

Grit 'n' Grace — THE PODCAST

Episode #241: How to Exhale the Good, Bad, and Very Ugly of 2021

Cheri Gregory

So Amy, another New Year is looming up ahead. Hard to believe. So let's pause to reflect a little. How did 2021 go for you, my friend?

Amy Carroll

Well, I'm not bitter.

(Both laugh)

Cheri Gregory

I can tell. That is so clear. I may have to take a screenshot of your face, just so our friends who are listening can see what you looked like when you said 'I'm not bitter.'

Amy Carroll

My lip kinda curled, right? What a year, what a year. But you know, here's the thing. In the midst of another year of dismal news cycles, I actually experienced a lot of personal growth. How about you?

Cheri Gregory

Well, okay, let's just be clear. 2021 was no 'Whee! Everything's back to normal. In fact, it's better than normal!' But for me, it has been a year where I think like you, I've been actually able to see some change and growth, which is huge, huge.

Amy Carroll

Growth is good. So we'll take it.

Cheri Gregory

(Laughs) A ringing endorsement if I ever heard one.

Well, this is Cheri Gregory –

Amy Carroll

– and I'm Amy Carroll –

Cheri Gregory

– and you're listening to Grit'N'Grace: The Podcast that equips you to lose who you're not love who you are, and live your one life well.

Amy Carroll

Today we're featuring *Exhale*, our book that dives deep into losing who you're not loving who you are, and living your one life well. We wrote it so that you can lose the ill-fitting roles that you've been trying to fill so that you can be lighter and freer. *Exhale* will help you to love your truest God-created self instead of trying to shove yourself into everyone else's mold. And by the end of the book – and we have so many testimonies that this is true – you'll be equipped to live your one and only life in a way that you know truly matters.

Cheri Gregory

So Amy, you're the one who lobbied for us to interview each other. So tell our friends who are listening in – and me – why are we here?

Amy Carroll

Okay, well on the tail end of confessing my bitterness, this might not go over well, but I'm bitter *and* disappointed.

Cheri Gregory

Do tell. Inquiring minds are dying to know.

Amy Carroll

I mean, honestly, I was so disappointed that more copies of *Exhale* didn't get into more hands. And it's not about the numbers at all. It's really not about that success to you and I, because we're teachers, thus martyr at heart.

(Both laugh)

We really are wired to want to help people and to change lives. And we've heard from so many people that *Exhale* is life changing. But we didn't get nearly enough copies in hands. And so today, I just wanted to circle back around. And for you who are listening, this is for you in 2022, we really want to help you stop suffocating under the pressures of your own life. If that feels like you – and goodness knows who who hasn't felt that in the last two years – then *Exhale* is for you. We believe in it so much that we are actually personally paying out of our own pockets for this episode.

Cheri Gregory

Absolutely.

Alright, so we're going to follow along the outline of the book, which is also the outline for this podcast. And we're gonna go through lose who you're not, love who you are,

live your one life well. And we're going to ask each other some hard questions, and I get to start!

So under this theme of lose who you're knot, which is the first third of the book, where would you say you have not done so well, since *Exhale* was released?

Amy Carroll

Well, you know, one of the things, Cheri, that people have told us is that maybe we didn't title our book well.

Cheri Gregory

Oh, my goodness. We love that title so much. But you're right, go ahead, unpack that for everyone.

Amy Carroll

Because a lot of people think it's a book about rest, but it's really, really not. There is that component in some places. But one of the main themes of the lose who you're not section is boundaries. And I just think boundaries is something that we all need to work on. So here's what I have not done well with boundaries, 'cause boundaries still feel really, really bad to me. And I'll talk about what I've done well in just a minute, but I still have a lot of emotions. Negative emotions are my own boundaries. And so the next thing I'm going to work on in 2022 is to try to deal with the emotions around boundaries better.

