

Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules
Episode #159: The Reason Your Weird Is Wonderful

Cheri: After last week's episode we asked some of our interns and former interns to share how God has been leading them to love who they're not and love who they are. So here's Jenn, Kimberli, Amanda, Rachel, and Kate. See who you resonate with the most and why.

Hi, this is Jennifer Bryant of PracticalFamily.org. I've always wished I was the type of person to be the life of the party. You know, that girl that everyone is so magnetically attracted to. She's likeable, and she's always up for a good time. Well, the truth is I don't have an endless supply of energy. I'm way more comfortable in smaller groups and quiet places and having deep conversations. Instead of wishing I were more fun I can be thankful I've learned to advocate for myself so I preserve my energy and focus on my strength of noticing the deeper needs of the people around me.

Hi, this is Kimberli Wicks from KimberliAnn.net. This past year I went through a very unexpected divorce and at times I have felt so lonely that it's actually physically hurt. When I pray about that God keeps turning me back to gratitude so instead of saying I wish I weren't so lonely I focus on I'm thankful I have so many understanding friends and family. And that has been a game changer. Sounds too simple but it actually works.

Hi, this is Amanda Davison of AWifeLikeMe.com. My whole life I've thought to myself, "I really need to get my crap together," wishing I were more organized and put together. I'm learning to instead say, "I'm doing the best I can." This allows me to better rest in and accept how God made me.

Hi, this is Rachel Latham from Breathe and Begin Again. Just because I can do something doesn't mean I need to or even necessarily should do it. I used to think it was my job to help if I was at all able to. Now I've come to realize that I can say no to requests even from my own children in order to use my time and energy in the healthiest ways possible.

Hey, this is Kate Hollimon from KateHollimon.com. And here's the script I'm going to start using to shift my thinking. Instead of saying, "I wish I had the talent and skill to decorate my home and make it look warm and hospitable as soon as someone steps through the door." I'm going to start thinking, "I'm thankful that God has taught me that hospitality is more about the state of my heart than the state of my house."

Cheri: Well, this is Cheri Gregory

Amy: And I'm Amy Carroll.

Cheri: And you are listening to Grit and Grace, good girls breaking bad news. The podcast that equips you to lose who you're not, love who you are, and live your one life well.

Amy: So this week we are continuing our series of love who you are and part of who we may love or hate about ourselves is our personality, and I have this love-hate relationship with personality tests.

Cheri: Hmm. How so?

Amy: I'll start with the hate since it's a lot less. What I hate about personality tests is that I think it gives some people an excuse. I have a particular person in my life that will say, "Well I can't help it, I'm just an LLP," or whatever it is, with the-

<Laughter>

Cheri: Yup, yup, yup.

Amy: So I don't like them, because I think we use them as excuses.

Cheri: Okay, by we, do you mean other people use them as excuses? Or do we ever use them as excuses?

Amy: Oh no, I meant other people. I mean they, not we.

Cheri: Very good. I'm in full agreement with you. I hate it when other people use their personality test results as an excuse, keep going.

Amy: And the other thing that I hate about them, or I've struggled with, about personality tests, is I am one of those people who will do the personality test and go straight to the weaknesses attached to your personality, and I struggle over that. In fact, one day I was having a time with the Lord, and I was telling him all the reasons I did not like my strength finders results. And I was really, I really was angsty over those results, and I was kind of enumerating to God about what I didn't like about what he had put in me, and he said, instead of striking me with a bolt of lightning, there was this moment, and I honestly, it was like that loud silent voice that sometimes we'll hear, and he said, "Amy, I'm so sorry you're disappointed in the way I created you, but I'm delighted with you."

And I started bawling, Cheri, literally. And so I was like, okay, I think I'll stop arguing with the creator now.

Cheri: I love both halves of that, though. I love the, "I'm sorry you're disappointed with how I created you." I mean that's a very gentle conviction.

Amy: Yes.

Cheri: And then, but I'm delighted in you. Oh, oh!

Amy: Yes, it was heart-piercing.

Cheri: Yeah.

Amy: It was heart-piercing.

So I've struggled with that part of them. But mostly, I love them. Because they're such great tools, and I particularly love strength finders 2.0 and the enneagram. And in studying some of these things, and I've just learned so much about myself, but I've learned two main things. One is the importance of a team, because none of us have the same strengths or the same personalities, and so a team is we bring all our strengths together, and we balance out each other's weaknesses.

