

Grit 'n' Grace — THE PODCAST

Episode #249: 2 Powerful AH-HAs about Living with No Regrets

Cheri Gregory

Okay, friends – confession time. After we recorded the episode that you're about to hear, I could not stop thinking about it.

Amy Carroll

And Barry would tell you that I could not stop talking.

Cheri Gregory

That makes me feel better. It stayed with me all day and I Voxed you like eight hours later, and this is literally what I said: I said, “Can I just say I think this morning's convo may be one of the best we've ever done? I cannot stop thinking about it.”

Amy Carroll

100%. It's 100% the best one, you guys. Stay tuned. And I told you I agree, and I said that in the description, and that – you'll laugh when you read it. So you guys make sure you read the description. I just unashamedly wrote on us.

Cheri Gregory

Oh, well they don't have to make sure they read it because we're about to read it to them.

Amy Carroll

Oh, okay!

Cheri Gregory

When I read the description, I died laughing. And not because it was funny, but because I agreed with you so entirely. So here goes the shameless self-promotion right here. Here is the description:

Amy Carroll

I write it like it is third person, but this is me. Okay, go ahead, Cheri.

Cheri Gregory

Yes, absolutely. Alright, so here's the description for anybody who didn't read it. Here it is.

Cheri And Amy share 'take your breath away insights' about how to live a no regrets life

Amy Carroll

Far from being intimidating – I mean, really, who has no regrets? No one – this episode is personal, raw and applicable.

Cheri Gregory

Amy has already declared this one G&G's most impactful episode ever.

Amy Carroll

It's one you'll want to listen to twice and share with all your friends.

Cheri Gregory

So Amy, do you think we're gonna regret giving this episode such rave reviews before anyone has even heard it?

Amy Carroll

We might. I have a little bit of a butterflies situation in my stomach right now.

Cheri Gregory

Well, this is Cheri Gregory –

Amy Carroll

– and I'm Amy Carroll –

Cheri Gregory

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

Amy Carroll

Today's episode is a follow up convo to our interview with Rhonda Stoppe, also known as the no regrets woman.

Cheri Gregory

Rhonda is a popular Christian speaker and author of six books including *Real Life Romance: Inspiring Stories to Help You Believe in True Love*, *The Marriage Mentor: Becoming the Couple You Long to Be*, and *Moms Raising Sons to be Men*.

Amy Carroll

Rhonda is a favorite radio podcast guest appearing, frequently on Focus on the Family. Join Rhonda's free no regrets woman community by signing up for her newsletter at noregetswoman.com.

Cheri Gregory

You can also learn more about Rhonda's books and schedule her to speak at your event at noregetswoman.com.

Alright Amy, let us dive in. And we're going to start out, part one of this podcast episode, lose who you're not. So what is your not statement?

Amy Carroll

Okay, can we just preface this conversation with how painful it's going to be?

Cheri Gregory

Okay, yes.

Amy Carroll

You just learned in like, ooh, this is gonna be good. But Cheri and I were ready to resign today.

Cheri Gregory

Alright. Absolutely. I may or may not have already warned Amy that I may have to pause because I may become overwhelmed by emotion. So we'll see what does or doesn't happen.

So yes, but Amy, I am here for you. In the pain. I am here for you. So what is your not statement?

Amy Carroll

My not statement is 'You're not more virtuous because you're regretful.'

Cheri Gregory

Whew. Unpack that for us, please?

Amy Carroll

Yes. Okay. So, within the last few months, I have had this epiphany, that peace is a fruit of the Spirit that I have pretended, like, doesn't exist, alright. It's crazy. Everybody wants peace, right? Yeah, no, I have joy signs all over my house. So I have totally embraced joy. I have really been working this year on becoming a more loving person. But I have preferred to act like peace doesn't exist because – and I had this epiphany that the reason I feel like the Lord showed this about me and my thinking, that the reason I have preferred to pretend like peace

doesn't exist is because I've had the underlying belief that hard work is linked to angst.

Cheri Gregory

Oh, okay.