This is something God's been doing in my life this year is dealing with negative emotions. I still feel like they're a little bit selfish. So the boundary itself brings peace to my life, which is so fantastic. So I feel like I am enjoying the benefits of boundaries, but I still struggle with the guilt of setting a boundary. Feeling like a bad person. Worrying I

said it wrong. And I really need to focus on – we talked about in the book that there are three things that every woman longs for. And those three things are that we want to glorify God, we want to have a life that feels good and brings joy to ourselves, but we also really, really want to love our people well. And I believe to the bottom of my heart that boundaries actually serve our people well, too, and I just need to focus on how that is happening.

What are some places that you've struggled with *Exhale* concepts this year?

Cheri Gregory

Okay, so – but first, I have to point something out. You said you're actually personally enjoying the benefits of boundaries?

Amy Carroll

I am.

Cheri Gregory

And you feel bad about that.

(Amy laughs)

So is it possible –

Amy Carroll

Can we move on, please?

Cheri Gregory

Is it possible you're just not comfortable feeling good? (Laughs)

Amy Carroll

Oh my gosh, maybe.

Cheri Gregory

Maybe I only see it because misery loves company. And it sounds like we're in the same boat.

Amy Carroll

Well, we can discuss that in an episode that you pay for, sister. Okay?

Cheri Gregory

Okay, okay, so moving on.

Alright, so my true confession when it comes to lose who you're not I actually had an episode last week that brought me just to a screeching halt. And I had to really give myself a talking to. Years ago, I wrote this article about being a highly sensitive person. And I compared it to being a little dog in a big dog world. Now for the last like five months, I've been a part of a business accountability group, and everybody in the group has known I'm the little dog and everybody else is a big dog. And I'm talking about capacity, like how much we can reasonably get done, because I'm the only HSP in the group and the group was about to make some major changes. And I realized, I need to lose who I'm not. I'm not a big dog. I need to leave this group. And as I said goodbyes on Voxer, I actually heard the words coming out of my mouth 'Guys, I wish I wasn't an HSP. But I am.'

And I was like, 'What on earth did I say that for?' And as I processed it, I realized that hanging on to who I'm not, this vision that some part of me could be that big dog, hanging on to who I'm not is actually an unloving act.

Amy Carroll

Wow. Yeah.

Cheri Gregory

Like I've known for years, I can't do the big dog stuff. But I keep trying to hang on to it as if I want it to still be an option. Like the way I imagine it is like I tell myself 'Cheri, you stay here and be good little HSP, while the rest of me goes and plays with the big dogs. And then when I get back to me, we'll get back to the business of being an HSP.' It doesn't work that way. There's one of me, there's not like two versions of me. I can't split myself.

And in fact, as I thought about it, I realized in an attempt to split myself, I'm literally two-timing myself.

Amy Carroll

Ooooh.

Cheri Gregory

I cheat with the version of myself that I still haven't let go of. And then when I come back to the me I left behind, who's trying to be this, trying to be the HSP that I – actually I don't have energy. I don't have time. I don't have energy.

Amy Carroll

And well, and she's a little sad because you cheated on her.

Cheri Gregory

Exactly. She's like, why did you leave me? There's like that little girl in me who's like 'Please just stay. Be my friend.' Now I'm really sad. So I realized, as we look at lose who you're not, it just hit me even more, it is such a vital part of being able to love who you are. And it's not a one and done just because we wrote it in the book. Like I didn't realize how white my knuckles have been holding on to some of these versions of myself that I wish I was, but I'm not and I never have been, I'm never going to be.

Now let me be super clear. My friends who are the big dog types, there is nothing wrong with that. I am glad that is who God created them to be. And so they glorify God by doing that. But I'm not. I have got to let it go. Go like done. Gone. And I never ever want to say I wish I wasn't an HSP ever again. Because it's not true. I mean, that was me kind of being of two minds, having a divided heart. So I don't want to cheat on myself anymore. I want to be true to the one me God created me to be.

