

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules

Episode # 152: Grit 'n' Grace Live from Lake Geneva, Part 2

Cheri: Okay. So then let's just wing it, and I'll just edit out anything that doesn't actually seem to fit. We can just stumble our way through it.

Amy : Okay. Transitioning to, the thing could just be ... I don't know. What did we have?

Cheri: We could do a graceful winner. We could do a completely awkward one.

Amy : Okay, let's just wing it.

Cheri: Let's wing it. You know, nevermind that I've been recording the entire time, and I may pull from some of what we just did.

Amy : That's always awesome.

Cheri: Isn't that the best? We got an email from somebody this week who says that she loves listening and she listens all the way to the very end, to not quit doing the outtakes. So Amy, you're stuck under the bus for life. Your favorite place.

<Laughter>

Cheri: Well, hey, this is Cheri Gregory.

Amy: I'm Amy Carroll.

Cheri: 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 were supposed to be delighted to include Tonya Kubo as the moderator for our conversation, but sadly, she is not here.

Cheri: Tonya, we miss you, but we love you. And since you're not here, we get to talk about you behind your back. (Giggling)

Amy: That's right. Okay. So one of the things that we're going to brag about with Tonya is that she's this incredibly hard worker. She's been an intern for Kathi Lipp, she's been an intern for Grit and Grace, she has a full-time job, and she is now starting her own social media business, and she's incredible at that. And, oh by the way, she's running our launch team like a boss lady. Right?

Cheri: Well what I was so impressed, when Tonya came on as one of our interns to help us with social media, she did a Facebook group training for all of us and she spent hours going through the Grit and Grace webpage. And so she told us all about ourselves, and I'm like, Tonya, you know us better than we know ourselves. How did you do this? I was so impressed. So anybody listening who needs help with social media, Tonya Kubo is your go to girl. Absolutely. Tonya, we love you!

Amy: Yeah. So Tonya's catching up from a child's sick days today, but one of the things that we wanted to do was brag on her. And speaking of bragging, co-authoring the book *Exhale*, one of the pleasures of that is that I don't have to brag on myself. That was the worst about all authoring my own book.

Cheri: No humble bragging.

Amy: No. So I get to brag on Cheri, and I tell everybody you have to read *Exhale*. You can skip my chapters if you want to, it's really okay, but Cheri's chapters set the world on fire. And so I want to brag on Cheri today because the pre-orders for *Exhale* are open. And with pre-orders, if you send your receipt to orders@exhalebook.com, you get a series of freebies.

And let me just tell you, Cheri's is the best. It's called the No Faux-pology Challenge. It helps us to weed out excessive apologizing from our lives so that we can walk into God's love for us, and just our acceptance of who He's made us to be. And y'all, it's got video, it's got handouts, it's got emails, it's just the best. So that's my brag on Cheri.

Cheri: Well, you're in those videos too, girl. I'm not just talking to myself there.

<Laughter>

Amy: Well, I made up the term, and Cheri did the rest.

Cheri: And you have an amazing resource for those who pre-order and send their receipt in, and it is the Expectation Evaluation. And today, we are recording this on Tuesday, May 21st so it's a week before it's going to be airing for all of our listeners, so today your amazing devo, I believe This Is Your Plate of Trash, just came out. It is spectacular. It's an excerpt from one of your chapters in *Exhale*, one of my favorites, and the tool that you developed from it to help us know if we have reasonable or unreasonable expectations of ourselves, and then also to evaluate others' expectations of us.

So that is, since you and I and our listeners struggle so much with these expectations, in fact, I just saw somebody comment that she feels like if God allows an expectation to show up in her life, she feels like maybe He thinks that she should be the one to fulfill it. And I'm like, oh, I remember thinking that. I remember trying to live that way. That's so hard. So this tool that you've created, the Expectation Evaluation, is such a practical tool for everyday life.

Amy: Do you want to read that quote? Is that up to like good place to do it?

Cheri: Absolutely. This is a great place to read the quote that I suggested and then totally forgot about.

