. I just - it was so, so helpful and the book helped me to see, Hey, I, I'm not perfect and never will be. However I've grown.

I've grown through this podcast series so, so much and discussing some of these things and feeling like I'm in a much healthier place even then four years ago.

Cheri:

Oh, Oh, that gives me chills. That, that makes me just so incredibly happy.

Amy:

I've done a monologue here. Tell us about your Enneagram 2 book.

Cheri:

So I got the 2 book after getting their marriage books. She and her husband actually wrote a book called *Becoming Us*, and I haven't read it all the way through, but what I can say I love about it is it's got some good information and stuff that applies to everybody at the beginning. But then it has these tabbed sections in the back that go through all nine of the Enneagrams and they're colored. They're color-coded.

And my husband teaches marriage, marriage and family, at our Christian school here to the seniors, and so he's found it a valuable resource and to just be able to open that book up and go, "Wait, I'm not understanding Daniel really well today, and he's a 5."

We finally figured out he's a 5-wing-4, and so, I can reach for that tab and flip it open and do a quick reminder. Which, basically, is another way of saying I need to finally get through my hard head.

It's been a marvelous resource. So, I thought since that was so valuable, I'd pick up. I think some people have been surprised that these little books are small. They're actually kind of like gift books, which is why I gave them as gifts.

But I also gifted one to myself. There's little hardback books, like you said, I love the journaling component. I love being able to pause.

I don't know about you. I've been reading just them in little tiny chunks. I have not read it all the way through, read in little tiny chunks and did some journaling

And it's interesting. It just flipped open here as I was holding onto it.

One of the questions had asked, here's what season of life have you thrived the most, not feeling limited by your fears and weaknesses. And you know what I wrote?

Amy:
What?

Cheri:
I wrote "While writing exhale."

Amy:
Ahhh.

Cheri:
Exactly.

Amy:
A literal exhale.

Cheri:
So the things that she says she's thankful for the type 2, which again, I love the term "Supportive Advisor," but you know, people pleaser.

She said "You're encouraging, supportive, and able to see the good in me. You are nurturing, generous, giving and loving. You're also thoughtful, warm-hearted, forgiving, and a deep well of compassion that blesses me."

And I'm like, "Oh, all of those sounds so much better than, than meddler or control freak." I like those all so much better.

[Laughter]

Amy:
Yeah, we pick those negative labels so many times, don't we?

They aren't the things that should define us for sure. And I love how she helps us redefine ourselves.

Cheri:
Absolutely. And then, at their worst, okay, I'm sure all of these are words that we have used in conversation over the last four years. Intrusive, martyr-like, indirect, I don't know what she's talking about there. I just drop really good hints.

Manipulative, possessive, flatterer, needy, and overly accommodating. And I'm sitting here going, "Wow, wow. Where's - where's the spy cam she's been using in my home to be able to see me like that?" Woah!

[Laughter]

Amy:

But here's the, here's the thing that I have found comforting about Enneagram is that I've realized, "Oh, it's that it's not just the spy cam in my home. There's a whole group of people as sick as I am."

[Laughter]

Cheri:

Well, and what's so funny is, you know, I have heard people say, "Oh, people are just using the Enneagram to feel better."

I'm like, "No, if you've studied the fit Enneagram, actually it's, it's really incisive." I mean, it really does lay things open. Like you said, it feels like, it feels like therapy.

It feels like, you know, my core weakness is pride and I realize everybody struggles with pride, but it's the idea that I alone can solve other people's problems without actually ever taking care of myself. And I'm like, "Well, when you put it that way..."

Amy:

Exactly. Well, and mine is anger. And I was like, "Hey, anger? *Anger?*" And I said to Barry, I told him that and I said, "Would you say that I'm angry?" And there was this long pause.

[Cheri laughs]

He's like... "Well..."

[Amy laughs]

Cheri:

Let me answer this question from the other side of the neighborhood.

Amy:

In 1s that manifests as resentment. So yeah, I do get loud when I'm mad, but mostly I simmer, and he recognized it. I was like, "Oh. Wow."

Cheri:

Yeah, I love it. So here's, here's one connection that I see right away between the Enneagram and self care because that, you know, we, we, we are doing our best here to see how we can blend these two topics.

And that is, I love you bringing up the rumble strip because that rumble strip can be a reminder that, "Oh my goodness, something's off here." That our needs aren't being met. We're coming - going out of alignment in our relationship with God.

You know, one of the things I realized, and I don't remember if we've talked about this before, there's two words for serve in the New Testament in terms of serving people or serving God.