Amy Carroll

So the more angsty I am, the harder I am working. And you know, I'm a one on the Enneagram. All about the work and not just the hard work, but other people's perception of what a hard worker I am. Okay, so there's that. And then there's this ancillary truth about regret, which – so angst is a sign that you're working hard. And then the ancillary truth of regret is a sign that you're still virtuous.

This is just eating my lunch this week as I thought about this, and all of this you have to say out loud to other people because it's really them that you're trying to convince. Okay? So if I'm working hard, and I'm just talking, I actually, I've spent a half an hour with you this morning doing this, if I'm working, then I'm telling you how terrible it is. And it's just so rough. And it's just so tired. So angst is a sign that I'm working hard and if things are not going well for me, if there are things in my life that are making me look bad, then I'm going to tell you how regretful I am so that you still think I'm a good person who cares so so incredibly deeply, but keeps going despite the misery.

Cheri Gregory

What could be more godly Amy?

Amy Carroll

I know sick, sick. Alright, so I have a current family situation, which I'm really wrestling with some regret, some really legit regrets. You know, there are there are some legit things in there. But now I'm starting to rehearse how I'm going to talk to other people about this situation. And I realized as I was thinking about this, that some of what I'm rehearsing is how I'm going to express my regrets. So that people still think I'm virtuous, even though this situation might make me look less than virtuous.

Cheri Gregory

So you're going to try to control the narrative.

Amy Carroll

Oh, for sure. And I will – shut up, Cheri.

Cheri Gregory

I'm not saying that as somebody who has any personal experience with this, it was just a theory that popped to mind. I don't know where it came from.

Amy Carroll

Oh, my gosh, okay. So – but as I worked on this, and these thoughts, and this painful topic, I decided 'I'm not going to do it. I'm not going to do it.' Although I have used regrets to look virtuous. I have decided, my friend Wendy Schultz said this, Wendy was on the show, I'm going to kill my martyrdom syndrome this year.

Cheri Gregory

Yes.

Amy Carroll

It's over.

Cheri Gregory

Yes.

Amy Carroll

Martyr is dead. Right. So instead of vomiting regrets, I have been rehearsing what I'm going to say. And this situation is that, here's my new scripts, because –

Cheri Gregory

– okay, but I gotta pause you, I know you're about to go do something really good. But I just got to go to that phrase, 'instead of vomiting regret.' Oh, that lands. Oh, man, does that land.

Amy Carroll

I'm telling you, this has so painful to work on these thoughts. Because it's been so revealing in ugly ways, about myself. But I'm rehearsing a new script, instead of vomiting those regrets. Here's my script: "This situation is teaching me to love others more and trust God more deeply." That's it. That's all I'm gonna say.

That's it. And then the people who will be dying of curiosity and want to poke around about this, too bad. That's all I'm saying. Full stop.

Cheri Gregory

Okay, so I love this. But I have a question for you. Then what are you going to do?

Amy Carroll

Wait, that's not on our – that's not on our page!

Cheri Gregory

No, no, it's not. But we know that in when we stop one old habit. There's got to be something to replace it. So there's going to be a gap. Now, what are you going to do when you're not talking? Like to replace that time and energy? So you say, you make your statement, which is amazing. You do your full stop, which is amazing. Then what are you going to do?

Amy Carroll

I think I really – this is the year to really focus on peace as one of the fruits of the Spirit, that I'm not going to do anything. I'm gonna rest. Thank you for asking me that question. Because it's making me think some more.

Okay, your turn.

Cheri Gregory

No!

But let me let me just circle back around and affirm that because that's what you started out with – what is in that space of silence, is where peace is going to live.

Amy Carroll

Oh, okay. You just made me tear up. And I'm praying that that is true.

Cheri Gregory

Me too. Yeah, absolutely.

Alright, so mine is in a somewhat different direction. But both of these perspectives are so, so powerful. You know, Rhonda defined regret as things we wish we could redo or undo that causes us to get stuck in shame, or things that we didn't do that we wish we had. And so she talked about both of those causing us to be stuck. And so my not statement is 'You're not stuck in the same old story.'

