

***Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules***

Episode #66: Who Would You Invite to Your Party?

**Cheri:**

I had so much fun visiting you back in July, but I only have one complaint.

**Amy:**

Oh. What's that?

**Cheri:**

I came home five pounds heavier.

**Amy:**

We did eat really, really well and coming off a conference weekend, too.

**Cheri:**

Oh my goodness! So, the first thing you guys did was take me out to brunch at this amazing, amazing place where I had huevos rancheros that were just to die for. Who would have known I could have huevos rancheros in North Carolina? This tells you how little I know about your amazing state.

**Amy:**

We are kind of upscale here.

**Cheri:**

Very! And then you guys treated me to Mediterranean. I have never seen so much baklava in my life. I sent a dozen pictures to my family, and they disowned me. They weren't speaking to me. That was some of the best Mediterranean food I've ever had.

**Amy:**

It was really yummy.

**Cheri:**

The one thing we do have to talk about is the key lime pie. 'Cause I made a confession when I got to your house that I had never had a key lime pie before, and I guess that was a problem.

**Amy:**

Yeah, well, it turned out to be a lie, too. Wasn't it?

**Cheri:**

I had bad key lime pie.

**Amy:**

Cheri told me she didn't have key lime pie because she didn't want to hurt my feelings if she didn't like this version, too.

**Cheri:**

That was the best stuff ever! I'm, like, do they make that in California? Is that something importable? Can I, like, order it in a freezer box or something?

**Amy:**

You probably can. It is Edward's key lime pie not Amy's key lime pie.

**Cheri:**

I don't care whose key lime pie it is as long as it becomes Cheri's key lime pie.

**Amy:**

We ate a whole, whole lot. Here's the real deal, though, that Cheri's not sharing. Most of what we ate didn't come from my kitchen. 'Cause, see, I'm not really confident in the kitchen. Confidence is something we can build in our lives, though, and our episode today is about exercising our confidence muscle!

**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."

**Amy:**

Today, we're reflecting on what we learned from our conversation with Tricia Lott Williford, author of ***You Can Do This: Seizing the Confidence God Offers***.

**Cheri:**

You know, listening to her tell the story of *Mrs. Wretched*, it made me angry all over again.

**Amy:**

Oh I teared up. I felt myself as a little girl. I felt myself as a teacher on *Mrs. Wretched's* team, 'cause I've had that teacher on my team. That was a hard story to hear, wasn't it?

**Cheri:**

It made me realize almost everybody I know has a story like that from third or fourth grade. My husband had a teacher who actually put a refrigerator box around him to isolate him from the other students. And for my brother, it was a fourth grade teacher and my parents almost pulled

him out of the church school, which for them would've been a huge move, because they were so supportive of the local church school. How about you? Do you have somebody who was like a Mrs. Wretched in your own life? It didn't have to be a teacher, but, just basically someone who stole your confidence?

**Amy:**

Yes. And I immediately knew who it was when you asked the question even though it's a much smaller thing – I didn't have to endure it for a year or anything like that – but I love to sing. Now let me clarify, I am not a soloist; I'm the girl who sings in the choir. But at one time, I hoped to be the soloist. In my church growing up I did some singing, and I actually did some duet kind of things with friends, including one friend whose mother had been an opera singer. So she was a real singer.

**Cheri:**

She was an expert.

**Amy:**

She was an expert. And one day, my friend shared with me that her mother had said that she dreaded it whenever she saw me get up to sing.

**Cheri:**

She did not!

**Amy:**

Well Cheri, it crushed me.

**Cheri:**

Of course. Aah.

**Amy:**

It crushed me. And it shook my confidence to its core – I was a teenager at the time – to the point that even today almost every time I sing I think about that. I mean, I don't sing in front of people at all anymore, but if I stand up to sing in the congregation at church, I think about it. These things are so damaging, aren't they?

**Cheri:**

Okay, when I come visit we need to do karaoke.

**Amy:**

<Laughter>

**Cheri:**

I'm serious! I mean I can't carry a tune in a bucket. I'm like a B flat so, you know...we have to get

–

**Amy:**

Well, good. We'll sing loudly and with great joy.

**Cheri:**

Exactly! Make a joyful noise unto the Lord. It's biblical. That was horrible! Horrible!