Amy Carroll

Yeah, and we both know, some of the best parts of you are your HSP parts. And you wouldn't give those things up for anything.

Cheri Gregory

Nope!

Amy Carroll

Right? But both of us are surrounded by big dogs. So we are both surrounded by women who get a lot done. And we both respect it. But both of us in different kind of ways are called to smaller ministry. And so as I'm listening to you, one of the things

that I realized is we cannot lose who we're not when we don't have a correct assessment of the value of things.

Cheri Gregory

Ooh, tell me more about that because it feels like it lands.

Amy Carroll

So I think both of us – and really the whole world around us, I don't think it's just the two of us – listeners, tell us what you think like, you know that we – we are American. So we value big, more, better, right? Instead of there is an equal value to something different, which is small, intimate, less, and there's an equal value to that. It's just different. And when we don't value things correctly, or value things in the way that God values them, then we cannot lose who we're not. It's part of the process.

So – but we've done some things well!

Cheri Gregory

Okay, so – thank you so much, I would love to segue out of that. Although I will rub it in, I will absolutely rub it in because I need the reminder. And I'm sure friends who are listening will appreciate that reminder that God does not measure things the way that the world does. And at least I know, I definitely need that. So what have you done well in terms of lose who you're not?

Amy Carroll

Well, I am implementing boundaries much, much better than I used to, or more consistently than I used to. One of the tools in the book is seriously three questions that we call The Expectation Evaluation. And I am running those questions on the regular in my schedule and in my life. And so the way it showed up recently is that I

was going to go do a speaking event for an organization that I just love so deeply, I was so thrilled to be going to do this event. And I had waived my fee, which I do for a nonprofit that I love once a year. And I done that, and I was thrilled about it, thrilled, thrilled, thrilled.

What I wasn't as thrilled about along the way is that some extra asks got added in at the end. Now, they have an event planner, she's amazing, lovely, loved her. So it was just one of those things – she came in late, so she hadn't gotten a chance to communicate it at the beginning, all of that. So nobody's fault, no blame. But the ask came in at a time when I was getting ready to leave for a big trip. And then this other speaking about what's coming on the heels of that. And the old Amy would have done two things. First of all, I would have absolutely worn myself to a nub to fulfill every ask. And number two, I would have resented the heck out of them for for doing it.

Cheri Gregory

Right.

Amy Carroll

Set the boundary and just said, 'Hey, you know, I'm so thrilled.' And so there were several asks, and so I said 'I can do this one, but I won't be able to do any of the other ones.' And I made myself not apologize. That's a big deal in *Exhale*, too, the faux-pologies, right?

Cheri Gregory

Yes.

Amy Carroll

And so I made myself not apologize, but just kindly say, 'I'm not able to do this, but can't wait to see you down the road.' So anyway, it was all good. And they received it with such grace. Sometimes I think that we think that other people's expectations, like they're going to be mad at us. This is why we won't follow through. And there was none of that.

Cheri Gregory

I am so, so glad. And just listening to you extend so much empathy to her for the situation she was in. I could just feel myself being like, 'Well, you did it, right? If she was coming into last minute and it wasn't her fault, if it wasn't her fault, then certainly you should do it, right? Because if it isn't the other person's fault, it must be yours, and thus you must fix it for her, right?'

Amy Carroll

Right. I've heard Brene Brown say that the people with the best boundaries are the most empathetic people she knows. That's because we're not overflowing with resentment. So if we choose boundaries, then we can also choose empathy.

Cheri Gregory

I realize I was being devil's advocate there. So let me say it this way: I love that you empathized with her, recognized that it wasn't her fault, and it wasn't your fault. It was – the problem simply existed. And nobody actually had to solve it. The world wouldn't end if some of those things didn't get done, and you didn't over function and – Amy, your number one strength is responsibility. And you didn't overdo it! Yay!