<Laughter>

Amy: I thought that's where you're going with the last one, so I was like, oh, there it is.

Cheri: You know me I always forget my direction. Tonya, we need you, where are Tonya? You would have kept us on track.

<Laughter>

Amy: We are literally unable to wing it.

Cheri: Okay people, this is Amy and me winging it. Now you're going to be begging us, "Please stay on script from now on." Is that what our listeners sound like? "Please stay on script from now on." I don't know. I don't know where that voice came from, Amy. I don't. Okay, so here was this great, great comment. This is me remembering to brag fully on Amy. Not just partially. (Laughing) No, this was my idea, but I forgot it already.

All right. Here's a beautiful, beautiful comment. "At age 55, I have accepted so many plates of trash that my personal space looks like a landfill or an episode of Hoarders. Today's devotional and Amy's new book were answered prayer in the midst of my piles of trash. I eagerly look forward to reading the book and to beginning the process of cleaning out the years of accumulated trash."

What I loved about this comment is, clearly, first of all, the Holy Spirit is already working on somebody's heart here. And she got it. She got the metaphor and recognized how it applied to her everyday life. So, I'm so excited you've been saying all along that you feel like this message of *Exhale* is landing in ways that are kind of surprising and unexpected, huh?

Amy: Yeah, in super powerful ways. And this is the fun part, for those of you that are listening, for authors, because Cheri and I have been processing this by ourselves. Well, we have other people with us, but in a small community for a while, and this is where we get to roll it out to the world and enlarge our community. And that was really the fun part of doing our first Grit and Grace Girls getaway, wasn't it?

Cheri: Oh my goodness. It was so much fun to be there at Lake Geneva at ... so let's take our listeners back to where we left off in Live from Lake Geneva, part one. Friday night, at the retreat, you and I had this impromptu recording studio. We were both sitting at the bistro table, set up to do this live Grit 'n' Grace podcast recording, and we're just about to go into the

part where we are going to talk about our baddest bad rules, from our years of podcasting together, and our biggest ah-ha's.

So, Amy, we're going to talk about our baddest bad rules and our biggest ah-ha's. Now, I want to let you ladies know that we're going to be talking about some of our bad rules, but we also want ya'll. I'm practicing my Southern. We want ya'll to be thinking about what are some bad rules in your own life. And we're going to share with you some of the ones we've done on the podcast.

We just want you to be 'praycessing'. Which means exactly what it sounds like: processing through prayer. Just be 'praycessing', letting the Holy Spirit speak to you as we're sharing because you might share some of the same bad rules that we've experienced. But you may also have some of your own, and they don't have to be worded perfectly. Don't worry about that.

But we would love. We're going to ask you—in fact, we have a microphone up here—we're going to ask you to share some that you're familiar with. Here's the thing: you can look within your own heart, or you can be thinking about bad rules you've observed in other people as well. So, Amy, let's start out with one of yours.

Amy: So, one of my big ones that I am still struggling to overcome is I have to bring cheerful to God. Somehow along the way, see these bad rules they affect our relationships—all of our relationships—and the one that it probably affects in the most negative way is our relationship with God. And what I have realized over the years is that I so deeply love God. I love the Lord. I have since I was a little girl; it's such a gift of my life. Any yet, I had absorbed this idea that I needed to come to God cheerful and happy, and with prayer requests for other people—not me. So what would happen was is in dark times—because we all have them—in hard times, in days that I didn't feel cheerful, I just didn't go to God. Is I would withdraw from Him; that I would pretend that I was okay even in the presence of God. I would pretend that I was okay. And one of the times that this happened the worst was when I was in college, I was engaged when I was in college, and [pause] wow, this is a hard story to tell, because I just found out that he committed suicide last summer [...]

Cheri: Hmmm.