**Amy:**

Okay, well here's another aside: here's the other aside. What possessed my friend to tell me? I have become very aware over the years – we've talked a lot about friendship lessons – I no longer trust people who seem to take some glee in passing on bad news to me, because there's a motive there. Don't know what her motive was, but it couldn't have been good. So, there you go.

**Cheri:**

Mm. That is very, very wise. Well, the person who stole my confidence...it was actually a boy.

**Amy:**

Not surprising.

**Cheri:**

Of course! It was somebody I thought I was going to marry, actually. And we had met at a leadership conference, and we were sure God had brought us together. It was a long distance relationship, and he called every single morning. And then one morning, I just felt I couldn't talk with him that morning. And so, I told my mom to just tell him I couldn't talk, and he broke up with me over that. And he later told me that when my mom told him I wouldn't talk to him something broke inside that could never be repaired.

**Amy:**

Oh mercy. The drama!

**Cheri:**

And the thing that slays me now is I was devastated that I had done that – that I could be such a ruiner. That I had the power with one innocent choice to be the one who ruined this amazing relationship that I thought God had put together. And it took me years to realize that in a real, true friendship, you can't make one mistake that is the deathblow. And that a person who actually cares about me believes the best, assumes the best, and actually wants to work things out and will tell me if they're upset and will dialogue and discourse. So, I guess kind of like what you said, it's taken me time to realize that somebody who is that (I wouldn't have used the word drama, but it's a good word.) – anybody who is that dramatic probably isn't particularly trustworthy.

**Amy:**

Absolutely. Well and, he shifted all of the blame of the demise of the relationship onto you. But yes, these are the things we can look back and say, “I learned a little lesson there.”

**Cheri:**

Absolutely. Well, Tricia talked about her love of having dinner parties and made me want to ask, if you could throw a dinner party with anybody, living or dead, who would you invite to your dinner party and why?

**Amy:**

Well, first of all let me just say, anybody who accepts my invitation has a lot of fortitude, because you’ll never know what dinner is actually going to be like. But that’s an aside, I guess. So who would I invite? I would invite people – and I try to do this now – to surround myself with people who energize me and encourage me. And that doesn’t mean that they don’t tell me the truth, sometimes – ‘cause I’m not saying I’m looking for yes-men or people to rubber stamp my life, but I want people around me who energize me and encourage me and challenge me, you know push me forward. I love it! I was looking for a quote that I had heard and the quote is, “If you listen to all the praise of your fans, you’ll think you’re better than you are, and if you listen to the criticism of your haters, you’ll think you’re worse than you are.” And I love that! So I thought, I don’t want to surround myself at my dinner table with fans or critics, really. I want to have those true friends, and I would invite Jesus to be at the table, too. I know that’s a Sunday school answer but leaving an empty chair for him is the deal every time. How about you?

**Cheri:**

First of all, I was thinking of this on a completely literal sense. I was like, who would I invite? And I thought, well, I would invite Tricia ‘cause she seems to know how to throw dinner parties.

**Amy:**

Tell it! I would invite Tricia and ask her to bring dinner.

**Cheri:**

And then I got to thinking, you know, really, who would I enjoy? And I would love to actually invite some of my former students and just catch up with them. I was thinking specifically of my first few years of teaching. You know, they’re 40, because I was only ten years older than they were

**Amy:**

Yeah, that’s amazing.

**Cheri:**

And it would be really fun to just catch up and listen and see what God has been doing in their lives since then. And then I thought I would also like to invite some of my favorite teachers. Because when I was in their class, they were one-dimensional, you know, like, they were only that teacher. They never went to the grocery store. They didn’t have lives. They didn’t pay taxes. It would be fun to be able to tell them the impact they had on my life, but then to just

also learn about them and hear. So I'll tell you one thing I hear in common with our answers is probably there would be a lot of listening. There wouldn't be a lot of brown-nosing or a lot of criticism; there would just be a lot of dialogue, a lot of give and take, and a lot of listening and learning and probably that lingering thing we've talked about.

**Amy:**

Oh! I love the idea of having teachers and students there. That's neat.

**Cheri:**

Yeah. It made me realize I might need to actually do something about that.