Amy Carroll

Right? In the past that has been responsibility for the whole wide world and everything that is going on in it, right? My overdeveloped sense of responsibility. I have given my sense of responsibility some boundaries, too. Isn't that miraculous?

Cheri Gregory

All right. All right, friends who are listening, I've got my pom-poms out so I'm going to wave them – shaking them!

(Sound of pom-poms waving)

Amy Carroll

I got a pom-pom wave! That's so awesome.

Cheri Gregory

Amy, with a top strength of responsibility, you took responsibility for what was yours and what you could and then you left the rest. I'm so proud of you.

Amy Carroll

I feel even better now.

What have you done well?

Cheri Gregory

Well, I am getting a little better at boundaries. And let's be clear, I'm still at the bottom of the Boundaries 101 class. Like, I keep retaking it. I may never get out of it. But that's okay. Daniel and I watched a two part documentary on Garth Brooks this week and you know love him or not, I'm not here to debate that – I happen to love country music, so it was fun.

Amy Carroll

I did not know that about you! I saw it in the notes and I was like ‘Garth Brooks documentary, where is this going?’

Cheri Gregory

Oh yeah, I grew up listening to Casey Kasem do the the country countdown, and I grew up listening to bluegrass live. Oh, yeah.

Amy Carroll

Fantastic! Okay, keep going.

Cheri Gregory

Just because I'm in California doesn't mean I'm a complete lost cause!

Amy Carroll

Friends! We know something new about Cheri Gregory. So exciting.

Cheri Gregory

But what stood out to me by the end of it is that he was somebody with deep convictions, and strong boundaries. And there were several situations, I won't go into the details, but there were several situations where you just watched him be clear about what he would or wouldn't do. He didn't tell anybody else what they should do, – there had already been agreements made, and if they did or didn't follow it, it was all about him knowing what he was going to do next. And I was like, these are boundaries. Oh, my goodness, he is demonstrating boundaries. And you know, I recently read the book *Boundaries*. And he talks about reactive boundaries versus proactive boundaries. And those of us who didn't learn boundaries early, we go

through a lot of reactivity. But ultimately, good boundaries are just lived. They aren't being said 'Here's my boundary.' They're being embodied by that person's life. And I thought 'Here is somebody.' The other thing I loved about him is the man cannot talk about anything important to him without tearing up. And I'm like, here's a guy who's pretty strong, pretty successful. He's got great boundaries. And he also has emotions. What an interesting combination, but I digress.

Amy Carroll

Those are some life goals right there.

Cheri Gregory

They are!

Amy Carroll

You said that and I'm like, 'Oh, that's a life goal.'

Cheri Gregory

Yeah. It was like it was a nice combination.

So anyways, just one quick example from my life. Daniel and I had a misunderstanding a few weeks ago, and it started to escalate. And I was having trouble with my computer, and he was trying to help me. And for probably the first time in my life, instead of my brain going to 'He should stop trying to fix me,' like, obsessing over him, I realized that even the fact that he was talking out loud to me, was too much coming at me at once. It was too much input. I was like literally having an HSP overstimulation moment. And part of what was driving it was my own internal upsetness with what was happening on my computer.

This is something that's relatively new to me, is to realize that the overstimulation, that an HSP experiences isn't just external, a lot of it is internal, it actually is generated by myself. And so I was able to realize, hang on, I need to dial myself down right now. That's why I don't need to be fixed. That's why I can't listen to anything else right now. I'm in the midst of trying to self soothe, you know, calm myself down. And it's not that he's doing anything wrong. It's not that I won't, at some point, appreciate his help. It's the timing is such that I need to bring myself down to a point where I'm breathing more normally, my pulse is normal, and my mind is open to learn.