Audience: [Sighs]

Amy: So I was engaged when I was in college. I was madly in love with him. I just really believed that he was the man that God had for me. When that engagement was broken, I was devastated. I remember a night—I waited for days to call my parents—and one night at midnight I called my p— [chuckles]. Now that I'm a parent—

Cheri: [Chuckles]

Amy: —I'm like, "Oh my gosh," I cannot imagine the tailspin I threw my parents into. I was sobbing so hard—

Cheri: Oh!

Amy: —that I couldn't tell my dad what was wrong. When I finally got myself together and told him that Kurt and I had broken up, he could tell how distraught I was. And he said, "Amy are you thinking of doing something to yourself?" —

Cheri: Mmm.

Amy: —and I said, "No, but if a bus was coming my way, I wouldn't move to get out of the way." I was in bad shape. And so I avoided God, even though I was passionately in love with Him even at that time in my life. But I went to church, and I smiled, and I did the plastic face. But I didn't read my bible, I didn't pray, I didn't spend time with God for probably a couple months. At the end of that time period, at the end of that couple of months, I missed God.

Cheri: Mmm.

Amy: I just thought, "I miss God. I love Him so much, and I want Him in my life. So I'm going to take the stick." This is how I've come to think of it: He's going to be mad at me because I haven't been having my quiet time, and so he's going to be mad at me. And I've been so upset, and I haven't been able to have faith to get through this without being so devastated. But I don't care that He's going to be mad at me; I'm just going to face the stick, and I'm going to go before God. It was at night in my apartment, and I was by myself and my roommate was out. And I got on the floor [exhales] in my apartment [pause] and I thought, "Okay, God, I'm ready to face the wrath, your rebuke or your anger." And y'all I've never experienced anything like it before or since—there's been one time since that something [came] close—but the most tangible presence of love filled the room and washed over me [inhale] and God showed me that I didn't have to bring cheerful to Him. That He loved me unconditionally, and that He just wanted me to be with Him. I say it's a process because I tell that story and I think, "Gosh I'm fifty-one that was"—I don't know how to do the math, that was a long time ago—

Cheri: [Chuckles]

Audience: [Chuckles]

Amy: —"really, really long time ago." And yet, I was going to an event recently, and I had just created some messages for our new book *Exhale*; I was finished at the last minute. And I was finished at the last minute because our lives have been absolutely crazy with writing a book, and speaking, and all this stuff. It wasn't that I was wasting time; it was just that I used the time I had, and I finished at the last minute. And I was really nervous 'cause, really, I didn't know if they stunk or not; I mean, I was so close to them they might stink. I messaged Cheri, "Please pray for me I'm really, really nervous about giving these messages. And I think they might stink,

and I just didn't really spend enough time—the time I would usually spend and blah, blah, blah." And Cheri, my very astute friend who knows me so well now from processing all these things together, she goes, "I'm hearing that you're thinking you're going to get the stick."

Audience: [murmurs]

Amy: "You think you didn't do enough for God to show up, and I'm telling you He's going to show up." So you see these bad rules that are stuck in our heads and our hearts it's a process to get over them. That's one of the ones that God's working in and through me. Cheri, what's your baddest, bad?

Cheri: Well, I already shared the whole "failure is the worst thing in the world." That's one of them. And then the other one is, well, I'll tell the story that leads up to it first. Then I'll tell you what the rule is. I was thirteen years old, and the boy I had the world's worst crush on came up to me, and he said, "Do you read the dictionary for fun?" And I went, "Well, of course!" [Chuckles]

Amy: [Laughs]

Audience: [Laughs]

Cheri: And he gave me a look I couldn't quite interpret. And he walked away and he started talking to his friend next to him, and I thought—and my heart went pitter-patter—and I thought, "Maybe he doesn't just read dictionaries, maybe he reads encyclopedias, too!"