And you've probably seen the meme. It's one of my least favorites that floats around social media that says 'You can't write a new chapter to your life if you keep going back and rereading the old one,' like, watch me. What kind of nonsense is this? And then I'm like, well, who's even reading the old chapters? I'm trying to revise them. I'm not reading them. I'm trying to revise them, even though they're already in print. And so much of this is about residual perfectionism. Because when I'm doing that, for me, regret is this tumultuous feeling, like *it's all my fault*. And in order to find freedom, in order to be able to

move forward and not be stuck, I have to fix it all. And if I can just fix it all, if I can just edit it all and revise it all, then I will earn permission to move forward.

So last November, I had a huge epiphany, and I'm going to try to get it out so that it makes sense here because it's still kind of new. I have spent my life making decisions based on one set of criteria and judging the outcomes, the consequences, and myself on a totally different set of criteria. Okay, so it's like getting an assignment in school for a big project, and then also getting a really detailed rubric and like a scoring sheet that breaks down here's how you earn your points. Except the teacher who who does all of this, so it's kind of split personality going on here – so I get the rubric, I follow the rubric. But then when I'm done, it's like I pull out a completely different rubric and use that to assign my grade to myself.

Okay, here's a quick illustration. I realized this back in November when I was traveling, and I was trying to decide on a hotel room and I was trying to decide between price and convenience. Okay, don't worry about the details. It was these two criteria. And as I was trying to decide, it occurred to me no matter what I decided I was going to beat myself up. Because if I chose convenience, I would spend the next day mired in regret for spending so much money. But if I chose the cheaper hotel I was going to spend the next day mired in regret for all the hassles and exhaustion of the inconvenience. And it hit me in that moment:

No wonder I have spent my life filled with anxiety and regret. Because for any decision, there are dozens of criteria I could use. And they're often very competing. Sometimes they're my own, but then you start adding other people

to the picture. And they swirl around my head as I tried to figure out okay, which one is the most important one, and then I'll make a decision. But then I get so bombarded because it's all still swirling and swirling. And I actually I forget how or why I made the decision. And so I keep beating myself up with regret for all the better choices that now seemed glaringly obvious. And often there's people who are helping me see, well, you should have done this, you should have done this, you should have done this. I'm like, you're right, you're right, you're right, you're right.

And it occurred to me, literally as I was traveling, wouldn't life be a lot more peaceful if I could make a decision and evaluate the results with the exact same rubric? And it hit me. I know people who live this way, like between the decision they make and their evaluation of this decision, it's a completely straight line. And for me, it's like this huge scribble, this snarl of regrets and it's full of self-recrimination. Because what I'm trying to do is go back and redo the decision, I'm trying to rewrite the past story. And I get stuck in this endless loop of what I could have done, what I would have done, what I should have done all that kind of stuff.

And so I had a really silly victory recently. Jonathan and I wanted to make chocolate cream pie – he has an amazing recipe for it. And due to traffic, I couldn't go to the store that I wanted to go to where you can buy them for a really good price. And I had a decision between going home with no Oreos, which meant not making chocolate cream pie with Jonathan, which also, let's be clear, meant I didn't get to eat any. Okay. It was a split between spending time with my son and eating the pie. I got to be honest there. And I had to

decide, do I – which criteria am I going to use? Saving money? Paying the price that I think is good stewardship? Or am I going to pay more for the convenience of stopping by this one little store where everything is three times more than it should be?

And I was like, hang on a second, I can do this. I can do this. I can decide that today. I'm going to buy it out of convenience. And then I will judge myself as successful for having bought out of convenience. I will not buy out of convenience and judge my success based on price. And so I got home, and I literally I could feel myself cringing as I was like 'I made a really good decision.' And part of my brain was no, you didn't. You paid too much. And like no, no, no. But my criteria for this decision today was the convenience of getting what I needed. So I could take it home. Therefore, I will have no regrets.

Amy Carroll

That's fantastic. And there was a little word that you used in there. Did you experience peace?