And Amy, it was the first time in 54 years that I didn't just go straight to 'You just trying to fix me, why can't you ever listen to me,' the usual stereotypical stuff. And I was like, that's not the issue at all. The issue is that I need to take care of myself first, and I didn't do it. But the next time, I'll know. I'm hoping I just need to leave the room, take five minutes upstairs in the bathroom, do some breathing exercise, splash some cold water on my face, come back down once everything has dialed down a little bit and then I'll be able to listen. But it was amazing to realize this isn't about him at all. This is about what I need. This is what about what my body is telling me it needs. And most of my life, I have tried to stop other people as a way to stop the overstimulation that I'm experiencing without realizing that was the problem at all. So I feel like I'm continuing to make breakthroughs with boundaries.

Alright, love who you are. Alright, true confession. Where have you not done so well with this, Amy?

Amy Carroll

Well, in Mark 10 – I talk about this in *Exhale* – Jesus asks, twice, He asks two different sets of people 'What do you want me to do for you?' Can you – I mean, let's just picture that for a moment. So he does it to James and John, sons of thunder, and then

he does it later in the chapter to blind Bartimaeus. 'What do you want me to do for you?' The stories are fascinating, but together, but I really thought this feels like the year that Jesus has been standing in front of me asking me that question. And I talked about in that chapter how James and John asked for the wrong thing. And I think for the first half of the year, I was asking for the wrong thing. And what I was saying is, all I really want is just relief. I mean, I bet people can feel that right now. I just want relief from the pressure. From all the news cycles. All the bickering and my Facebook. I just want relief from some family circumstances. I want relief from all the people being all up in my house all the time. I need, I just want relief. And Jesus is so good that he does not give us our requests when we asked for the wrong thing.

Cheri Gregory

Oh, oh, that sentence was so hard. Could you say it again so that we can hear it in the back?

Amy Carroll

He doesn't give us our requests when we asked for the wrong thing.

Cheri Gregory

And you said He's so good. You said He's so good and that's part of it.

Amy Carroll

'Cause I imagine if we always got all we asked for, we'd be in so much trouble. That's my cliffhanger. And then I'll tell what I was doing well later.

How about you? What were you not doing well?

Cheri Gregory

Well, yeah, I'll just admit, for me, the pandemic felt like a lot of trying to make two steps forward and one step back, but it was a lot more one step forward, two and three steps back, not proud of it. I'm just saying that's the way I see it in retrospect, and I'm so grateful for grace. But I become aware that I'm still struggling with this concept that I wrote about in the second part of *Exhale* about disappointing people.

Amy Carroll

Oh, people love it.

Cheri Gregory

Like that was such a great concept. We did a whole podcast on it, turned it into a book chapter. And you know me, I mean, I'm an Enneagram 2w3; check, done, victory. And then under enough pressure and lessened intentionality – and so not too long ago, I was reading the story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal. And it's from – right now, I'm just looking at some verses from 1 Kings 18:26–29. And it talks about the prophets of Baal, shouting from morning till noon, “Baal, answer us.” And then there's this verse, this line that says, but there was no response, no one answered. And so of course, Elijah, he taunts them, and it's a great, great story. And so they do even more extreme things, and for even longer, and then there's this interesting list, but there was no response. No one answered, no one paid attention.

And my first thought when I was reading that was this is me doing eisegesis, this is me just kind of sensing the Holy Spirit. I'm not saying this is what the verse was meant to say. But there was a part of me that was like, hmm, so it's okay for humans to want responses, to want to answer, to want to be paid attention. So that kind of felt like, I've just never seen that in the Bible, this part of me that's always seeking responses and answers and attention. It's interesting. And I realized that the no response, that no one

answered, and then no one paid attention, all three of those go along with false gods, those are characteristics of false gods.

And then so here's the next step, the part that really hurt. And that is that when I am constantly going after humans, to get response, to get attention, and there's no response, no answer, no attention, I double down, I'm basically treating them like false gods, because humans are false gods when we elevate them to that level. And so I've really been processing this and looking for when I find myself trying to get a response from people trying to get those quick, immediate answers that feel good from people trying to get that quick hit of attention. I'm trying to realize that of course false gods will never satisfy and turn myself back to Scripture, back to prayer, back to journaling, and dis-appointing people, taking them off the throne, where I seem prone to place them, and seek to have those needs met by God.