Amy: [Laughs]

Cheri: And I thought he was just the shy type. And so, the whole week whenever he and his buddy would dig each other in the ribs and look my way and whisper to each other, I thought they were admiring my vocabulary. And it took me a whole week to realize that they were making fun of me. And the lesson I took away from that adolescent boy is that I can be myself or I can be loved. Pick one. I became a shape shifter. In high school, I learned whatever each teacher wanted from me. I was like, if I was taking seven classes, I was seven different people; there were seven different versions of me. In one class I sat in the front row, in one class I talked a lot, in another I didn't talk at all, in another class I sat in the back and didn't speak. I figured out what anybody wanted from me and that's who I would be because I wanted to be loved so badly. Or at least receive basic approval even if it couldn't be love. And I knew that being who I actually was was not even in the picture.

One of the things God has been doing through you and other friends, because Amy was my message development coach before we started doing the podcast that's why we did message development coaching for about three, four years—

Amy: Until I finally said you're never paying me again because you're a better speaker than I am, and so now we're just friends and we're bartering in this.

Audience: [Laughs]

Cheri: [Laughs] She said the magic words, and she kept calling me brainy girl. As if it was—and I kept going no, no, [pause] no, no, and it was like, but hang on, from her—from the guy when I was thirteen it was bad—but from her it was okay. And I'm like, "Okay, well, I really like Amy and she seems to be okay with who I am. And she's hung around with me, and heard a lot of messages and heard all the weird places my mind goes." Slowly God has been using people in my life to break the bad rule, "you can be yourself or be loved." And then a few years ago when you helped develop this message I actually traveled to Serbia to talk to a bunch of women pastors, [chuckles] and that was a trip all it's own because I am an English teacher and a pastor's wife; what was I doing going to speak to a bunch of women's pastors in Serbia?

And how could I shape shift to be who they needed? It was like, "I don't even know who they need me to be." The only thing I could do was what Amy had taught me to do: and that was start with scripture and see how God led. And what He led me to do was go through and start paying attention to how Christ responded to women, how Christ interacted with women. And as I did that I thought, "I wonder how each woman feels in each of these stories?"

I put on my researcher hat and I went through all the gospels, and I had post it notes all over my walls and I totally geeked out, total nerdy girl—and as I stood back and looked at all of that I realized, "Yeah, if I take the researcher hat off what I really want to know is how does Jesus respond to me. And how does Jesus make me feel." And I realized that in every single one of those stories Jesus met those women exactly where they were and demonstrated how much he loved them individually. And what I took from that in a very personal way is: yeah, Jesus says I can be myself *and* I can be loved. I don't have to choose between them. And that has been huge for me.

Amy: And don't you think brainy girl is kind of glorious? That's a great title right? [Laughs]

Audience: [Laughs]

Cheri: [Laughs] I'm growing into it.

Amy: Well, my second baddest, bad rule probably is: that I have to prove myself to the world. And I think that's rooted in a lot of comparison and that comparison is fed in our culture by

everything we see on our screens [chuckles] and the highlight reels that we watch in social media. We'll talk a little bit more about the podcast tomorrow, but there are some of our interviews that really stand out to me. And one of them this is Episode #39—write it down, it's a good one, it's one of my favorites—it was with Emily P. Freeman some of you may know of her. She has a new book, we'll just pitch it, *The Next Right Thing*—oh!

Cheri: Yeah—*The Next Right Thing*—it came out this week!

Amy: And she has a podcast also.

Cheri: Which is amazing.

Amy: Which is incredible. Emily has this voice—

Cheri: Oh!

Amy: —that is, so it. She could be speaking Russian—

Cheri: [Chuckles]

Amy: —and I would feel closer to Jesus because of her voice.

So you have to listen to it. But Emily talked about—and this was at a time when I was coming out of a really painful personal situation—and Emily—well, it was kind of a professional situation and personal and so it was just really really painful.

And I had come out feeling really less than—and Emily said, she said, “What if we refused to run? What if we refused to run? What if we just—if people want to race with us, if people want to compare and compete with us, what if we just say ‘yeah, I’m not running today?’” And out of that conversation there was this whole ‘you don’t have to prove yourself.’ I can make a difference choice. I can refuse to run. And then in our follow up convo there was this moment. And sometimes do you ever have things that come out of your mouth, and they’re so real, and they’re so true, and you’re like, “Where did that come from?” and you know it was God? Right?