And one of them means to minister to, and one of them means to worship. And I've had to realize I constantly get it mixed up.

When I start to – and that's when I'm out of alignment. That's the rumble strip for me, is when I start to think I'm ministering to God, and actually, I start worshipping people.

And I think that's a very much a 2 thing, is that in our service towards people, we, we, we get to that point where we flip, and we are worshipping people, and we think God must be really thrilled that we're doing this, when, in fact, we're to minister to people and worship God.

Amy:
Whew.

Cheri:
And so having that conviction, having that rumble strip make us go, Whoa, I need to swerve back into my lane. That's self care. swerving back into our lane is a form of self care.

Amy:
Right.

Cheri:
So let's move into that question and let's see, you know. Certainly we can answer this question in five minutes, right Amy?

[Laughter]

How do we balance servanthood to Christ and family but still do self care? Let's start by defining what self care is and is not.

Amy:
Well, I got to thinking through this, and I thought, for me, self care is paying attention to myself, which is the opposite of ignoring yourself. So, so many of us perfectionists, especially perfectionists, I think we get really overly focused on outward situations.

We're trying to control and manage outward situations, and we start to ignore ourselves. The downside that's, you know, in the church, let's just be honest, we've decided ignoring ourselves is a virtue.

But I don't think that's true or biblical at all because when we ignore ourselves, we can get into unhealthy places, really, really fast. And so, for me, self care is not a spa day or mani-pedis – although it might be for some people. I'm not knocking it, but, for me that's not it.

I thought, what really gets me back in alignment with God? And with other people?

A lot of times it is some time alone. So, I'm an ambivert, and I just need some time alone and time alone outside, it's especially good for me. And the second thing that is self care for me is to pay attention. Again, when I'm in situations where good enough is good enough.

I mean I'm getting better at that. You know, I'm having company coming over and instead of like acting like a crazy woman and scrubbing the grout in the upstairs bathroom that nobody's going to see, that I think "Well vacuuming the living room and running some-", you know, using some Fantastic in the bathroom. "That's good enough."

And that's self care for me. How about for you?

Cheri:

Well and I'll tell you in a sec, but that's self care for you and it translates into care for others.

Amy:

Yes!

Cheri:

Because, you, having decided "good enough." and stopped early enough. Now are going to be fully present for people rather than still being in that anxious state about did you scrub the grout good enough.

Amy:

Exactly. Or exhaustion.

Cheri:

Exactly. So, in that case, self care absolutely translates into care for others, because you'll be present and you'll have the energy for them.

You know, I recently heard a definition from Rachel Macy Stafford, and she says, for her, self care is routinely turning away from what depletes us, so we can turn to what fulfills us.

Self care is about honoring your needs as a human being. And I thought "Yes."

And I just loved that physical turning away and turning towards. And so, for Christians it's going to be turning away from, in my case, inserting myself into other people's lives, trying to always be necessary, trying to be the hero and turning towards Christ. He's the only source of fulfillment we have.

Even though I'm constantly bouncing to try to get my sense of fulfillment from people. And so, neither of us is talking about indulgence. I think that's one of the problems with the word self care is I think a lot of people immediately think indulgence and spending tons of money, and, you just talked about spending some time outdoors. That's free.

You don't have to pay, pay any actual money for that. You just have to consciously make that choice.

And I'll just share a little example of something that didn't happen to me, but it's impacting me. And that is when my father was caring so well for my mother when she was going through her late stages of Alzheimer's. There was a couple of years there, as she really declined, that he didn't go to his doctor appointments.

And I'll admit right now I have a certain level of guilt about that, because it never occurred to me to step in and help him practice self care. He's the patriarch of the family. He's always been so independent. I only see this in hindsight. And none of this is blame. It's just awareness.

But because he didn't go to his doctor's appointments, he didn't go to the eye doctor, and his glaucoma was not diagnosed until it was too late. He'd already lost some peripheral vision and right now he's battling to have any eyesight at all.

And, I'm now going to be visiting him more often, because he'd like to see me while he can. He's grateful for everything he has in his life. We know God is in control, but there is a simple truth here that he did a great deal of care for my mother. But he didn't go to those doctor's appointments, and self care could have gotten him diagnosed and treated earlier so that he wouldn't have had to lose his eyesight.

And so, the idea that ignoring yourself is always selfless – it's not an either or. We can do both.

We can take care of others, and we can take care of ourselves. It's not a choice that we have to make between.

Amy:

I think it's really interesting that we've kind of exposed a spectrum. So on one end of the spectrum is completely ignoring yourself, not healthy.