Cheri Gregory

I did. Did you notice that came up for both of us?

Amy Carroll

Yes.

Cheri Gregory

Yes!

Amy Carroll

Amazing.

Cheri Gregory

And again, I know the Oreos is a small and silly example. But it was powerful because it didn't involve a ton of other people. And it wasn't a big moral issue. Although I did realize, you know, Cheri, if you had driven out of your way to go buy it cheaper, the gas probably would have totaled more than the price. So there was a part of my brain that justified it so I felt better. So you know, that part of my brain still needs work. But it was such an illustration of when I choose the criteria and carry that same criteria all the way from the decision through evaluation of the results, I can then make the choice that says no, I'm not going to have any regrets. And that was freeing.

Amy Carroll

You know, your superpower is coming up with these concepts that we can all hang on to. I'm going to hang on to that. I bet our friends listening are gonna hang on to that forever. And the beautiful thing is that you made it in this small place to practice. And now you'll be able to apply that idea of consistent criteria to every single decision you make. Fantastic.

Cheri Gregory

Thank you. All right, let's move on to love who you are. What is your love who you are statement?

Amy Carroll

'You are permitted to process and move past regrets.'

Cheri Gregory

Tell us more.

Amy Carroll

All right. So this is a confession to our friends that both Cheri and I felt a little squirmy about this idea of no regrets. But after we talked to Rhonda, we felt better about it, because we realized that she was giving us permission not to live in regret.

Cheri Gregory

Good point. Yeah, absolutely.

Amy Carroll

It's not this claim that we will live life perfectly so we'll never have any regrets. Again, what she is saying is there are ways for us not to live in regret. And so that resonated. Or another way for us to say it today, is that we are able to move beyond regret into peace.

Cheri Gregory

Yes.

Amy Carroll

Right.

Cheri Gregory

Yes.

Amy Carroll

And so, and we're able to live that way. And you know, I'm a big Brene Brown fan. And she has a new book out that is speaking to me. It's called *Atlas of the Heart*. And in *Atlas of the Heart*, she talks about 87 emotions and experiences, and she talks about our disappointment and regrets. And so I was very fascinated that all of this was coinciding, I believe that this is a God thing that we got to listen to Rhonda, and then put notes together for this. And I'm reading Brene. And God obviously has something to say to me, and hopefully, to our listening friends about regret. But she links disappointment and regret. And I want to just read you the definition that she gives for those two things that I thought was so helpful to show the link between them. But then the difference between them, too. She said, both disappointment and regret arise when an outcome was not what we wanted, counted on or thought would happen with disappointment, we often believe the outcome was out of our control. In other words, it was a natural disaster, somebody else's fault, whatever. And then she says with regret, we believe the outcome was caused by our decisions or actions.

Cheri Gregory

Oh, so 100%,

Amy Carroll

The same outcome with a different catalyst, right, what we believe about the catalyst. And so since she sees those is so related, I'm going to edit one of the earth shattering quotes that she has in the book and I'm going to replace the word disappointment which she used in the quote with regret, because I think it's valid to do that. And here's what she said, blew my world up. "There are too many people in the world today who decide to live regretful rather than risk feeling regretful." Let me say that one more time. Cheri's crying, maybe some of you are too. "There are too many people in the world today who decide to live regretful rather than feeling regretful."

Okay, so let's talk about the difference between those two. And I think it gets to the heart of why we were so squirmy about this no regrets thing. Feeling regretful is part of living an examined life. You and I, Cheri, have talked so much about it, it is important to live an examined life. Honestly, if you feel no regrets in your life, there's something wrong with you. Okay, sister, if you're listening, you have not a single regret, you might not be thinking about your life. That's what Cheri and I have to say. We stand by it. Okay, but we all have a few regrets, right? And sometimes they surface inconvenient times. But feeling regret is not a terrible thing because it leads us to live an examined life. But living regretful is a terrible thing. And sometimes we do that and I see it so much of myself and I'm sure you all are putting the pieces together with how I opened; living regretful was a protective measure. I used it, some people I think use it as a protection, lots of different ways, and our friends might want to reflect on that, like how have I used regret as a self protective measure? I think it keeps us from disappointment. You know? Like if we expect regret and disappointment, then

we won't be regretful or disappointed. But I have used it as a 'See there. I'm a good person.'