And the other thing that I've learned is I'm not alone. So I think when we get in those angsty places, we think we're the only person that has that struggle, or that weakness, and what we find out from these is, no, there are whole groups of people that have those weaknesses that we are not alone.

Cheri: We're in good company.

Well, and you know, the importance of a team when you are a part of a team and you've grown together, I mean one of the things I'm finding is, and I'll bring up the C word again, is I'm slowly in some areas, very few, but at least some, I'm able to release control, and say, "That's an area of weakness for me, but a huge strength for her, why am I still trying to do it?"

How about I not only trust that this other person can and will do it, but they enjoy it, they're glad for the opportunity to do it? And oh, that's so freeing.

Well okay, so I read something a while ago that I have been dying to share with you.

Amy: Oh, goodie.

Cheri: And it is a new idea for your overdeveloped sense of responsibility, AKA your hyper vigilant inspector personality, AKA your enneagram one, what, improver is one of the many titles for the one?

Amy: Uh, yes.

Cheri: And this isn't all for you, it's also for me. It's for my enneagram two helper slash meddler, and for the overzealous connector part of my personality. So basically I'm saying this is an idea for the perfectionism and for the people pleasing that with still are continuing to grow out of.

So, the book I read is called *Boundaries for Your Soul*, and the author suggests that we give these overeager parts of our personalities, these parts that have worked so hard to defend us and keep us safe, that we give them an honorable discharge. Like we just recognize them for their years of faithful service, albeit misguided service, that we give them permission to stand down, so that they are not constantly at attention, but they go to at ease, and just really assure them that God is our protector and deliverer. What do you think about that?

Amy: That's an amazing exhale right there.

Cheri: Yes.

Amy: And what is upending about that thought is that ... I've never thought about it that way before, but my overdeveloped sense of responsibility is a protective measure. It's armor.

Cheri: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Amy: And the things that I think I've tried to buy with that, or protect with that, is that my responsibility helps me earn your approval, and it helps me belong, but then that is so sick and twisted because I consider producing for you a way of buying belonging. That's just sick, isn't it? But anyway, so 'at ease' is a really good thing to do for that overdeveloped sense of responsibility. Beautiful.

Cheri: I did a Google search to see if I could find like medals of honor for these parts of our personalities, and I did find one that says, "Someone didn't like me today, and I was okay." But I couldn't find one that said, "I held my tongue and the sun still rose the next day." So.

Amy: That's awesome.

Cheri: Maybe I'll get you a certificate. I'll make you a certificate that says that, since I can't find it, a medal.

All right, well in chapter 11, you talk about how God turns our quirks into perks, and you say, and this is a quote, "The difficulty of hiding your gifts behind a façade to fit in feels less scary than authenticity, even if it's painful to shelve your gifts, it's less excruciating than being shamed for your superpower." And this got all up in my business because just a few weeks ago I came to the inescapable conclusion that maturity requires authenticity.

So when we hide and shelve our gifts, we're actually stunting our own growth. It's like we're staying on the playground, playing let's pretend, rather than growing into the women of influence that God created us to be. So, you're welcome, you know. When God gives me these convictions that step all over my toes, I just have to, you know, share the wealth, misery loves company, however it goes.

Amy: Love it. Well, you know what? I just had this flash, a picture. Did you ever have a hermit crab when you were little?

Cheri: I saw them at the aquarium. I didn't actually have one.

Amy: Our pet stores used to carry them. But, hermit crabs are interesting, because as they grow, they have to shed their shell and find a new shell. But that's the problem with our shells, right? Those self-protective things that we put around ourselves, is we can't grow inside of them. And so, I love what you just said, and the picture of the hermit crab is what came to mind.

You know, I don't think we shed our shells and just find a new one as easily, but sometimes that perfectionism is shape shifting, so we do that to some degree, but we cannot grow inside those shells.

Cheri: Well, and we're never at home because what you're describing is somebody who's just constantly being, not a freeloader, what would be the word for somebody who's constantly inhabiting other vacant places?

Amy: Oh yeah, that's true.

Cheri: Yeah. But it's still a way of not actually being our true self. So that's a great illustration. All right, so looking back at the last year, how have you grown as a result of God turning a quirk into His perk?

