

**Grit 'n' Grace: Good Girls Breaking Bad Rules**  
***Episode 29: In Celebration of Imperfect Beauty***

**Cheri:**

So, how was your Christmas?

**Amy:**

Well it was good. I obviously have been missing you because I dreamt about you last night.

**Cheri:**

Oh no.

**Amy:**

My mind's just been thinking, "Hey, I get to talk to Cheri in the morning," and here's what you were doing, here's the crazy. You were stitching enormous stuffed animals to sell so we could keep the podcast on.

**Cheri:**

Because that, everyone knows that is a big money maker, even that over trendsetters. I'm not sure if that's delightful, scary or some kind of combination of both. Oh my word. Well let's just real quick welcome everybody to Episode #29 of Grit and Grace. We are wrapping it up and taking a few minutes to just kind of debrief after the holiday season. This is the last of our holiday break episodes. Let's start out with the all important question, when do your Christmas decorations come down?

**Amy:**

Well, mine will probably come down either Saturday or Sunday this week. They'll come down after New Year probably. How about you?

**Cheri:**

Well, I've got a neighbor, who everything is gone at 6:00am on the 26th.

**Amy:**

Wow.

**Cheri:**

I mean the tree has already been taking to the dump gone. We used to be the opposite extreme. I really shouldn't confess this but here I go. There were times when we only got rid of our live tree because Anne Marie's birthday party was coming up, and her birthday is March 25th.

**Amy:**

I love it.

**Cheri:**

You don't even want to know or think about what that tree looked like, what kind of a fire hazard it was and where all of it's needles were. I guarantee you they weren't on it's branches.

**Amy:**

Well you decorated late because you guys had been sick so I think you should enjoy it for awhile, go for it.

**Cheri:**

We're going to. We kept things pretty minimal, we got the two trees up and a few other things so, yeah, I'm not in a big hurry.

**Amy:**

Well Myquillyn who is the Nester always talks about quieting the house after the holidays and I love that, so I do kind of strip down. I love all the bobbles, sparkles and stuff during the holiday, then I just want it to be quiet during the new year, so I like that.

**Cheri:**

No more kicking elf legs on your front door huh?

**Amy:**

No, all the glitz and glam is going.

**Cheri:**

I love it. I had an interesting aha moment about my decorating style during Christmas. I posted a picture, I just took a picture of our Christmas Eve table which to me was so simple and so bare, but-

**Amy:**

It's beautiful, no, I saw it on Facebook.

**Cheri:**

One of my friends made some comment about how classic it was or how minimalist, as if there was intention, as if I knew what I was doing which is the biggest joke in the world. It just was what it was. I came back and I said, "Well, in my mind I'm busy comparing it unfavorably to my mother's table." I grabbed a picture that I had handy of how my mother had always done her table and it was just so interesting. I got a couple of responses from people who were like, "Oh, that is so not you. What you do is you and what she did was her." A couple of people even said that they found what my mother did was too busy for their taste. Over the last few days I've been thinking, wow, and I think we must do this as reforming perfectionists is, "What was once normal for us becomes the standard, like the way things must be done," because in my mind, the way my mother did Christmas and the way she set her table was the right way.

**Amy:**

Yes.

**Cheri:**

It took outside help to realize, no, it was one way. It was a beautiful way, it worked for her, and when other people said they found it too busy, I suddenly realized, so did I. It's

not that I disliked it, it's not that it was bad, it's just, oh yeah, it was too busy for me. Oh, and just the sense of relief of oh, I get to be different.

**Amy:**

I had a moment too that was a people pleaser moment that I had to wrestle my people pleasing to the ground. Kim Nowlin's advice on fashion had really helped me. I found myself at a party at my friend's house who, she just kind of moves in different circles than I do, but we're very close and she's completely down to earth. I found myself in a conversation with I think a third generation debutant and the woman who started the debutant ball in my area. Now let's just say I'm not a debutant, wasn't a debutant and kind of an anti-debutant.

**Cheri:**

For those of us who are Californians, would you please define debutant.