Audience: [Chuckles]

Amy: I had this moment, and I was like, “Think about snowflakes!” Every snowflake is completely unique, they say, in all the world. They don’t compete with each other; they just must like marvel and celebrate each other as they fall. And Cheri and I just talk about what would it be like if instead of saying I have to prove myself, to say I’m not running anymore; I’m going to watch you and celebrate you.

Cheri: Hmm.

Amy: I'm going to watch you and celebrate you. Like, people who are completely unique don't have to compete. They can celebrate each other. And it was such a big a-ha, such a breaking of a bad rule in my head.

Cheri: Well, and I'm going to go off script again because I'm reminding—

Amy: [Chuckles]

Cheri: —and I know, get the paper bags out—I, my entire life, I have had such a hard time with envy. Like every woman on earth seemed to have more better, have more talent, more ability, be more beautiful. Whatever. You name it. I've had such a hard time with that. But you're reminding me now of the day you called me from a bathroom stall.

Amy: The bathroom from Focus on the Family. [Laughs]

Audience: [Laughs]

Cheri: And she had just had an interview at Focus on the Family. I was at home praying for her, and realizing I was right where I was supposed to be. And I was so proud of her, I was so thrilled for her, and I realized this is what it feels like to not envy, to not compete. This is what it feels like to celebrate, and you call me from the bathroom stall and we're both [squeals 'Yeah!']

Amy: [Laughs] I had to get away. Like, as soon as it was over—

Cheri: And she—

Amy: —I was like, "Oh sorry, I got to go potty." And then I went and called Cheri. Oh my gosh!

Cheri: [Laughs]

Amy: And then we were like, yeah [laughs]

Cheri: She made the men at Focus on the Family both cry, and you now have a plaque with Best of Broadcast, don't you? Yes, she does.

Audience: [Applauds]

Cheri: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Yeah.

Amy: That was exciting. But I called a friend I knew would celebrate me. You know?

Cheri: Mmm.

Amy: So develop those kinds of friendships. Okay, so Cheri, we've talked a lot about ourselves—

Cheri: Mmm.

Amy: —but we had decided we don't want this like a podcast with just the two of us sitting in the room. But what happens is we get emails from our listeners all the time saying, "I feel like I'm sitting with you," and we wanted to do something with you. So Cheri, she is this genius survey queen, Cheri came up with an idea to really talk to people about what their baddest rules are. So tell us what happened, and then we're going to process this with you guys. In fact, do you want them to get their papers passed around while you're telling it or what?

Cheri: Yeah, they're on the table. Yeah, so you will find a sheet that looks like this that says "How to Recognize a Bad Rule," and it's got a top ten bad rules, and place for notes and brainstorming.

Cheri: So, we were trying to figure out what are the top baddest, bad rules that we've ever done. We quickly pulled them out of all of the episodes we've ever done, I think—

Amy: Which is how many?

Cheri: We have done one hundred forty-four episodes. Yep. Yep.

Audience: [Cheers]

Cheri: We're almost on three years. Oh thank you. It's been a lot of fun.

Audience: [Claps]

Cheri: We pulled all the bad rules and we surveyed our listeners. We had like over two hundred fifty—we have more listeners than that—but we had a bunch of faithful followers we had over two hundred fifty responses. It was so interesting to see which ones rose to the top really quickly, and Amy messaged me and she said, "I'm so curious to see which ones are in the top running." I took a quick screen shot and I sent it to her, and what was your response?

Amy: It was like a punch in the gut. I think what we'll have you do—don't do it yet—is we'll have you follow what I did. What I realized is that when I read all of those bad rules it made me tear up, because I thought these are things I've lived by for so long that I believed them. I wouldn't, I wouldn't have necessarily have said them out loud to you because I knew better than that. But I believed them. And they shaped my behavior and the way I interacted with God and other people. For way, way, way too long.