Cheri Gregory

Almost a preemptive strike.

Amy Carroll

'Because I care so much.'

Cheri Gregory

That way much nobody can tell us we should be regretful because we're already so busy showing how regretful we are. Ooh. Ooh. Hold on, hold my hand through the Zoom screen please.

Amy Carroll

Like stretch arms from North Carolina to California, right?

But so living regretful, I believe that processing regrets is a godly thing. But living regretful is not a God ordained way to live, it is not a good way to live. It is not a peace filled way to live. So I started thinking about so what is the progression so that we don't live in regret? So we can say I don't, I have no regrets, in the sense of I have dealt with my regrets, right?

Cheri Gregory

Yes.

Amy Carroll

I think that what we do – I'm learning this, Cheri knows because I've confided stuff to her, but feel regret. Feel it. Let it sit there for just a few moments, and then take it to the cross and talk to Jesus about it. Prayerfully examine the regrets. What's my part in this? What is somebody else's part? What is just part of living in a broken world? Like examine it prayerfully with Jesus, then we move on from that to learning something from their regrets. Most the regrets I have, listen, I had something to learn from that. And because I didn't do it perfectly. And so learning is a good and healthy thing. And then we move on from learning and we do it better next time. And we live in peace, and freedom. So I think that our progression is just super, super important. When we think about you are permitted to process and move past regrets.

Cheri Gregory

I literally can feel the knot in my stomach has just gone and just relaxed and I can just feel my shoulders just kind of expanding as I'm sitting here. This all feels really, really right and doable.

Amy Carroll

And well, there's hope. And that process isn't there. And that's my favorite name of God, is Redeemer. And this is, that's the process through which God redeems our regrets.

Cheri Gregory

I love it. Well, this sounds so much better than my old, hopefully old habit of trying to rewrite the past, which of course isn't even possible. So I used up a lot

of time doing something that can't be done. So my love who you are statement is 'You are invited to sing a new song.'

Amy Carroll

So beautiful.

Cheri Gregory

And this whole 'you can't write a new chapter of your life if you're still rereading the old ones,' man, that has ruined the whole new year, new chapter metaphor for me, you know, a lot of people are like, oh, the old chapter's done, we're starting to write a new one. I can't do it. I can't even listen to it.

But a couple of weeks ago, as I was leading the Friday Sensitive & Strong Lectio Divina group, we read Psalm 98. And it begins "Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things." And Amy, I was smitten. Like, I cannot sing to save my life. You know, writing is the thing I've been doing as long as I can remember. Singing is something I never do in public. But this invitation to sing a new song made me realize two things. First of all, I know in my gut, like it's a totally visceral feeling when a song I used to love has become nothing but noise. Like it no longer makes me want to dance or even clap along like it may still be an okay song. But I'm done. Like, its time is over. And the second thing I realized is I'm ready. I am ready for a new song. Like the old song may still play in the background. But I feel like I've got some tools to turn the volume down on the old and then crank it up super high on the new. So Psalm 98 says "Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things." And that part totally

connects to my word for 2022, which is celebrate, and I chose that word because I'm terrible at it.

Amy Carroll

I'm so proud of you. That is hard work. Most people go 'Celebrate? What a fluff word.' Not for Cheri Gregory! That is so hard.

Cheri Gregory

Not when I have lived mired in regret and felt like it was virtuous. And that celebrating is like you would actually have to have moved on from regret in order to celebrate. And so what I love about this is it's not celebrating me. It's celebrating the marvelous things that God has done and celebrating the marvelous things that the Lord has done with a new song. And so as I was praying, assessing where this new song would come from, like am I just going to turn on the radio and see what what's playing? Is it going to be random?