The other end of the spectrum is overindulgence and completely indulging yourself, not healthy.

Some place in the middle is paying attention, right? It's just simply not an over focus on self, but a paying attention to self in ways that are healthy. So it's, it's hard to find where that spot is, but I think we can all work at that.

So let me ask you the shocking question, Cheri. When is it okay to put yourself first?

Cheri:

Okay, where's my paper bag? Where's my paper bag?

Just that, I mean, just the idea of putting myself first, because we know the first shall be last and the last shall be first.

I mean that's biblical. Plus you use the word self. And as Christians we just, that word is so fraught because we are so used to saying the word self and selfish as synonymous.

But you and I have talked, especially as we worked through the book *Exhale*, the word self means who God created us to be. And just saying who God created me to be over and over takes too long in conversation, so the only other word we have in the English language is self.

As a 2, as an Enneagram 2, I'm so used to immediately looking out for everybody else that I've had to really learn to put myself first. And it feels really, really weird.

And it's one of those things that doesn't have an easy answer. I was just writing something the other day. It was a memory of when I was in sixth grade and our family dog, Nicky, died, and I begged and begged and begged for another dog and my mother was done. She'd had enough pets. And she'd had enough heartbreak, and she said no. And I begged and begged and begged, and I did not get a dog. And I was disappointed.

And all these years – one of the reasons we've had so many pets is I have been making up for the dog I didn't get as a child. But, as I was writing, it occurred to me the choice my mother made was right for her. It was wrong for me. And those two things are true at the same time.

Amy:

Wow

Cheri:

It wasn't an either or, it wasn't either right for her or wrong for me, but she had to make a choice. She had to put herself first in that situation.

And for all of these years I haven't understood, haven't understood because, well, first of all I was only thinking of it from my perspective as a child, but especially, after the last year of all of the medical issues we had with Rafiki.

And, you know, just a few months ago, we almost lost him again and I suddenly started to have some compassion for my mother and realize, "Wow, I understand why she made that decision." That really was the right decision for her to put herself first. I still wish I'd gotten a dog. I still think a dog would have been good for me.

But I think sometimes we have this belief, especially of mothers, that they will always make the self-sacrificial decision. They will always make the decision that's right for others, and they will always, if that means making the wrong decision for them, well, so be it. God will take care of that.

And it's a tension. It's not an easy answer, but I understand now that she did what she needed to do and that was, that was right for the whole family.

So I think, I think we need to be careful not to oversimplify. Yes, of course, it's okay to put ourselves first. And I'm not going to, I don't even want to go to the cliched example of "If you're

in an airplane and the oxygen masks come down, put yours on first and then put it on the child.”

[Amy laughs]

Cheri:

You know, we've all heard that so many times, but in our everyday lives, oxygen masks aren't dangling in front of us. In our every day lives it looks very different, and it doesn't look nearly as clear.

Okay. How about you? What do you think about putting ourselves first?

Amy:

Well, the thing that I thought of is, again, not simplistic and sometimes really hurts other people. And I think we are called to put ourselves first when we're protecting our mission, what God has given us to do.

And I do remember, it's been a couple years ago, we were, I think we were interviewing Holly Girth. And at one point I got snarky and said, “Well, I'm sorry you're not on board with my mission.”

Cheri:

I loved that moment!

Amy:

But I have kind of hung onto that. And when I look at the New Testament and how Jesus made decisions that protected his mission, that other people didn't always like, I thought, “Hmm, boundaries are biblical.” They really are.

And I had something happen recently, though, that was painful for me personally to draw the boundary because I felt like I hurt my friend. I'm sure it was painful for my friend, and yet I still think I did the right thing. Maybe kind of like your mom, you know, in that situation.

I had a friend who I hadn't seen for a long time. We're not generally in touch. She asked me to have coffee. We had coffee. We had a great time together. It didn't have anything to do with her at all.

But I have a job that takes an increasing amount of time. I have an enlarging family, my boys are distant so it takes time for me to go see them. And I am finding, I can't even maintain the friendships I have in place, you know, let alone start to nurture some new ones.

And so, I just said, “Hey, I, I can't. I can't do this on a regular basis. It's kind of a rare event that I can make a coffee date.” So that was so painful to have to say that to her, 'cause I didn't want her to feel like it was about her. It really, really wasn't. But I knew I had to protect my mission, my mission that God's given me to be connected to my family, to my current friends, and also

the work that He's called me to do. So I did put myself first in that situation, but it was hard to do.

Cheri:

You know, one of the things I'm hearing here that I'm betting most people did not grow up with. We need to normalize that sometimes we will put ourselves first and other people will put themselves first and we need to be able to talk about it in that language.