What had happened was, is see every week Cheri, we each have different roles and one of my roles is I write the bad rules. I had only written them one at a time, so they didn't have that much of an impact it was like, "eh, bad rule." Bad rule. When I read the list of them, it was devastating. Absolutely devastating. And there was somebody else who said this, too—

Cheri: She said, “Holy guacamole, what a lot of bologna I have believed all of my life.”

Amy: Yeah.

Cheri: So we’re going to give you ladies just a few minutes. We’ve gone ahead with the top ten bad rules, and the reason they’re not numbered numerically is because those numbers are the episode numbers should you be interested in listening to those episodes. But they have yes, no, and maybe. We’d like to invite you to just spend a few minutes here going through saying: yes, I believed this. No, that doesn’t sound familiar. Maybe, it’s been part of my life. But then also take just a few minutes in that brainstorming section and if the Holy Spirit moves anything else on your heart that resembles a bad rule that smacks of truth that has that ‘God-ish’ feeling to it. Just jot it down. So go through, kind of rate yourself on those—top thirteen if we’re being completely accurate—bad rules, and then do a little bit of brainstorming at the bottom. And then we’ll come back.

Amy: Well, so every week we talk through some of these issues, but we are women who love God’s word; so we always come back to addressing these bad rules with the truth of God’s word. Cheri, tell us about the scripture you picked out this week.

Cheri: The scripture that we wanted to use is the foundation for handling all of the bad rules that we bump into in our life: is Romans 8:1-2, and I’m going to be reading it from the NIV. “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.” So how does being in Christ empower us?

Amy: Well, the only thing that really, really breaks these bad rules is the spirit of Christ, and encounters with him. We’re going to do two sessions tomorrow that are more of the traditional kind of sessions than what we’ve done tonight. We’re going to talk about what it means to have an encounter with Jesus and how that changes and breaks bad rules in our lives. There are lots of different ways that we could talk about having encounters with Jesus, but there are a couple that I just want to mention. First one is: time in scripture, time with your bible. This is where bad rules are really broken because if it’s not there, and none of these are— (chuckles)—if it’s not there, we’ve got one of two things going on. Either it’s not true like these bad rules—which are not true—or it’s a place of freedom. That’s good news, right?

That is good news is that it’s a place for freedom for us in Christ. So spending time in God’s word is one way to have an encounter with Christ, but I don’t, I think God is so big, and magnificent, and He is spirit that there are other ways to have encounters with Him. Cheri mentioned one that we listen to Him in those quiet places where He’s whispering, “No, that’s not true I have more for you,” so we have to pay attention to our hearts.

Here's what's, for me, one of the things that I've realized is that when we start paying attention to what's going on with our souls, our hearts, our emotions and when they're stirred up, and they're negative and we're in a knot—that's the time to pay attention. What is the bad rule that I'm walking in here? That is not the life God has for us.

We have to pay attention to our bodies. This may sound a little off the wall, but Cheri and I have talked quite a bit—I have this sensation of something sitting on my chest. I'll say to Cheri "that makes my chest hurt" and literally I feel, I have the sensation in my body that—and I know now it—is an indicator to me that is not God, so what bad rule am I following here instead of listening to His truth? So we need to pay attention to our hearts and our bodies because Christ came for life! An abundant life! So we want to walk out of these bad rules because I think for me that most of these bad rules I kind of adopted a falsehood believing would earn me love—

Cheri: Hmm.

Amy: —and it has never earned me love, it has never earned me abundant life. What bad rules do is it gives us smaller and sadder life. So it doesn't even give us what we wanted all along anyway, the reason we were following those rules.

Cheri: Bad rules always have this sense of condemnation; conviction comes from the Holy Spirit. When we feel convicted about something we're going to have true sorrow, we're going to have actual contrition, and it's going to lead us to repentance. Bad rules lead us to hide. They lead us to numbing. They might even lead us into addictions. What we want to be looking for is those ways that the Holy Spirit is leading us into conviction.