Amy Carroll

Oh, that's powerful. I think a new chapter needs to be written on that.

Cheri Gregory

Well, let me live it out a little bit here.

So let's talk about what's going well in terms of love who you are.

Amy Carroll

Well, sometimes, even as you said, going well, it's like, this is so counterintuitive, because sometimes when things are going well, it's actually really painful. Which is so – yeah, not what I was asking for. I was asking for relief. And what actually happened in some ways is that things got dialed up.

So I think I've shared on the podcast that I did some spiritual direction this year. And at the end of my first call with Christy Galtier, who we interviewed, and she's amazing, and anybody who's not following Soul Shepherding should be doing so; but we got to the end – I had opened like a little lid of a box of an old pain that I thought was healed, but as I sobbed my way through the story, I realized, maybe this is not quite as healed as I thought. Christie kept saying to me, Jesus empathizes with you, Jesus empathizes with you, and at the end of the call, I said, 'So what's my assignment?' And she said, I think you need to sit with your feelings. And I'm like, 'No, could you please give me a book to read or like a list to check off?' That's what I'm really good at. And she said, 'You know, I think you're doing muscle is really strong.' She said, 'I think God wants to strengthen your feeling muscle.'

So God has been doing a big, big work Cheri, you know, because you get the back end conversations, a big, big work in the area of my negative emotions. So when I say negative emotions, they're not bad, but they're those emotions. We all try to avoid anger, grief, you know, all those ones. And it's so funny because like, for two years, I've been – my process that I've been blogging on my personal blog is listen, feel, do and speak. And I've talked about failing and the importance of feeling and – but see, I had only connected it to these issues, you should feel something about the issues. Well, you know, the thing that I have heard, and is so true, that we cannot shut down feelings in one part of our life only, that if you shut them down in one part of your life, you shut them down and all of them. If you won't allow yourself to feel sorrow, you also won't feel joy. And so God is doing an overhaul to love my feelings as a God given-gift. And it's so good and so painful all at the same time.

Cheri Gregory

Okay, so there was this almost imperceptible pause as you said 'to love my feelings.'
So how'd that taste coming out your mouth?

Amy Carroll

I'm not there yet. But I'm growing.

Cheri Gregory

I'm proud of you, friend. Especially when you're a woman of a certain age – I talk to a lot of women who are like, 'I can't go there. Because I'm afraid once I start,' I'm just quoting one person. She told me 'I'm afraid once I start crying, I'll never stop.' When you've got – I look back. And I'm like, if I could have done this when I was 25. Oh, there wasn't an awful lot there. But, you know, it's not just that we've added years to some degree, some of those years were exponential. So it feels like a lot.

Amy Carroll

Yes. Well, I think maybe this is the one reason that God gives us a gift of doing it at this stage is because we've experienced some things and I keep thinking about our interview with Cheryl Bridges Johns about menopause. And how many women end up in the counseling office because the gentle wash of estrogen has ebbed?

Cheri Gregory

Yeah, menopausal rage.

Amy Carroll

And so I was like, oh, wow, it is a gift. But it is a gift that we don't think we want. But I see the benefits of it too. So yeah. Alright, sorry, y'all, our friends. You're probably like, 'Yeah, I'm not asking for that.'

Cheri Gregory

I'm bringing up pom-poms for Amy's feelings right here and right no. I am pom-pomming Amy for doing hard things and blazing the trail. Because here's the thing: you don't have to. There's plenty of people who don't.

Amy Carroll

Yeah, that's true. That's true. But oh, gosh, the downside of that is too big to imagine.

So what have you done well, Cheri,?