I've always grown up like, okay, it's okay if it happens, but nobody notices. But if anybody notices that I put myself first or that my mother put herself first, oh, then that would be – but why not normalize it?

Why not raise our kids knowing that, no, sometimes adults put themselves first and that's the best thing for everybody? And I don't just mean in the sense of, "Well, you're not always going to get your way."

I think that's how we've done it. But, "You're not always going to get your way" isn't the same as, "Today mom's going to put herself first, because that's the way that things need to be today."

And so, I think it ends up being so shocking and horrifying. And especially in the church. We're, like, what do we do with a woman who puts herself first? We shame her. We make it sound like she's not doing what she supposed to do.

What would happen if we normalize this as a good for you. I am so glad you put yourself first today, because I trust you, and I know that that is what God is leading you to. What would that be like? Hmm. Food for thought.

Amy:

Radical.

[Laughter]

Cheri:

Oh, that's the word people have always used about me. Radical.

[Laughter]

Alright. Take us into the scripture for this week.

Amy:

Well, I used *The Message* this week, because I'm using a very familiar scripture and this is what I like to do is I will use *The Message* beside the translation I generally use it to wake my brain up.

So, here's the scripture, and you'll already translate it in your head 'cause you know it. "Some people came to Jesus and said, 'What's the greatest commandment?'"

Here's Jesus's words in *The Message*. "He said, 'That you love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and muscle and intelligence and that you love your neighbor as well as you do yourself.'"

Cheri:

Mmm.

Amy:

Just that little tweak in the way he says that last part and that you love your neighbor as well as you do yourself.

Self care isn't selfish. The end result should be that it helps us to love others better. That we love our neighbors as well as we do ourselves.

Cheri:

So what's the bad rule for this week?

Amy:

Caring for others means neglecting myself.

Cheri:

Wow. That just, that feels so true.

Amy:

Mmhmm.

Cheri:

That feels so true.

Amy:

And we've chosen that. And I really liked the comment that you just made. I think particularly mothers do this, right?

Cheri:

Can I suggest a slightly different truth than the one you have down here?

Amy:

Yes, please do.

Cheri:

How about - caring for myself means I can care for others better.

Amy:

Perfect.

Yes, because I believe that it's true. The grit is walking that out.

[Laughter]

Cheri:

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. So what's the, what's the grit for you when it comes to self care?

Amy:

I think the grit for me is drawing those boundaries. Definitely, we want to do it in kind ways.

I tried to do that for my friend that I just referenced so I could have coffee with her once and it was a delight to do so, but I couldn't do it monthly or you know, more often.

And so, I had to draw that boundary, but we do it kindly. But if the grit was drawing the boundary, it was, it would have been easier to say yes, but I knew I'd end up resenting it in the end. And that wasn't fair to her.

Cheri:

Exactly. The fact that you were candid up front and you didn't have five coffees before breaking the news, that really there was no longterm future to that. That would have been really heartbreaking, too.

The grace for me is giving other people grace when they need to put themselves first and when they need to practice self care.

Yes, I need grace for myself, but I also, if I recognize the importance for me, then I need to be more active in recognizing it for others and calling it for what it is.

They aren't ignoring me. They're not being mean to me. They're not whatever else. It's not about me.

And give them grace and more than grace, you know, support them. Cheer them on in their practice of self care.

Amy:

Beautifully said.

Cheri:

We hope you've enjoyed episode 183 of Grit'n'Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules.

Amy:

Hop on over to our website, gritngracegirls.com/epiosde183. There you'll find this week's transcript, our digging deeper devotional, some links to self care resources.

Cheri:

So in March, Amy, something exciting is coming up. What can you tell our listeners about it without spilling the beans quite yet?

Amy:

Okay. It will build a group of us that are doing things together, including you and me, Cheri. So, they'll want to be part of that.

Cheri:

You know collaboration is my favorite words. So listeners, keep listening, keep watching the website, and we will tell you more as we get closer.

Amy:

Next week, we'll be talking some more about the things that you said you wanted to hear.

Cheri:

For today, grow your grit. Embrace God's grace. And when you run across a bad rule, you know what to do. Go right on ahead...

Amy 'n' Cheri:

Break it!

Outtakes

Cheri:

Let's hope our listeners missed us, 'cause they're gonna get a good sized episode.

Amy:

I know. I was thinking that too.

And I'm not editing it down. Sorry listeners. You're getting the whole thing,

[Laughter]

Cheri:

You're stuck listening.

Amy:

Love it.