This is Be Known, and I’m Kerrah Fabacher. You’re listening to episode \_\_27\_\_\_\_. 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.

So last week I shared with you some of the things that keep us from having good Christian Community and what happens when we don’t have it. I also said something about not being able to identity how to cultivate good community… Mainly because over the last few years, I have struggled to have my own. But I have thought about that more over the past couple of weeks.

I know what good community looks like, even if in this current season it may look a lot different for me. I have seen true accountability and discipleship. I have known vulnerability and authenticity and knowing one another deeply. I have experienced life on mission with others and serving with others and caring for others. I have seen the body of Christ rise up to meet my financial needs, emotional needs, physical needs, and relational needs. When I have been at my darkest, my people have brought me meals and sent groceries and written checks. When I feel lonely, my people have intentionally checked on me. When my marriage has gone through rough seasons, my people pray for me. When depression creeps in, my friends love on me.

I’ve said it before. I’ll say it again— we were not made to live this life alone. Even you, my introvert friends. All of us. We were all made to do this thing called life together. Because of that, I believe there are some ways we can cultivate this kind of deep, authentic community. Now hear me out really quickly. I do not think you need to have a deep relationship with all of the Christians around you or even in your small group at church. Nope. You can go back and listen to episode 6 — “Be the House with the Picket Fence” — to hear about the different levels of closeness in relationships because not all relationships are created equal.

I am simply sharing with you how to develop good community and watch it grow.

This week on Instagram I am doing a 5-day challenge called “Use Your Words” to help you do just this! Each day, I will provide a simple prompt for you with a practice that helps you build deeper relationships. There is also a fun giveaway for those who participate, but I will share more at the end of the episode about all that. For now, I want to dig deeper into those five practices.

How do we cultivate authentic community? The concepts I will share today aren’t new, if you have listened to the podcast for any length of time. But they are essential.

1. Be Brave.

Some of us are scared of even initiating with others. Um, this girl is raising her hand. For real! I get scared to go up to someone I don’t know to say hi. I get weird and look all around the room or peace out as fast as I can so I don’t have to say hello. It’s a whole thing. I also struggle to initiate with people I’m already close to. Like it’s rare that I’m the one to invite someone to coffee or lunch or to come to my house. Initiating feels scary because what if the conversation goes nowhere and the person doesn’t want to be your friend? What if the person rejects your invitation? It happens. But sometimes that conversation turns into a friendship. Sometimes that coffee date leads to becoming soul friends— the kind you share everything with. Maybe that invitation could help another person feel seen, loved. Maybe it could be healing for both of you. Don’t wait on someone else. Initiate. Go to the thing. Extend the invitation. Sit beside someone. Reach out. Stay a few minutes after church and talk to someone, even if it is just the person next to you. Invite someone to come to a small group, or more simply, be brave and go. Be brave and accept the invitation another extends, too. I know that you may have been brave in the past and gotten hurt. I have, too. But Relationships will always require bravery, so let’s step out of the boat and reach out our hands.

2. Be Honest.

Honesty can look like being yourself— don’t show up with a mask on, with someone else’s face on. Show up as you. We get nervous others may not like the real us or that there is something wrong with the real us. There is no place for dishonesty in relationships. In genuine, whole relationships, at least. We need to allow another person to see us for who we really are and stop trying to live to please others. I think honesty also looks like sharing your thoughts, feelings, experiences, values, dreams, and beliefs. We don’t have to dig this deep with everyone, remember… Because not all people are safe. But with those who are? Yes, we absolutely need to be honest about these things. Hiding our lives away is just a form of shame. But when we expose our true selves, gosh, that’s when healing and true connection happen.

3. Be Quiet.

I don’t know why I love this one so much. Maybe because I love peace and quiet. Ha. Maybe because I’m a sucker for good contemplative practices. Maybe because my family has no clue what “be quiet” means. Ha! I don’t know, but when I say “Be Quiet,” I mean share your stuff and allow another person to share theirs, too. Be intentional with the questions you ask others— not just how is your day or how are you, but more specific— how can I serve you today? or what do you need from me? Or what does this experience mean to you? Or how are you dealing with this situation? Or how do you feel? And then let them share. An authentic, deep relationship is meant to be reciprocal in nature. The ones that aren’t? Well, like I say in episode 6, they don’t get to be inside the house. Let others share their stuff, too. Be a good listener, as I share about in episode 24. Take the time to know another as you are known by them.