**Amy:**

Well debutant for southerners is the old fashioned coming out ball for girls of a certain society of the south. These women were more frou frou than me. That's the-

**Cheri:**

Highfalutin.

**Amy:**

Highfalutin, yes. I found myself, even though they were lovely, totally lovely in every way, I was feeling very insecure, especially about what I had on because, not highfalutin. I'm sitting there in this conversation trying to think about them and not think about myself. There's so many good things in our holiday break episodes that worked on me over Christmas, it was so good. One of them, who I would say was the more highfalutin of the two, started telling me how ravishing she thought I looked. Now listen, it was everything I could do not to say, well I think my shirt came from Goodwill and my pants definitely came from T. J Maxx, not the boutique. Seriously, all I had on was a white shirt and black pants, but I thought about Kim's advice and I put on some sparkly red earrings and red lipstick, that was it, that was it.

**Cheri:**

You would look fabulous with that.

**Amy:**

Here I felt so small and I was allowing myself to feel small. In that moment it was so sweet that she said that and so unnecessary. It just made me realize that was only my own perception, not anybody else's. I let my little sparkle in my red earrings to bolster my confidence and-

**Cheri:**

There you go.

**Amy:**

It turned out to be a really good moment, a reminder that my perception is not the same as the other people standing and talking to me so that was neat.

**Cheri:**

It sounds like you actually received what she said.

**Amy:**

I did, I did. I was surprised by it and it did, it made me feel good, like any woman loves to be told she looks nice.

**Cheri:**

Sounds like a delightful moment.

**Amy:**

It was a delightful moment, yes.

**Cheri:**

Very cool. All right, well I have four R's that we can see if we want to talk through real quick here, in terms of just debriefing from the holidays. The first 'R' is reality because

we did end up taking Daniel to Urgent Care and I eventually went and there were tests and such. It meant that I had to shift money over to make sure we could pay for those. We have good insurance but I also know that there is going to be a certain amount that we're going to have pay for ourselves. Combined with the illness and the finances that the illness treatment took, we didn't take the trip away from home that I'd been planning on, that I'd been really looking forward to and that I talked about. It was what it was. Instead we've been hanging out at home and having a good time here. The other thing that was curtailed was gifts. I had been waiting to see what the budget would allow and the budget was very minimal, so our gifts were the gifts of presents, that is being present with each other, not so much the boxes or bags to be opened. Fortunately our kids are older and they prefer experiences anyways.

**Amy:**

Yes.

**Cheri:**

Anyways, it was still a good Christmas and we still celebrated Christ's birth and that's what it's all about. How about you, any realities?

**Amy:**

It's always interesting to do this on a podcast because, of course, we would honor the people that we love. I have a very difficult relationship that I'm faced with on most holidays. It's with someone I love, but it's not the relationship I wish it were and that's always hard. It's so funny, I thought, "We should really do a wrap up after Christmas, it made me behave better," knowing that I was going to have to report. I really did pray.

**Cheri:**

Accountability is a beautiful thing.

**Amy:**

I really did pray before all the gatherings like, "Lord, put a guard over my mouth because it's my mouth that gets me in trouble," so I did pray ahead of time. I've been reflecting on Jesus and those beautiful shows that we did with Michelle and Susie. I've been thinking a lot about how he said in Matthew 10:16, "I am sending you out," he was saying to his disciples and then he says, "Therefore be a shrewd as snakes and as

innocent as doves." That has always sort of puzzled me a little bit, but I felt like I had a little insight over Christmas about that. Jesus was so clear eyed, he was so honest, he dealt with reality so well.

I've been been studying Luke with first five and in Luke 15 and 16 man, those are some power packed chapters where he is calling out the religious leaders, I mean he is telling them, "I know who you are, you are not who you are supposed to be," then even in Luke 19 where this verse is that I want to focus on. Right after he says what I'm going to share, he clears the temple, he knew the leaders were trying to kill him, but in Luke 19 it says, "As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city he wept over it and said, if even you had only known on this day what would bring you peace, but now it's hidden from your eyes."