Cheri Gregory

Well, I think I'm doing better in terms of loving who I are.

(Both laugh)

I'm doing better of accepting and acting on what I know to be true for me. So even though like just a week or so ago, I actually said 'I wish I wasn't an HSP.' But like I said, I didn't really mean it. It was just it was one of those residual things that I was like, oh, the Lord just brought that up. And He's like, here's an area to just keep – let's keep working on this.

But – so I'm gonna be going on a trip in a couple of weeks. And in the past, as I think you know having traveled with me, I don't really pay attention to the details. Like I plan it like a week or a few days in advance. I'm sure that the airfare will work itself out, and the hotels will be there. And I just I don't like how taxing travel is on me. So I just go into denial. And so this time, I found out about the trip just about a week ago. And this time, I dropped everything to make the plans, I did the plane reservations immediately, – you know how sometimes flights are wonky and so you have to make alternate plans. In this case, I'm gonna have to go a day early and stay a day late just to be able

to get to have my son take me to the airport. And I was like, 'Oh, we're gonna need to reschedule some Grit'N'Grace recording. How about I contact people now, rather than acting like it's some big surprise, the day before or the day of? I do have three weeks notice. Maybe this is what adults do. We look at the whole picture and then I was like, well, I'm traveling the day before and then there's the things I'm doing, then I'm traveling the day after. Let me take off work the day before that and the day after that and then this my insides rebelled and I was like that's six days off. How dare I do that.

And you know, the word lazy starts coming to mind. And I'm like, you know what, every time I do it my old way, which includes taking a suitcase full of work that I never do. But for me, I'm just going to go ahead and say it: travel is itself a full time job for me as an HSP. There's so much stimuli, I get fatigued. I enjoy it, I genuinely enjoy it. But I'm gonna take my Bible and a good book. That's it. I'm not taking an extra suitcase, I'm going to take off work the day before I travel, I'm going to make that a travel day where all I do is just be completely present for myself and whoever God puts in my path as a traveler. I'm going to do the things I'm going for and focus on them and enjoy the people I get to see. And then I'm going to reverse the process and take an extra day off when I get back and see what happens. And I think it'll be good.

Amy Carroll

Well, I'm so proud. I don't have pom-poms but I'm doing jazz hands.

Cheri Gregory

Jazz hands for me are just as good as pom-poms. I will report back I once I get back, I'll report back how it went. But I'm going to accept and I'm going to act on what I know about myself. And that is going to be a way to love who I am.

Amy Carroll

Fantastic.

Alright, so the live your one life well, I have to confess there is one thing I have not done so well this year. It's the one thing that I was volleying for in the book, which is this idea of being a seed sender, right, this idea of this is what I wanted women to do from the very beginning. And you're like we need to gently lead our friends through a process, right? And so we talked about that our hands are full of seeds and the seeds are gifts and even our quirks and our God-given personalities and all the things that He's given us as gifts to love, they fill up our hands and one of the things I have not done this as well with this year is I have relied on myself a lot and striving and hustle and so it's like me taking the – I think Kendra was one who gave us this picture, that I am blowing for all I'm worth on the seeds in my hand, and all that does is really make a pile of like spitty seeds.

(Both laugh)

Cheri Gregory

Oh, thank you so much for that image, Amy. A pile of spitty seeds. I love it so much.

(Both laugh)

Okay, so can I just confess that I did not live my one pandemic well? I would love to be able to tell our friends who are listening that I wrote five new manuscripts, trained for a triathlon... I look back and I'm like, 'Why didn't I memorize the entire Bible?' But I'm just like, honestly, it was chaos. And for those of you for whom it was you, cocooned, and you thrived, I am so glad. I wouldn't wish our experience on my worst enemy. But here's the one thing that got me through: and you can see it's a very raggedy Post-It Note inspired by Jon Acuff, and it literally says, 'This is my first global

pandemic.' And I felt so much guilt and shame for not handling it better, then this little scrap of paper made a huge difference for me.

