

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules

Episode 35 1/2: More Wisdom About an Unexpected Key to Improving Relationships

Cheri:

Hey this is Cheri Gregory...

Amy:

...and Amy Carroll...

Cheri:

...and you're listening to Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules, Episode 35 1/2.

Amy:

Our interview with Shaunti Feldhahn about her new book ***The Kindness Challenge: 30 Days to Improve Any Relationship*** was so good, we just had to put editing aside and share it all.

Cheri:

So without further ado, here's the rest of our convo...

Cheri:

So really this could've been called the *Anti-Selfishness Challenge*- that just wouldn't have sold very well.

Shaunti:

Probably!

Cheri:

Amy and I talk so often about perfectionists who are all or nothing, and seeing multiple perspectives is so hard. We're used to one right way and what you're saying is there's a lot of good ways and right ways to be. Because what you're describing aren't moral issues here; you're describing preferences.

Shaunti:

Yes. It's always preferences.

Cheri:

There's not a right of wrong there and so instead of being so focused on my preference you're saying I'm going to be looking to discover their preference and celebrate it and be grateful that they're honoring me with their presence and their interaction in my life.

Shaunti:

And just to recognize, you know there is something that is fundamentally – and I’ve done a whole bible study on this – called the life ready woman, by the way, which is why this is a big passion of mine – there’s a fundamental way that we as women especially tend to have this little sinful nature creep up in our lives and its called *control*. Right?

Cheri:

We don’t know what you’re talking about. Could you define that word? Sorry I’m totally teasing keep going.

Shaunti:

Men have some central tendencies of their own. Theirs is to be passive and back off in the face of control. We each have our own things, but for us as women we don’t realize that legitimately - okay this is not just a matter of difference of opinion. You know, his way could actually be better. That other, that colleague’s way - that might - that decision that they made that you’re pushing and pushing and pushing to change...you know what, if you stopped pushing and thought for a minute and backed off for a day you might say “You know what, if I let myself acknowledge it, that way might actually work better.” And there’s just something in us that has a hard time with that for some reason. So this is one of those prescriptions to sort of “get over thy self.” It’s something that really helps.

Amy:

That’s really good and I’m just thinking about putting this into practice. I mean I can agree with you mentally on the definition of kindness, but as a recovering perfectionist I thought *helping* you was kind. “Helping” you.

Cheri:

That’s what we call control on this show, Shaunti! We call it “helping.”

Amy:

But I’m “helping” you... and so doing this will actually take that definition of kindness that I give mental assent to and put it into our hearts. Because we have to fake it till we make it, right? In this challenge...

Shaunti:

Very, vey much so. This was the thing that was so encouraging. The first step is going “Okay fine. I’ll do this because it’s probably a good thing and I want this relationship to improve.” The second step is “Holy cow! My eyes have been opened and I’m not nearly as kind as I thought I was. I’m more negative and not nearly as affirming as I thought I was. I don’t do all these things I thought I did.” So then there’s the stumbling around and then its, “But I don’t feel like it.” Right? That’s the next step. “But they don’t deserve it. But he’s...but she’s...” you know whatever that is. There’s that argument with yourself and that’s where that *faking it till you feel it* becomes this huge tool.

It really becomes God's prescription. And that why we're commanded to do these things even when we don't feel like because God knows if you will do this at some point along the way you'll realize, "You know I kind of like this person now. Everything that they did used annoy me, but I kind of like them now." Or "I just don't notice all those things about my husband that used to drive me crazy. What were those again?" And it makes perfect sense. If you're irritated with someone and you tell them that you're irritated and you tell your girlfriends at the office that you're irritated...are you going to be more or less irritated?

Amy:
Right

Shaunti:

The answer is pretty obvious, right? You're going to be more "rant rant rant" but if you are irritated but you refuse to talk about it, and instead you look for something that's affirming and you tell them and you tell your girlfriends at the office everyday...are you going to be more or less irritated?

Amy:
This is so good.

Shuanti:

Everybody knows the answer to that!

Amy:

I knew within the first 5 minutes who I was supposed to do this challenge with. So I'm like, "Oh wow. Go to work Amy Carroll!"

Cheri:

And the phrase you used at the beginning of our time together, Shaunti, is you used the phrase "heal out we feel." So we're either going to make it worse or we're going to participate in the healing. And I can - just listening to you - I can see how that would happen. Because I think it was back in the seventies or eighties we believed we needed to let it all hang out and we would feel better if we vented, and I think the research has come out really clearly that doesn't actually work.

Shaunti:

Imagine that. Yeah, actually its funny- I was looking at - and this was from one of my previous research studies; I had to dig a lot into the brain science that had come about what influences our emotions and this kind of stuff and - there was this researcher names Brad Bushman (he's a professor at Ohio State) and he had done all this work on anger management and completely has debunked this idea that we all sort of have that if you are really, really frustrated and somebody is getting on your last nerve, its really important to let a little steam out of the kettle so that you don't explode eventually. Like if you just bottle it up that eventually you'll explode. And I think all of us kind of subconsciously believe that for some reason. And he has completely

debunked that idea because it turns out that when you express that frustration, that irritation, that little what you call “venting” its actually not called venting; its actually activating more and more and more, this anger system in the brain.

Cheri:

Wow.

Shaunti:

And every time you talk about it, every time you say those things...that anger system gets turned up a notch. It's basically like turning up the heat more and more and more, and instead when you refuse to talk about it- that doesn't necessarily mean ignore it, but if you just don't complain about it, you don't talk about it the same way you used to, it's like taking the kettle off the burner and putting the lid on tight and suddenly the steam...just there's nothing happening. And that really is the way God has wired our brains. It's remarkable that when you do that and then you're looking for these active way to praise...you'll see them everywhere. And you know what? It doesn't solve the big problem. Those problems are still going to be there but seeing the other things that balances them out- It makes it so much easier to solve those problems.

Amy:

Its beautiful to hear that psychology is affirming what our creator has always said is true.

Shaunti:

I love it.

Cheri:

You know it's so fun doing the video because I can just see it in your face- you do have a light behind you, making you look somewhat angelic, but even beyond that it is just- you are so effusive about it. So Amy, what do you think? You up for it?

Amy:

I just said at my church that I don't have time to lead a bible study or to lead a book study, and right when you talked about the group challenge I was like, “Oh Jesus, I think you're redirecting me. Okay!” Because I'm inspired by the thought of doing this with a group. I think that would really help.

Cheri:

Head over to [GritNGraceGirls.com/episode 35](http://GritNGraceGirls.com/episode-35), where we're giving away a copy of Shaunti's new book ***The Kindness Challenge: 30 Days to Improve Any Relationship***

You'll also find some great freebies from Shaunti, this week's Digging Deeper and a transcript of today's podcast.

Amy:

We hope you've enjoyed Episode #35 1/2 of Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules!

Join us next week, when Cheri and I will be processing with you what we learned from Shaunti.

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 and

Cheri & Amy:

BREAK IT!