I was journaling, and I journaled, sing a new song, learn a new song, receive a new song. And then I almost had to stop writing because this felt so audacious. I sensed the Lord saying, 'Let's co author a new song.' And I have no idea what that's going to look like. But I am certain that it's going to be a huge improvement over being stuck trying to revise past chapters that were filled with regrets. And so my statement is 'You are invited to sing a new song.' And I'll betcha Amy, it's going to be song of peace.

Amy Carroll

Oh, my goodness, this feels like a moment. So good. So alright, so let's move on to live your one life well. Help us, Cheri? What are some good questions for that?

Cheri Gregory

Okay. And so these would be some questions – I love your progression, feel regret, prayerfully examine; and learn, do better, and live free. And I'm thinking that these questions could be useful in that prayerfully examine part of the progression. But these are just questions I've been learning to ask myself. One, what is the score sheet I'm going to use to make a particular decision? Or if you're teaching a person, what rubric will I use? Number two, what score sheet will I use to evaluate the results? So I want to be – let's be super conscious. What's the rubric to make this decision? What's the rubric to evaluate the results? And then number three, how can I make sure these two score sheets match? Like, ahead of time? How can there be a straighter line between the criteria for making a decision and the criteria for evaluating the results? The fourth question, what new song is God inviting me to sing? And then number five, how is God inviting me to co-author this new song with Him?

Amy, action Amy, tell us what we're going to do.

Amy Carroll

Oh my goodness. Okay, well, here – I just – you saw me, probably typing in our Google doc while you were talking because I was like, “Oh!” It all goes together. Then in God. Good. So here's the action to take, go through the progression. Feel the regret, prayerfully examine the regret with our friend and Savior Jesus,

learn from the regret. And then the last one really is live your one life well. Live, do better. And live peaceful and free in your new song.

Cheri Gregory

Okay, I have to reach for my pom poms. That feels not just doable, but that I feel myself leaning in, like have a longing to do that. Right. So what Scripture are we focusing on here with this episode?

Amy Carroll

A beautiful one. 2 Corinthians 7:2 says “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation, and leaves no regret. But worldly sorrow brings death.” Do you see? I mean, our progression is really in that verse. Yeah, that we feel the sorrow and we process it with Jesus. I think that's the repentance turning away from it, you know? And so but I love the part it says leaves no regrets. So we have we have Ron does no regret right there. But what we're saying is it if we go through that process, we will not live in regret.

Cheri Gregory

Yeah. All right. So what is, in all of this, what is the grit for you?

Amy Carroll

Well, I have to transform my go to script for situations that I think made me look bad, that I'm not gonna vomit regret anymore. I have to choose and plan to talk about things differently and so hard,

Cheri Gregory

So powerful. And the grace for me is that I get to trade all my efforts at revising past chapters, for co-authoring the new song that God's inviting me to sing.

Amy Carroll

Oh, it is such a relief. I'm so glad that scripture God Himself tells us to leave regrets behind and He's given us a way to do it.

Cheri Gregory

And for people like me who hang on to regrets with white knuckles, this is such good news for you: freedom. Friends, we so appreciate you tuning in each and every week.

Amy Carroll

And we're especially grateful to Rhonda Stoppe, aka the no regrets woman for her sponsorship of last week's interview and this week's convo.

Cheri Gregory

You can learn more about Rhonda's books and schedule her to speak at your event at noregetswoman.com.

Amy Carroll

Check out this week's episode at our website, gritngracethepodcast.com/episode249. There you'll find this week's transcript and a link to Rhonda Stoppe's YouTube channel as well as a link to her website, noregetswoman.com, where you can sign up for her newsletter.

Cheri Gregory

And remember when you sign up for Rhonda's newsletter, you'll receive her free ebook *The Money Myth: Does More Money Really Mean Less Stress?*

Amy Carroll

Be sure to join us next week. We'll be talking with Amy Jill Levine, author of *The Difficult Words of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to His Most Perplexing Teachings*. Another favorite episode of mine.

Cheri Gregory

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!

Cheri Gregory

So –

Both

take it!