I thought even that is so clear eyed, so based in reality, so honest and yet, also, equally, filled with love, grace, compassion and mercy. In this difficult relationship, it really challenged me to say, "Okay, I don't have to hide what I feel about it. I don't have to stick my head in the sand and pretend it's something it's not. I can look at it in complete reality and yet, alongside of that, pray that I'll be fully filled with love, joy, peace, kindness and all those fruits of the spirit along with it." I really think that is a perfect example of shrewd as snakes and innocent as doves.

**Cheri:**

Very true.

**Amy:**

Based in reality and still with that purity of heart. I really prayed for that and saw some fruit in that over Christmas so I was-

**Cheri:**

Wow.

**Amy:**

Yeah.

**Cheri:**

Boy, I love that. I love that. The next 'R' is rejoice. We had some fun times, we watched some Christmas movies together and our kids have gotten us started watching this BBC show called Sherlock, probably the entire rest of the world knows about but we just started watching. There was one evening where the kids wanted to go out and see an action movie with Daniel. They invited me to come along in that tone of voice, "Well mom, we're asking you because we know we want to, but we know you won't want to go," because I can't sleep, I can't. Movies like that, I just cover my eyes and I watch through the slits, it's a waste of a ticket. I don't mind watching them at home when I'm on the couch and I can pace the room or get up and get something to eat, but on a big screen TV these action things are just too much for me.

I ended up going with them and I sat in Starbucks and wrote while they were at the theatre seeing the movie, then we all went out to California Pizza Kitchen together and had a great dinner together. I thought, you know that a really nice kind of a compromise. It was still family time and the kids got some alone time with their dad, and they can now talk about the movie and they have their secret language that doesn't include me, frankly, that's okay. How about you?

**Amy:**

That's fantastic.

**Cheri:**

Any other rejoicing moments?

**Amy:**

Some of my rejoicing happened in the kitchen shock of shock.

**Cheri:**

Oh my word.

**Amy:**

You know how we talked about, and this is kind of, I don't know why, but a new idea, a transformative idea for me, turning the kitchen into more of a community place. I tried



to really embrace that. It's funny because I realized too, the kitchen is where everybody can really get on each other's nerves pretty fast, you know, because everybody has an agenda on how they think it should be done. There was a little of that too, but everybody kind of flexed and got over it fast, and we had a good time in the kitchen together.

**Cheri:**

Well very cool. There's another little delightful unexpected surprise. The next one we don't have to spend much time on but it's regret. This one, it just cracked me up. In fact, as I analyzed it after it happened I'm like, "Oh my goodness, I am so going to tell Amy and the Grit and Grace listeners about this," because talking about an aha moment. I was working in the kitchen, Daniel and Johnathan were just kind of hanging out and I had started the dough for the rolls. I make famous homemade rolls, somebody said they were like cloud pillows, that's how they turn out, they're so good. I realized I had started the dough in the bread maker but I hadn't checked it. Normally I wait five minutes and then I check it to make sure that everything is getting well mixed. Well it was half an hour into the mixing cycle and I take a look, and a half of cup of flour hasn't gotten blended in.

We timed the entire meal based on when the rolls come out because we want to eat those fresh and hot, we are a bread loving family. I'm suddenly freaking out, I'm frantic, because the one thing I do so well may well be ruined. I grab a spatula and I'm starting to dig around, I'm trying to figure out what I'm going to do. Suddenly Daniel shows up and he says, "Do you need some help?" Now, the most innocuous words in the world right? I will tell you, he didn't say them in any kind of manner, or, I just lost my mind, I absolutely lost my mind. I'm like, "No, I don't need help, I didn't ask for help." Of course he disappeared. As I was thinking about it, immediately I'm like, "Well, I only did that because I was anxious, I only did that because I care so much about the rolls," and I'm like, "No, I do this all the time." Somehow I have this thing to prove that I don't ever need help.

The conclusion I came to is, you know we talk about how other people are unhelpful. I realize no, actually the problem is I am unhelp-able. I know, isn't that just a lovely thing to realize. I don't receive help. How hard would it have been for me to say, "Yes, thank you, would you fix this?," because that's what he wanted to do, he's a fixer. Why was I clinging to the spatula, because I'm unhelp-able. This is one of my big things for 2017 is learning to be help-able.