I also had kind of an aha moment when she was describing this whole situation of having trolls attacking her when she was doing some of her personal writing on a political site, and she described these as people with no life. See if this makes any sense – in computer programming there's zeros and ones. That's how everything gets done – zeros and ones. And you know that I like to say lose who you're not, love who you are, live your one life well. And one of the problems we as women have is we think we can live multiple lives, we can be all things to all people, but really we have one life. And so I was thinking about what she said about these losers who have no life attacking us and how we shouldn't invite them to our table, metaphorically, we shouldn't let them in our lives to speak into our hearts and speak into our souls. It occurred to me we don't want to let someone who's basically a zero, steal our one. Or turn our one life into a zero, into kind of this nothingness. So that may be a little bit too nerdy but it kinda stuck with me.

**Amy:**

No, I love that. You and I had been talking about a professional project, but I think this is true of any kind of relationship. I had a professional person years ago in a group-setting do a teaching, and he said, "We need to remember that not all opinions are equal." Now that really flies in the face of our American mentality, which is all men are created equal, so then we kind of extrapolate and say, "Oh, so everybody's opinion is equal." Well, its really not. It's really not. And I've had to have that processing and this goes back to Tricia's confidence – that I don't let one mean-spirited person steal my confidence. And can I just say...Oh, let me tell you a little continuation of my earlier story...

**Cheri:**

Do tell.

**Amy:**

This person who criticized my singing – she might have been right about my singing, I'm not saying that, but she's a mean-hearted person, and I actually...she sent me a friend request on Facebook. This was a couple years ago and I was like, "Oh wow! Okay, sure, yes." I mean within days she wrote the nastiest comment on something that I had posted about. She actually said, "That is the stupidest thing I have ever heard."

**Cheri:**

Oh. My. Word.

**Amy:**

Yes! And I sat there, and I thought what in the world...and then I thought, I know exactly what to do. I am not a little girl anymore, she is not an authority in my world. I can say what she is. She is simply – she's a zero. She's a mean-spirited person. And guess what! I un-friended her and didn't think twice about it.

**Cheri:**

Good for you! Nothing had changed. You know that saying, "When people tell you who they are, believe them the first time..."

**Amy:**

Yes. And it's really, really true. So, but in this case, I thought I am taking my own power back.

**Cheri:**

Good for you. Good for you.

Wow, because it's your page. She can write that stuff on her page.

**Amy:**

Exactly. If she doesn't like it, she can un-friend me. Whatever. What-evah!

**Cheri:**

I love it. I love it.

I appreciated Tricia's approach to the past, because as you know, I have a little bit of a – Okay, I have a big problem with people who say, "Well, you can't write the next chapter of your life if you're still busy reading the last one." And while I recognize that there's problems with staying too stuck in the past, I also think that there's problems with never, ever looking back at the past and always being so forward focused. And I was part of an online discussion this week that I really had to kind of back out of, because it was in a group of people who made it sound like if you were totally forward facing you were spiritually mature, and if you ever looked back to the past then it was evidence that you were spiritually immature. And that hurt my feelings. Oh wait, no. That makes me sound immature. But it just didn't ring true for me. It didn't ring true for the way God works in my life. And so, I appreciated that she recognized that we need to heal the past, we need to tell the story of our past, and sometimes we need to do it over and over again in order to move forward.

**Amy:**

I love – I think it was Suzie Eller one time that said to me we need to be visitors and students of our past, but not residents. Which, I love that, because, that is what you're saying. It's these forays into our past to understand ourselves, to take a look at the wounds that need to be healed still, so that we can move forward.

**Cheri:**

For me, I'm sure its different for each personality type and how God works with each individual...when I can look back and go, "Oh, I get it!" And then it impacts what's happening in the present, and I can make wiser decisions for the future. I actually find that really, really exciting. And maybe some people just don't do that. Maybe for some people it really is better to blaze forward, I don't know.

**Amy:**

Well, hmm. I would really question that, because the other aspect is the quote. And I don't have it quite right, but that if we don't know our history, we are doomed to repeat it. And I think that's true in our personal lives as well as the political world and as far as the bigger picture of history, so. You know one of the things that I think has been a common theme with Tricia and in our conversation is that confidence really is tied into the people that we hitch our wagons to, to a large degree.

**Cheri:**

Good point.