Amy Carroll

Oh, that's so so good. And I think maybe it took all – what month are we on? (Laughs)

Cheri Gregory

I've lost count.

Amy Carroll

– 18, 2000, something like that, month of the pandemic to realize we're not in control.

Cheri Gregory

What?!

(Both laugh)

Amy Carroll

It took this pandemic, we've talked about the Cc word so much on Grit'N'Grace, it took this pandemic to really blow that to smithereens. Like any illusion of control that we thought we had is completely gone. And it sounds like bad news. But it's actually wonderful news, because I think we finally release that sense of control that that's when we start to really trust God. And we trust the wind of the Holy Spirit instead of our own breath to be the ones who lifts the seeds out of our hand and sends them into the world to accomplish His kingdom and His work.

Cheri Gregory

I agree. The number of times that my usual – I was going to say ‘control freak,’ but of course, Barbara has taught us that it's control-loving behaviors, they would start to rise up, and they'd be like, nevermind. I feel like those old experiments were dogs. They did the learned helplessness experiments where the dogs learned no matter what they did, they couldn't get out of the shock box. And so they just gave up. I feel like that controlling part of me is like that dog in a good way. Like, nevermind, nevermind, doesn't work, doesn't work. Now, that doesn't mean I'm fully surrendered. But it's not a bad start.

Amy Carroll

Yeah, it's a good place to start. Because you start to see the virtuous cycle of that, the benefits of that.

Cheri Gregory

Yes, absolutely.

Well, for me, what has happened well, in chapter 16, of *Exhale*, we talk about living open to God's redirection and how God sometimes calls us to start, sometimes He calls us to stop, and sometimes He calls us to swap. And as you know, for a long time, I have felt like I was supposed stop teaching high school. But every time the opportunity came around, I was like one more year, one more year, because I could not imagine life without teaching. But during the pandemic, I started doing a lot of small group and one on one coaching by Zoom and Voxer. Like so many of us, that's what we did. And so by the end of last school year, I realized God isn't asking me to stop teaching. He was just calling me to swap high school teaching for teaching in a different venue. For doing more coaching, in my case of highly sensitive Christian women, and it's been really, really rewarding. So yeah.

Amy Carroll

Ah, so we did experience growth.

Cheri Gregory

Yes, we did. Absolutely.

Amy Carroll

Well Cheri, did you ever listen to Click and Clack on NPR?

Cheri Gregory

We listened to it all the time when our kids were little like, oh, my goodness. And we have all their CDs. And when we take a road trip, we stick them in the car and listen to them all over again.

Amy Carroll

Well, they always used to wrap up by saying “Don't drive like my brother.”

Cheri Gregory

“And don't drive like my brother.” I remember.

Amy Carroll

So friends, I'm going to boss you around. Buy *Exhale*. But don't read my chapters, read Cheri's.

Cheri Gregory

And friends, I'm going to boss you around too. I'm going to say buy *Exhale*, but don't read my chapters. Read Amy's.

Amy Carroll

Well, friends, we sure hope you've enjoyed listening to Episode 241 of Grit'N'Grace the podcast as much as we've enjoyed making it for you.

Cheri Gregory

Check out our web page at gritngracethepodcast.com/episode241.

Amy Carroll

There you'll find this week's transcript, a link to order our book *Exhale: Lose Who You're Not, Love Who You Are, Live Your One Life Well*. And a link to our website, which has some great resources related to *Exhale*.

Cheri Gregory

Join us next week when we'll be talking with – hmm. Who are we talking with?

Amy Carroll

A couple of mystery guests!

Cheri Gregory

Ooh, sounds fun.

For today, grow your grit,

Amy Carroll

embrace God's grace,

Cheri Gregory

and as God reveals the next step to live your one life well,

Amy Carroll

we'll be cheering you on! So –

Both

take it!