This is Be Known, and I’m Kerrah Fabacher. You’re listening to episode \_\_34\_\_\_\_. 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.

I’ve always been a sucker for a great story. I read novels like I breathe air. Classics and fantasy and romance. I love art and music and travel and nature. Because everything tells a story. Like Donald Miller says, “There is something about a good story that helps me escape.” (P. 10, A Million Miles in a Thousand Years)

I honestly think I love stories so much because I just want to live a different one. Because even if the artist or author or character’s story is hard, at least it’s not mine.

My life has been anything but spectacular. I’ve lived a pretty normal life for the most part, and I’ve always been shy to share parts of my story because they don’t seem worth sharing. There are beautiful, amazing moments that have brought so much joy, but there are a lot of parts of my life I haven’t liked at all, parts I sometimes wish I never had to live.

The older I get, the more I realize how my story has shaped me. Who I am today is because of everything I have lived through. I am not a slave to my story, but it still has significant influence over my life and relationships.

I struggle to make new and deep friendships because some of my closest friendships have ended, leaving me feel betrayed and hurt. I don’t love some parts of my body because a high school boyfriend compared me to porn stars. I struggled to have sex with my husband at first because of my past history of sexual shame. I am more introverted than I used to be because having three miscarriages stole a huge piece of me that used to be more outgoing. I have anxiety around a lot of new people because moving to New Orleans at 22 all alone was the loneliest and scariest I’ve ever felt, and being around new people makes me feel like I’m right back there, scared and lonely. I battle shame because shame entered my story at a young age. I don’t like loud noises and yelling because I had a family who fought a lot. I cringe when husbands are too dominant over their wives because my grandfather treated his wife like that. I’m not always a very good friend because I’ve had a history of thinking more selfishly in friendships.

Our stories shape our lives, and they shape our relationships. Dan Allender says this, “If we don’t tell our stories, our stories will tell us.” (p. 1, To Be Told) When we don’t tell our stories, they end up taking the driver’s seat. They boss us around and lead us to do things that are often unhealthy. But when we take a look at our stories, honor them, and tell them, we can work through the past that tries to tear us apart today.

I believe everything is redeemable. And I believe God is in the business of redeeming our broken stories. And though it may feel scary and even shameful to tell your story, I promise it is worthy to tell. Escaping our stories only leads to further pain and numbness and heartache because when we escape, we can’t face it head on. And facing our stories head on is the only way to healing. To restoration and redemption.

So how do we begin this hard path? How do we learn our stories and tell our stories?

In counseling, we ask clients often to write out a timeline of events in their lives. We have knowledge of what has happened over the course of our lives in our brains, but writing it brings so much to light that was sitting in darkness. It helps us make meaning and understand and see themes and patterns. It helps us see the memories that stand out and those that come back that we haven’t thought about in years. It helps remind us of hope, and it helps us face our pain.

Some think it is best to leave the past in the past, but we can’t truly leave it there if we don’t face it first.

Dan Allender also says this about the power of writing our stories down:

By writing your stories, you begin to see them in a different way. Details that you almost forgot suddenly stand out, and you begin to make connections that eluded you when you spoke the tale. Metaphors take on a life of their own, and themes become more pronounced. Stories reveal themselves to be something other than what you thought. You can talk and walk at the same time, but writing forces you to step off the path and sit under a tree so you can ponder. (p. 3, To Be Told)

I know this task is not an easy one, friend. Some of our stories carry more pain than we can even speak about, trauma that has nearly destroyed us. I know our stories aren’t always the ones we want to live now, much less *re*live. But we don’t want them to hold so much power anymore. We want to be free to walk forward into our lives without those shackles and burdens. We want to be free.

We want to understand the meaning in our stories, but we don’t want them to be in charge anymore.

This is the path to deliverance and healthier, whole relationships.

So I want you to start with this simple exercise found in Dan Allender’s *To Be Told* Workbook. Buy a journal for this, and begin to answer questions about your life. Here are some questions to get you started, and I would highly recommend buying this workbook to work through on your own.

 Start with writing your earliest memory. Who was around? What sights, smells, sounds, did you experience? What happened?

 What events do you remember in first grade, second grade, third, and on?

 Who were your friends?

 What did you do for fun?

 Where did you live?

 Describe your home.

 Describe your family. What were your parents like? What do you remember about how they interacted with each other, with you? What about your siblings?

 Write about the role of faith and church in your childhood.

 What did you enjoy?

 What were you good at?

 What was hard for you then?

 What were your worst memories?

 What were your best memories?

 What themes do you see playing out?

No one ever has to read this, and you don’t have to share the whole story with others if you don’t want. There are pieces of my story that still only God and me know about, and that’s okay. But when we begin allowing others into our story, we find new and deeper connection. We find camaraderie because their stories hold hard things, too.

Enter music:

Begin writing your story, friend. Because what you’ll find is that it’s not your story at all. It’s God’s. He wrote your story at the beginning of time, and he invites us to be coauthors in it. We can allow our stories to tell us, or we can choose to tell them. And even though resisting your story may be painful and understanding it even more so, and even though you may not even think your story is worth sharing, hear that God says over you, “Enjoy your place in my story. The beauty of it means you matter, and you can create within it even as I have created you” (p. 59, A Million Miles in a Thousand Years). We can recreate our present and future by choosing to process through and heal from our past. What a beautiful thing!

Thanks for sitting a while with me. I trust that understanding and telling your story will help you take a step toward wholeness so you can finally see what good relationships are made of.

Do you want to work through your story with another person, to make meaning of it? I would be honored to work you through it in coaching (if there is no significant unresolved trauma) or in counseling if the wounds require more trauma-focused therapy. You can find out how to work with me on a one-on-one basis at [www.kerrahfabahcer.com/book-online](http://www.kerrahfabahcer.com/book-online). Listening to the podcast and reading my weekly emails is only scratching the surface. The real work is when we can dig deeper one-on-one. So be brave, and reach out. Your story needs to be heard.

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.