This is Be Known, and I’m Kerrah Fabacher. You’re listening to episode \_\_33\_\_\_\_. 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. And let’s see what kind of healing happens here.

Y’all know I love a good reflection list. Emily P. Freeman’s *The Next Right Thing Journal* is one of my favorites because it guides me into reflection with intentional questions. These questions help me find gratitude, direction, and help me learn more about myself, God, and others.

Recently my husband, Beav, and I celebrated TEN years of marriage. I know! That’s so crazy. I seriously can’t believe it’s real sometimes. My friend, Heather, told me she should love to hear what I’ve learned through these ten years because it is such a milestone. So, today, I am sharing the top ten things I’ve learned in ten years of marriage. Because you know, I’m a vet now. And this is a reflection list that I think I’ve avoided, if I’m honest, because our marriage has been anything but glamorous, but since this is a podcast to help you have whole relationships, I thought, why not?

I think this list will be helpful to singles, those dating, and those married. So let’s jump in.

1. Marriage isn’t the magical cure for loneliness.

 I’ve been thinking on this topic quite a bit lately. I think when we are single and battling loneliness, we think getting married would make it all better. A constant companion who cares about your well-being? Where could loneliness enter in a situation like that? But marriage doesn’t end the loneliness. There are moments when I’ve been extremely lonely in marriage— if my husband is gone a lot or we haven’t been connecting well or I’ve got the kids by myself. Sure, a great marriage means a great companion for life, but that companionship is flawed, too. I can’t expect my husband to cure my loneliness. I need to learn to hold that feeling, welcome it, and allow myself to be curious about the deeper issues that may be at play instead.

2. Marriage may not look we hoped it would.

 My marriage has been anything by perfect. We have had great seasons and really not great seasons. There have been moments when I wasn’t sure I could do it anymore. We have these dreams of what we want our life to look like, and if marriage is a part of that dream, we create a picture of the ideal marriage. And when our marriage or life situation doesn’t fit that ideal, we live in disappointment. I’ve honestly had to grieve that my life isn’t all I had hoped it would be. That doesn’t mean I’m not grateful for the wonderful life I *do* have. It just means that I’m honest about the things that haven’t turned out how I imagined. And that’s okay.

3. Honesty is everything.

 I’m not just talking about being faithful and not keeping secrets. I’m talking about being honest with your partner about how you feel, what you think, what you need, what you dream and desire. I can’t tell you how many couples I’ve worked with who struggle to simply tell each other these things. Marriage is nothing if we can’t be honest with each other. Sometimes when we are emotionally flooded, that honesty may come out in rude ways, and that’s not the goal. The goal is to speak to one another vulnerably. Because vulnerability and honesty brings deeper connection and greater clarity.

4. Invite laughter in daily.

 Because yes, life is hard, but life is fun, too. My toddler just had a bad stomach bug. This came after I had been sick for a week after the SAME child had already been sick for a week before that. For a straight month, someone in my house was sick. And when she threw up all over the place, I couldn’t help but laugh. It’s almost ridiculous at this point. I mean, really! But I know when my husband and I are able to joke and laugh together, it helps lighten the heaviness. So laugh and laugh often.

5. Love looks different for everyone.

 Yes, I know this is going to sound like a cliche plug for the love languages, but seriously, I have learned that the way I show love and things I need to feel loved are very different than how my husband does, than how my other family members do, than how my friends do. We need to tune in and pay attention to how others show and receive love. We can stretch ourselves to love them how they need and show gratitude when we can tell they are showing it in the way they know, even if it isn’t exactly what we need.

6. We need to adjust our expectations.

 Did you make a list of what you want in a spouse? Or was that just weird little me? We want a tall, dark, and handsome guitar player who has tats and sings amazing and is an athlete and loves to read the classics and is the most emotionally intelligent person we’ve ever met. Who loves us like the movies. Yep. You know you did it, too. We have all these expectations of what we think or want our person to be like, and I’ve learned to throw out a lot of those. Because most of the time they are unrealistic. I don’t think we need to settle, but I do think we need to adjust those unrealistic expectations when we can.

7. Sex is actually awesome.

 Haha! You surprised I went there? Listen, I grew up in Purity Culture, where any sexual slip-up pre-marriage was highly shamed. So I entered marriage excited to have it, but also scared out of my mind. For so long I had told myself no, sex is not okay. And then to try to flip that switch all of a sudden on my wedding night? To go from feeling shame to the best sex ever? Yeh, that didn’t happen. It took time for me to overcome any past shame to be fully present with my spouse and to have fun with sex. Sure, there have been days and seasons when sex was the LAST thing on my mind, but it *can* be awesome. I’ve learned to forgive myself for things in the past and stop letting sexual shame ruin my sex life with my husband. P.S. sorry mom or dad if you are listening to this.

8. An equal partnership is better than a dominant/submissive one any day.

 This is a loaded topic, but my husband and I approach our relationship as equals. We lead together. Make decisions together. Honor each other and submit to each other. He doesn’t lord over me, and yell at me to submit. Honestly, I’m too strong-willed to let that happen. We aren’t perfect by any means, but I’ve seen marriages where wives had to silently submit, no matter what, and seriously, that’s kind of messed up if you ask me. You may not agree, and that’s okay. But I’ve seen how great it can be when we lead as equals, and so I’m definitely on that team.

9. Pulling away is easier than connecting.

 When things have been difficult, I tend to pull away from my husband. I isolate more and get distant from him. Pulling away feels easier because it doesn’t take as much effort. But it is danger zone. When we start pulling away instead of working to connect, marriages (and all relationships for that matter) start going down fast. Doing the brave thing to connect with your partner is something that is key to a healthy, thriving relationship. Fight the tendency to flee.

10. Divorce isn’t the unforgivable sin.

 Okay, this may sound strange, since divorce is not something on my own radar. My husband and I aren’t getting divorced, but I will say that some couples just aren’t able to work through their problems. They remain in terrible relationships because they think divorce is literally the worst thing in the world. But I have friends who have divorced or married someone who was divorced, and they are some of the best people I know. So listen, though I wouldn’t advocate for divorce, I also want you to hear me say, “It isn’t unforgivable.” And God can redeem anything. I have seen people remarry into strong, healthy relationships or find healing after divorce, and it has been a beautiful testimony of God’s grace in their lives. So friend, if divorce is on the table for whatever reason, definitely seek out wise counsel. But if you decide it is the next right thing, just know God is bigger than all of that. He redeems.

Enter music—

Y’all, I can think of so many more things, but these are the ones that I thought of first. But if I could add a bonus one— it’s for singles. And that simply is getting married won’t automatically solve all your problems. In fact, it may complicate them. But if God does have marriage in store for you, it’s absolutely worth the rollercoaster. Because it has changed me and shaped me in ways nothing has before. I’m so thankful for my hubs, and I’m thankful God continues to anchor us as we navigate through the tough things life throws our way. I’m thankful for the love and laughter and random kitchen dance parties. I’m thankful for the joy of bringing my girls into the world and seeing one another pursue our dreams and live out our callings. I’m thankful. Cheers to the next ten.

Thanks for sitting a while with me. I trust that these things I’ve learned in marriage will help you take a step toward wholeness so you can finally see what good relationships are made of.

If you are struggling in your own marriage, I would love to work with you. I can do this in coaching or in counseling if you live in Louisiana. Check out more at [www.kerrahfabacher.com/book-online](http://www.kerrahfabacher.com/book-online).

To finish up, the transcript for this episode is 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 fellow hope\*writer, Alana Dawson, for being a great editor.

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