That whole phrase "in Christ" has taken on some new meaning to me. We were doing an interview and I tried to see who it was, and I don't even remember who it was, but we were talking about being in Christ. The next day I was thinking—I run high on the anxiety scale, okay? So I was starting to get anxious about something, and I was like trying to remind myself, "I'm all right, I'm all right, I'm all right." But normally when I'm asking myself is "Am I all right? Am I all right? Am I all right? In this particular, in this situation, and that one, and that.

I'm constantly trying to figure out if I'm all right—and I remembered the interview we had done, and I was like, "but I'm in Christ." So if I'm in Christ, then by definition I should be all right. Now, that doesn't mean life is peachy-keen, but it just means that I that in Him everything is going to be all right. And I thought, "Well, this reminds me of when I travel and I rent a car." Now, I'm in California and I don't know what the laws are in North Carolina or what the laws are in Wisconsin, but in California you can make a right turn on a red light. Alright? But I am terrified of getting a ticket when I travel. Whenever I rent a car I ask them, in this state, "Is it okay for me to make a right turn on a red light?" And they tell me yes or no. If it's yes, then at every red light where I need to make a right turn I'm not constantly asking myself, Oh can I turn here? Can I turn here? Can I turn here? Can I turn here?" Like, or where, when I'm at home I'm not constantly asking. I'm just remembering, "Oh I'm in California, of course, it's all right to

make a right turn on a red light.” And that’s how I started to think about it in terms of being in Christ. It’s not in every single situation “Am I okay? Am I all right?” No, no. Where am I? I am in Christ.

Everything is going to ultimately be all right. I don’t mean the trite “all right,” but I mean ultimately and eternally I’m going to be all right. And that’s made a huge difference.

Amy: That’s good.

Well, Cheri, lead us through breaking some bad rules.

Cheri: Oohh! Whoa Ho!

Amy: We need audience participation. And we’re teachers so we can sit here in total silence for just as long as you want.

Audience: Laughter

Cheri: Amy, I think you have inspired some rebel rule followers out there. What we would love to do is hear from some of you. We’ve got a microphone up here, and we would love to have some of you who are willing to do the extrovert thing or the pretend for a moment you’re an extrovert thing. And either share with us one of our bad rules, one of the bad rules here that has been meaningful to you, or share something, and again, it doesn’t have to be perfectly worded, but a form of a bad rule that you brainstormed. Here’s the dealio. Okay. If any of you saw me break this ruler and heard me break this ruler, and something within you went, “Ohh. Ha Ha. I wish I could break a ruler, too.” You’ve come to the right retreat, ‘cause I brought a stack of rulers with me.

<Laughter>

Now, you don’t have to. Okay? My mother would be horrified to know that I was recommending that women come up here and break bad rules, but should you want to come up and tell us the bad rule you are breaking. And then experience the actual, physical sensation of breaking it, what I’m going to recommend you do then is take it home and glue it in this shape and place it somewhere in remembrance of this weekend.

I’m going to invite you to consider breaking a ruler on behalf of yourself or on behalf of a woman in your life who can’t. I break many rules on behalf of my mother. She died of Alzheimer’s disease about five years ago now, and she can’t break the bad rules anymore. But it gives me a great deal of satisfaction to know I’m breaking them on behalf of all the women in my family and my daughter is breaking them as well. So break if for yourself, break it for a grandmother, break it for a daughter, break it for whoever you want.

Now, Amy, you had some misgivings. You were a little nervous. You had no idea if this is going to work out. Tell our listeners how you were feeling about this.

Amy: I was nervous, but it's basically because I'm a control freak. Because when you do open mic you cannot control it. And I have seen some open mic situations go really bad, really fast. But that is not what happened this time.

Cheri: Absolutely. Well and you know, I'll admit even for myself, I was just like, well, maybe the Holy Spirit will move one or two women to step up and be brave. But something very different happened. I was there down by the microphone with Dawn, the women's ministry leader, and you were still up on stage. So tell our listeners what you saw from your vantage point.

