Be Known, the Podcast

Kerrah E. Fabacher, LPC-S

Episode 92: What I Wish I Knew About Friendship When I Was Younger

Originally published on May 22, 2023

This is Be Known, and I’m Kerrah Fabacher. You’re listening to episode \_\_\_92\_\_\_. We were made for relationship, but so often our relationships are broken. And when our relationships are broken, we are broken. One of our deepest human desires is to be known, but we often have lost ourselves along the way. This is a podcast to help you get your relationships back to a place of wholeness. A place of authentic connection, where you feel truly known.

So come on in and sit a while. Let’s exchange fear for love and finally see what good relationships are made of.

\*\*\*\*\*

I’ll be the first to admit when I was young, I wasn’t always great at friendship. Like it’s cringey to think about, but I’m no longer going to be unkind to a former version of myself that didn’t know what this version knows. So today isn’t about me expressing all the cringey, regretful ways I was and was not a friend. And it’s not about the cringey ways my friends were, either. We were young and immature. Our brains weren’t full developed. We were egocentric and not great at thinking about others and how they’d feel. And we didn’t know much about true friendship. How to have true friends and how to *be* true friends. I’m still learning this.

I have some teenage clients, who if I’m honest, are some of my favorite. I love their raw, unfiltered honesty. I love hearing about their lives, but it’s their friendships and dating lives that often have me like, huh? Ha!

I forget I was once their age. I once had similar ideas of what good friendship was. I once thought I knew. Just like them. So, today, per a listener’s request, I’m going to tell you some of the things I wish I knew about friendship when I was younger. This may be helpful if you know or love a young person, even a young adult, or if you are a young person/young adult.

I will share these with the understanding that one’s brain is not full developed until the mid-20s and also with the grace for young people I’m glad many have shown me over the years.

Without further adieu, here we go.

1. We don’t need to be friends with everyone, and we need to be clear about who our friends are.

This seems obvious, but just because someone is around you or is willing to hang out, doesn’t mean you have to be friends. Acquaintances aren’t the same thing as friends. Just because you get along, laugh at the same things, watch the same shows, have a lot of mutual people you know, doesn’t mean you are friends. Just because you’re in the same class, same youth group, on the same team, or hang our in each other’s dorm room doesn’t mean you are friends. I think we throw around that term so loosely, and then when those so-called “friends” do something we don’t like, we are mad and disappointed. But our expectations of acquaintances should never be the same expectations we have of our friends. The distinction is important. A friend is someone who takes the time to get to know you— who you really are, past your common interests. Who knows about your family and your inner struggles and your fears and your heartbreak. Who knows what you’re into and who you like and your goals and desires. If we expect someone who’s an acquaintance to be the same, we’ll be hurt and angry and disappointed all the time.

2. Friends are safe people.

For more on who are safe people and who aren’t, go back and listen to Episode 43: Safe People, or you can read the book by Cloud and Townsend called *Safe People.* But in a nutshell, safe people are trustworthy, kind, nonjudgmental, honest. They are true to who they are, don’t manipulate or treat others as though they are beneath them. They are good listeners and apologize when they do wrong. They’re understanding and helpful and accepting of who you are. They aren’t going to talk bad about you, betray you. They care deeply about you. Are friends perfect? No. But they are safe.

3. We can be friends with people who are different than we are.

I feel like growing up in church kinda made me think that I didn’t need to be friends with the “bad” kids. So I was pretty judgmental and rude even to some of those I thought were “bad.” Yes, the Bible is clear about being wise about the company we keep in many different places, but Jesus spent time with the “bad” ones, and because of the cross, calls *all* of us friends who believe in and follow him. And we also need to be careful not to assume different is bad. Some people may not be people you want to spend a lot of time with, and that’s fine, but it’s good and healthy to become friends who think differently, believe differently. Who may be of a different race or ethnicity. Who’s families look different than yours. After I got my head out of my butt, ha, I became friends with a girl in my class in high school. This girl couldn’t have been more different and definitely didn’t share my same belief system. And instead of judging her and staying away like I had before, I just was my true self and let her be her true self. Heaven isn’t going to have a whole bunch of clones of you in it. So be friends with people who aren’t like you sometimes. Stay true to who you are and what you believe (which means you need to take the time to get to know yourself and what you believe…ps), but be open to letting others do the same.

4. Friendship changes over time, which means some friendships will naturally fade away.

This one. Gosh, I wish I’d known this. A lot of my high school friendships faded away or drastically ended because of a boy. And usually because of *me* with a boy. I’m the first to admit that. And also because I didn’t keep up well with people after I moved to college. What I wish I’d known, though, is that some friends are in your life for a season and not for a lifetime. That doesn’t always mean you’re a terrible friend because a friendship goes away or isn’t the same. It could mean you did something, but it may not. If you did, I hope you’ll apologize. But just know, some friends will last a long, long time. And some will be for a time. They will be what you need in that time. And when that time is over, instead of ruminating on what went wrong, we can remember how much we loved that friendship in that time and why. Some things that can lead to natural fading of a friendship are time, distance, being in different seasons of life, and personal growth. People change. Situations change. Which means, friendship will change, too.

5. Friendship should be a reciprocal relationship.

And finally, friendship needs to be reciprocal. Ugh, I can’t tell you how many stories I hear all the time about out-of-balance relationships. One gives so much and the other takes. There is one who calls most, texts most, makes the plans. One who expects the other to bend over backward for him but isn’t willing to do the same. One who talks and makes the other listen. Sure there are seasons where friendship won’t be balanced because of hard things people walk through, but as a whole, you want to aim for friendships that are reciprocal. Mutual. And begin to set better boundaries if they aren’t.

I know, I know. There’s probably so much more here that I did’t say, but I hope this is a good place for you to start.

ENTER MUSIC

Thanks for sitting a while with me. I trust that knowing these things about friendship will help you take a step toward wholeness so you can finally see what good relationships are made of.

Want to do me a favor? If you have listened to an episode of the podcast and think it’d be helpful for the world (or at least your social media followers, ha), will you share it? Don’t forget to tag me @kerrahfabacher and use the hashtag #beknownthepodcast.

To finish up, the transcript for this episode will be on the podcast page on my website, [kerrahfabacher.com](http://kerrahfabacher.com).

A big thanks to my friend Robert Hargrove for creating the music for the show, and the team at Wildfire Creative Co for editing.

Until next time friend, I’ll see you soon.