Amy: Well, this has been a perspective shift, and we've talked about nerdy girl and wordy girl, and so for so long, I have thought my words are something to be tempered and controlled. Now, is there truth in that? Absolutely, I mean we're all called to tame our tongues, right? And some of that means not using them at all sometimes, as you just said.

Cheri: What?

Amy: Shocking, I know. But, I did it to such an extreme, that it became a self-consciousness, it became a shame. And so in writing this book, even I thought my words can be my gift from God to the world, and so you know, I still want them to be a gift, so that does mean that they have to be tempered and controlled to some degree.

Cheri: Mm-hmm (affirmative) mm-hmm (affirmative).

Amy: But I don't have to be ashamed of them, I don't have to be so hyper vigilant all the time, that I'm not talking too much, because I want them to be a gift to the world. So it's just a perspective shift. And it's so funny because even as I was processing that, I thought, it's scary to say, because I'm afraid somebody that's listening is in my everyday world, and they feel like, "Well, your words weren't a gift to me today." Anyway.

Cheri: Yeah, but we don't listen to our brothers ever, you know? So we just like ... we'll just blow off what they say.

Amy: We'll just hope that he's not listening to this, pretty sure that's a safe bet. But anyway.

<Laughter>

Cheri: But you know, that's a very, very real fear. You know? We can sit here and theorize about things, and then they run into real life, and sometimes those who are closest to us, we can have the most tender reactions to, so I think that's a really good thing to point out.

Amy: Well, and I just want to say to the listeners today, like pause for a minute, and say what's your quirk that you've hidden from the world? What is your gift?

And I want ... so let's pause a moment. What is your gift?

And then, I want to encourage you to pull it out and put it on display. It's part of what God has woven into you, just like Cheri is brainy girl, and think about what a gift she's been to us on this podcast. And I'm wordy girl, and we hope that my words are a blessing to you. What is it that God wants to put on display in you?

Cheri: I love that. So you have selected a beautiful passage of scripture to go with this episode.

Amy: Okay, well this is long, and I usually try to choose one verse, but I had a purpose today, that if you are listening, I want you to close your eyes for a minute, and let me read this familiar passage from Psalm 139, and just let it wash over you, like, take it in. Here we go.

For you created my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful. I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place when I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body all the days ordained for me were written in your book before **one of them** came to be.

How precious to me are your thoughts, oh God. How vast is the sum of them?

Or, I want to reread this, because this is a note, it may actually mean this, how precious, or how amazing, are your thoughts concerning me? How vast is the sum of them?

Were I to count them they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you.

Cheri: Mmm. That is beautiful.

Amy: That says it better than we ever could.

Cheri: Absolutely. So what's the bad rule that we're breaking in this episode?

Amy: I must edit God's creation. I think that's how I've approached some of my quirks is that I have to edit what God did in me.

Cheri: And when I read this earlier this morning, I literally bawled. I read it, and I not just teared up, but I did the ugly cry. I was like, "Oh my goodness, this resonates at such a core level." So what's the truth, what's the fact we can focus on instead?

Amy: I must unveil God's creation.

Cheri: I love it.

Amy: You know the grit for me is that it is still more comfortable to hide under the veil. To stay in the shell, in the armor, under the veil, however we want to say it, but I have to make a decision to be vulnerable, because as you said, maturity requires it. This is not optional to grow we have to come out from under the veil, out from inside of the shell.

Cheri: Well, and the grace for me, you know how you frequently talk about the stick that you expect God is going to use on you when you haven't managed to pull off perfection?

Amy: Yes.

Cheri: I realized in pray-cessing my reaction to the bad rule, I must edit God's creation, my version of the stick is a red pen. And so grace for me is that I can quit carrying around a red pen for continual self-editing, and I can simply trust that God is doing a transforming work in me.

Amy: That is so beautiful, because it's not saying you don't need a transforming work it's just saying that you're not responsible for it. That God's in control of that.

Cheri: We hope you've enjoyed episode 159 of Grit 'n' Grace, good girls, breaking bad rules.

Amy: Make sure to stop today over at our website, gritngracegirls.com/159. There you'll find the transcript, and this week's digging deeper download.

Cheri: If you're a small group leader thinking about using *Exhale* for your fall study, or in 2020, make sure to add your name to our leader's list to receive updates, training, and support.

Amy: Just go to Exhalebook.com/study, and enter your email at the bottom of the page. We'll be in touch, as things roll out in August.

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 & Cheri: Break it!