**Amy:**

And Hebrews 10:35, I love it, says, "So, do not throw away your confidence. It will be richly rewarded." And one of the ways that I have thrown away my confidence in the past is by allowing people in who either have this mantra like, don't look at your past, that seems destructive in our own life, or the people that are actually mean-spirited towards me.

**Cheri:**

That makes total sense. And I love that verse. I don't think I've ever seen that verse before. For both the *grit* and the *grace* aspect of our time with Tricia, I think her definition of confidence can apply to both of those. She defines confidence this way: she says, confidence is the belief that there is a place for you. I thought that the *grit* aspect of this is, that can be hard. It can be hard to just believe this for myself. Because it's so easy for us to expect that that sense of belonging, or that sense that there's a place for us, that we wait for others to bestow that on us or we work hard and hustle to prove it – to prove that we really deserve a place. So I think, for me at least, that's kind of the *grit* aspect. How about you, what would you say is the *grit* aspect of all of this?

**Amy:**

For me the *grit* has been, I can draw some boundary lines. I can jettison some of these relationships. I mean – and these aren't people that are close to me; I'm not talking about shoving people out of the way. I'm just talking about; I can cultivate some and let others die a natural death. And so that's taken *grit* from me, because I really bought into that loving everyone meant letting everyone speak into my life for a long time.

**Cheri:**

That's a really important distinction. And I think for those of us who are recovering people pleasers and those of us who are HSPs, even thinking of hitting un-friend feels mean. And so, I think you're right, it takes *grit* to set the boundary that says no, this person doesn't have access – this person isn't invited to my dinner table.

**Amy:**

Absolutely.

**Cheri:**

Well, and then when I was thinking about the grace, especially in terms of Tricia's definition of confidence. Again, she says it's the belief that there is a place for you. And that phrase there's a place for you sounded so familiar. And I realized, when Christ was leaving this earth, he said, "I'm going to prepare a place for you." His last words were words that were all about confidence. There is a place for us – an eternal place for us. So that got me all excited, and then I started thinking about 1 Corinthians 12, that says that we're each a part of the body of Christ and so not only is there a place for each one of us in the body, but biblically, no one of us is allowed to be that troll who says you don't belong here. Nobody is allowed to reject us. We have confidence that there is a place for us, because Christ has gone, and he's preparing a place for us, AND because we are a part of the body of Christ. That got me really excited.

**Amy:**

Oh girl, I'm gonna soak that in for the rest of the day. I feel it – I did. You know I talk about that pressure in my chest; this was lightness in my – I feel everything right there, you know. So I'm gonna take that one and rub it right in. That was really good. Hope that the listeners feel that way, too.

**Cheri:**

So you came up with a good, bad rule that goes along with this – a good, bad rule – Isn't that an oxymoron? Never mind. You came up with a bad rule for these episodes...

**Amy:**

Which is...confidence comes when others approve me.

**Cheri:**

You know what, I recognize that as a bad rule.

**Amy:**

Yes. But goodness knows I've lived by it some in my life.

**Cheri:**

And then what's the fact we can focus on instead? The flip side?

**Amy:**

Confidence comes when I reach out to others. I think about how that was illustrated so beautifully in Tricia's story...project smile. And even the way she ended with the dinner party. It's all about reaching out to others. And we think, "I'll reach out to others when I feel confident" but really we've got to flip it to "I'm going to reach out to others and that will build my confidence."

**Cheri:**

Head over to [GritNGraceGirls.com/episode66](https://www.gritngracegirls.com/episode66).

**Amy:**

You'll find links to this week's Digging Deeper Download, Bible verse art, and transcript.

**Cheri:**

We'd love to have you join our Facebook group, where we'll be doing a LIVE Q&A later this week! (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/gritngracegirls>)

**Amy:**

Be sure to join us next week when we'll be talking with Karen Ehman, author of *Listen, Love, Repeat*.

**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

**Amy 'n' Cheri:**

**BREAK IT!**

**Outtake**

**Amy:**

Yeah, and I believe that you have an incriminating photo.

**Cheri:**

I do. I have a photo of the day where we both had lunch, all beautifully laid out, and next to my plate was a pile of grapes and next to your plate was a half of Edward's key lime pie. So, I don't know, I'm thinking it seemed like Amy's key lime pie to me or, at least, you thought it was.

**Amy:**

That really seems right to me. I don't see the problem with that!