**Amy:**

That is, wow, that's a great insight. Well okay, so I was like, "Well, I don't know if I have regret," then I was like, "Oh yes, I do," because I woke up December 26th feeling like a slug and thinking, "I did not treat treats as treats." They were my steady diet. I think I told you that I was supposed to have a doctor appointment next week.

**Cheri:**

Yes.

**Amy:**

Let me just say that I re-scheduled that today.

**Cheri:**

Oh my, you didn't?

**Amy:**

I needed a little time to redeem things.

**Cheri:**

I love you. I love it. Okay, so when is it rescheduled for?

**Amy:**

I'm not going and stepping on that scale next week, I'm not.

**Cheri:**

Is it still in January?

**Amy:**

It's in February.

**Cheri:**  
Okay.

**Amy:**  
It will give me a little time to redeem myself.

**Cheri:**  
Okay, I will be following up. I'm going to put February 1 on my calendar and check in with you, make sure you're healthy.

**Amy:**  
All right.

**Cheri:**  
All right, the last one is resolve. This is where I want to make some resolution, not New Years resolutions, but these are some actual action steps that I want to take for the next holiday season. For me, these are born of a little bit of regret, but it's not regret so much as, "Okay, things didn't work out a certain way this year, so I want to be very intentional," is I guess the better word for next year. On Christmas and after Christmas I saw pictures of various parts of the family and it looked like we were the only part of both sides of the family that didn't show up for both sides of the family.

Both of us have aging parents and family members that aren't going to be around forever. As I was thinking about, "Okay, what can I do starting in January to have a different outcome for 2017 and I thought, "The first thing is I need to take better care of my health, whether that means better sleep, drinking more water, and if I get sick, going to the doctor right away and getting the medications that I need." The other thing I realized is I need to do a holiday savings plan, whether it's an envelope with cash and it's untouchable, or a separate savings account, I'm much too likely to say, "Okay, we have enough money for the holidays unless something goes wrong." Well then things go wrong, so I need to find a way to make sure that I'm saving the money for travel.

The other thing I realized is we made it through the holidays, but we survived. I want to make 2017 a year we celebrate, not just survive. Part of that celebration is taking the

time, effort and resources to be with various parts of the family and celebrate together. What about you? What kind of resolve do you have for the new year?

**Amy:**

Yeah, that sounds good. Well, one of mine is a health thing too. I saw a friend on Facebook use #fitby50 and I was like, "I need to embrace that," although I heard a statistic that if you say it out loud, your brain thinks that you already achieved, so all of you just ignore what I just said because I have to still achieve it, it has not been achieved yet, so it's a health thing. The other thing was, this year one of the things I worked on was letting go of expectations and I felt like I did well on that. I went in without expectations, but probably I'm thinking I went a little too far, so instead of just letting go of expectations I also did a little, there was a little lack of planning, so I want to let go of expectations. Hey, I didn't get to take my walk in the woods because of the weather and I was just winded but not crushed.

**Cheri:**

Oh good, good, that's progress.

**Amy:**

Do a little bit better with the planning so it's not just let go of all of it.

**Cheri:**

Yes.

**Amy:**

I think the more activity there is, especially when there's a lot of people around, the better things are. It's when people start getting a little loose ends and bored that the careless words start to fly and that kind of thing, so yeah.

**Cheri:**

I think you're right. Well this has been great and I'm just going to go through that list of four again for our listeners. Hopefully we've modeled very imperfectly a way to kind of, I don't even want to say triage, but just to kind of reflect back on the holiday season.

What were the **realities**, what were the things to **rejoice** about, what were any **regrets** and then **resolve** for the New Year.

We hope you've enjoyed Episode #29 of Grit and Grace.

Amy, do you remember who we're going to be talking with next week for Episode #30 kicking off our new season?

**Amy:**

Oh, I can't wait because we're going to focus on *Overwhelmed*, and we're talking to Kathi Lipp next week.

**Cheri:**

So for today, grow your grit, embrace God's grace, and when you run across a bad rule you know what to do: go right ahead and break it!