Amy: Well, I was just watching in awe because one after another, after another, after another, women came up and shared the most vulnerable, and sometimes heart wrenching, rules that they had been following in their lives. And then they broke a ruler. And Cheri, it was, I choke up even now talking about it. It literally felt like holy ground. It was, the Holy Spirit at work in such an incredibly powerful way.

Cheri: And one of the things that we invited them to do is to take those two pieces of the ruler home with them and glue them together in the shape of a cross and post it somewhere where it would be a reminder. And we just wanted to share a few of the bad rules that the women broke on Friday night. One of them was, godly women are all meek, mild and only work in the background.

Another one, it's my job to help others behave, but if you say it in a loving, godly way, it's not really control. Gosh, I wish that was true.

Amy: I love that. That might have been in one of our podcasts, wasn't it?

<Laughter>

Cheri: If not it, it should have been. Another one, my body must meet a certain criteria in order for my husband, or Jesus, to think I'm beautiful. Heartbreaking.

Another one, I'm too small for big things. And this was a woman who had been told she was stupid, a woman who's raising her son all by herself. And then, I'm not a good Christian or I'm doing it wrong if I don't tangibly feel God all the time.

And there was just something so profound about watching the women read these aloud, break the ruler, and then the entire room erupting in applause. And we had women coming up to us that evening, and the next morning, saying that just watching it happen gave them a sense of freedom. I mean the women who did it had a certain experience, but even those who were in the audience watching, the word freedom just kept coming up over and over and over again.

Amy: Because sometimes someone else said what was on their heart and suddenly you're not so alone, and you know, that really was what this retreat was all about, is not being alone. And finding out that you have a community of women. And for us, writing *Exhale*, we have so many vulnerable spots in that book, and it's all about finding out that we're not alone, that we're in a community, and we can move forward in a community.

We want to invite you to join that community, either now or later, it's totally fine, but until June the 4th, which is the official release day. We do have these freebies that if you preorder *Exhale* that you can get these three freebies: The Expectation Evaluation, Breathe a Prayer which is a series of prayer starters and then the No Faux-pologies Challenge. You can get those freebies if you submit your receipt to orders@exhalebook.com.

Cheri: We had so much fun developing these special resources for you to help you lose who you're not, love who you are, and live your one life well.

Amy: Come back next week when we'll be handing over the guest host mic to our very first Grit 'n' Grace guest ever: the one and only, Kathi Lipp.

So Cheri's going to do a little lead in for us and at the end we're all going to shout together for the recording that we hope... we've got plan A, B, and C. So we're hoping that we can air this, and we'll let you know. And you try to make your voice heard above everybody else's when we shout, "Break it" at the end. Right?

So this is my part. Cheri does the lead in, and I always say, "Break it" with her every week. Ya'll are going to say it with me. Okay? Ready? So, let's practice

Cheri: I'm a big believer in practice, so, it's going to go...

<Laughter>

Wait. No No. No.

Amy: The girl that did the test three times.

<Laughter>

I'm sorry.

<Laughter>

Cheri: (Laughing) Okay. I didn't see that. I didn't see myself doing it. I didn't see it coming. I'm am totally hot. Alright, let me...

Amy: I am going to point to you and we're going to do a big...

Cheri: No practice. That breaks our breaking rule rule. That's not a rule. It's spontaneous. I'm going to be quiet now. Here we go.

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 break it.

Audience: Break it.

Amy: Break it.

Outtake

Cheri: You know you were just so excited about the fact that it was the Playboy, the former Playboy mansion. I don't know, Amy, you get way too much delight.

Amy: It's really horrifying.

Cheri: It is.

Amy: Yeah. I know. I was kind of thinking should I think this is funny or should I walk around and pray out the demons?

<Giggling>

I'm not really sure. So, but it was entertaining for some odd reason. So... (laughing).

Cheri: I'm dying. I'm dying over here.

Amy: But being there together was so amazing. And there was this one point ...