4. Be Mindful.

A person I meet for the first time does not need to hear my whole life story and all the sin and shame and heartache and pain. They can see the genuine Kerrah, but it’s a more on-the-surface version. This does not mean that I am inauthentic. It simply means that I am wise, mindful. Thoughtful, even. Not everyone needs to be my best friend. When I share, I can also be mindful of what I share and the motivation behind what I say. Is my story turning into gossip? Am I only seeking attention? Why am I saying what I am saying? Is there any untruth to what I am sharing? We need to take our time with others, allowing the space to get to know each other and build a sense of trust. We need to give relationships our time, not all of it, but enough to be able to nurture it and watch it grow. To spend time together— talking, praying, serving, living. I also can mindful of the needs of others— paying close attention to what is going in their lives and genuinely caring about it. Mindful relationships are whole relationships.

5. Be Known.

Inside and out. Let others in. Let them see you. Know you. Tell them your fears and shame and struggle with that sin. Tell them your favorite songs and take them to your favorite places. Let them see you without makeup on and in the chaos of your crazy busy life. Let them know your dreams and let them see you working toward those dreams. Let them see your pain and let them hear the questions you have for God. Let them see that you are real. A real person. Let them see your true personality. We must put ourselves in an open posture in order to be known. People can try to get to know you all day, but it is up to you to live known. And on the other side of this? Know others, too. Know their favorite Starbucks drink and where they like to go eat. Know that they love McDonald’s cokes or Chick-fil-A’s chocolate chip cookies. Know their Enneagram # or Myers-Briggs type. Know their strengths and weaknesses. Know their pain and struggles. Know and be known. True community knows one another. It is possible to do some life with others, some ministry with others, and not fully know them… But the Acts 2 type of community? They knew one another well because they were around each other all the time.They prioritized one another. They served and loved and forgave one another.

Enter the music—

Building community looks like so many more things, too. It looks like being active in a local church and going and serving. It means being in small groups and spending one-on-one time with others. It means sending a Vox or Marco Polo or Instagram message. It means b being generous and selfless and kind and gracious. It means so many things.

We can have this type of community, too. The strongest community I have are a handful of girl friends. They know my laugh. I know theirs. They ask me hard questions, and I ask them, too. They want to spend time with me. They tell me their marriage problems and infertility struggles and about their feeling of loneliness. They tell me what they are leaning in scripture. They tell me they are depressed and scared and angry. I know their favorite shows and how they like their coffee. I know their style. We have done mission together, led Bible studies together, led women’s ministries together. We pray together. I know them. And they know me.

And we can’t have deep relationships— that authentic community we crave— if we can’t be brave, be honest, be quiet, be mindful, and be known.

So will we be the ones who are?

Thanks for sitting a while with me. I trust that cultivating authentic community will help you take a step toward wholeness so you can finally see what good relationships are made of.

OK, let me tell you a little more about this week’s 5-day Instagram challenge! We will use the hashtag #useyourwordschallenge, and you will get to post something each day about you are doing one of the five prompts- be brave, be honest, be quiet, be mindful, and be known. Even if you only share one day out of the five (and use the hashtag), you will be entered into a giveaway of some of my favorite books, including *Emotionally* *Healthy* *Spirituality* by Pete Scazzero, *The* *Gifts* *of* *Imperfection* by Brene Brown, *The* *Listening* *Life*, by Adam S. McHugh, *Boundaries*, by Cloud and Townsend, and *Rhythms* *of* *Renewal* by Rebekah Lyons. You will also get a $25 Starbucks gift card. To even get more entries, you can go to the link in my Instagram bio that says “Use Your Words Challenge” and drop your email. When you do this, you get 5 extra entries into the giveaway. The winner will be announced next weekend. I want you to join me in this not only because the giveaway is awesome, but friend! We need to cultivate deeper relationships in our lives. There is no better time to jumpstart them than now. So will you join me? Follow me on Instagram @kerrahfabacher to come alongside me!

To finish up, the transcript for this episode is on the podcast page on my website, 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.