This is Be Known, and I’m Kerrah Fabacher. You’re listening to episode 39. 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.

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Welcome back my friends! It’s good to be back. And even though I am literally only hearing my voice right now, it kind of feels like I’m sitting with you. And that feels fun. The podcast took off the month of July so my family could begin to get settled into the house we’ve been renovating. And y’all, this girl is tired. But I’m happy to be back with you.

For the Fall, we will be back on our weekly schedule for a while, so let’s jump in!

Lately, I have been having a conversation on repeat with so many of my clients. We are talking about emotional awareness. Emotional awareness is vital to having healthy and whole relationships with others and with God. We cannot be known by others if we don’t know ourselves, and knowing self requires being aware of how you think, how you feel, what you need. It is awareness of your body and your values and personality. We must be aware.

It is the first step in effective management of our emotions, and it is one of the most important things we need to cultivate in relationships with others.

Awareness involves slowing down, listening with curiosity, and naming our experience. To be aware, we must sit with ourselves long enough to know our heart, our mind, and our body. If we avoid our pain or uncomfortable emotions (and I know many of us do!) , we will never be able to move through them and come out on the other side.

So how do we become aware? In hard situations, can we be brave and pay “compassionate attention” to ourselves to see what we are feeling, what we need, and what we are thinking?[[1]](#footnote-1)

First, we need to slow down. Slowing down, putting away the phones and calendars and distractions for a moment, is the only way to self-knowledge, to God-knowledge—it’s the only way to freedom. And isn’t that what we’re all longing for? Adam S. McHugh says that “listening requires being,” sitting with your feelings and the voices in your head like you would sit with your friend in the living room.*[[2]](#footnote-2)*

I cannot emphasize enough the value of solitude and silence in this process. Filling our spaces, our minds, with noise feels like it protects us from having to face our demons and be honest with ourselves about what is wrong, about how bad our relationships have gotten. But this cycle only leads to emptiness in our relationships. So it’s time to be alone for a while, with no agenda but to reflect and pay attention to what is going on within us. How can you carve out alone time in your schedule? How can you intentionally get quiet?

Second, we listen.

We listen to our body, our mind, the situation around us. We listen to another person if they are involved. We listen to the Spirit within us. There are two episodes you can go back and listen to help you learn how to listen to yourself: Episode 10, *Listen to Your Emotions* and Episode 19, simply called, *Listen.*

And then lastly, we get curious. We are kind to ourselves, and we pay attention with a curious attitude, not a shaming attitude. A curious posture is where learning begins.

We can ask ourselves the following questions:

What is going on right now?

What am I feeling? (Name the specific emotion.)

When did I begin feeling this way?

When do I feel it the most?

What usually triggers it?

Where do I feel it?

What is happening in my body when I feel this way?

What thoughts am I thinking when I feel this way?

Why is this feeling or situation uncomfortable for me?

What could my emotion be telling me?

What is the possible purpose of this emotion?

How do I normally react whenI feel this way?

What do I need right now?

What do my people need to know about how I’m doing right now?

As you spend time thinking through these questions, I want you to answer as honestly as you can. I’ll give you an example of what it can look like.

This summer I’ve spent a lot of time with my kids without my hubs around because he has been working on the new house non-stop. And we are in a small apartment until we can move in. Being in a small space with my loud kids really triggers me. They get louder and louder and argue and cry. And I’m finding my blood just boiling. So that’s the situation. That’s what’s going on. In those moments, I feel trapped and overwhelmed, which then leads to anger. You hear how I’m naming the specific emotion? I begin feeling that way when my kids are too loud. I feel it most when my husband isn’t home, when my kids are all yelling or crying at once, and we are stuck inside. If I haven’t eaten, my irritability is much worse, and I begin losing patience with them. When they all yell at once, I’m quickly triggered. I feel it most at home or in the car.

I feel my muscles tense and my heart race when get this way. I also have a hard time breathing and thinking straight. My thoughts are all over the place, but mainly they are something like, “I can’t take this anymore! Being a mom is the worst….” (Yes, I know, dramatic, but hey, you know I’m always real with you. And I do love being a mom, MOST of the time.)

I don’t like feeling overwhelmed and overstimulated because it feels like my senses are being attacked. Like I am out of control and can’t turn off the noise to find the quiet I desperately need. My emotion could be telling me I need to take deep breaths or take a moment in the quiet by myself so the noise doesn’t overwhelm me. I normally don’t react well. I try to be patient, but most of the time, I crack. Because the noise just seems to do mama girl in! When I feel this way, I need my kids to use quieter voices and not all speak to me at once. I need them to take deep breaths and calm down, too. I need them to know that I’m overwhelmed when they act this way.

Do you see how that process works? Because I slowed down and looked carefully at my situation and the feelings I was having, I was able to know what I needed and communicate that to my kids. Awareness is a gentle and kind approach to understand the situation, yourself, and what you need in a moment. This week, I want you to write these questions down (or just download the transcript of this episode!), and spend at least 10 minutes sitting with them. Be honest and name what you are experiencing.

Though this isn’t the magic sauce, it is essential to being emotionally healthy, which in turn, helps you be more relationally healthy because you are able to better manage your uncomfortable emotions and able to communicate about them in effective ways.

I know that this process isn’t always easy and may not come naturally to many listeners. Maybe your life is too loud and too busy to slow down and pay close attention. Maybe you don’t think you matter as much as others, so spending that much time thinking about yourself feels selfish. Maybe no one ever gave you permission to consider how you feel. Maybe you’ve always discounted your feelings. Maybe you are avoiding them because you are afraid of what you’ll see if you look too closely. Maybe avoiding them feels easier. But friend, I am telling you in this moment: you matter. Your feelings matter. It’s important to be aware of what’s going on within you. You are allowed to feel. And express your feelings in healthy ways.

Enter Music—

To end today, I wanted to read part of this blessing by John O’Donahue called, *For the Unknown Self (To Bless the Space Between Us,* p. 144)

So much of what delights and troubles you

Happens on the surface

You take for ground.

Your mind thinks your life alone,

Your eyes consider air your nearest neighbor,

Yet it seems that a little below your heart

There houses in you an unknown self

Who prefers the patterns of the dark

And is not persuaded by the eye’s affection

Or caught by the flash of thought.

It is a self that enjoys contemplative patience

With all your unfolding expression,

Is never drawn to break into light

Though you entangle yourself in unworthiness

And misjudge what you do and who you are.

It presides within like an evening freedom

That will often see you enchanted by twilight

Without ever recognizing the falling night,

It resembles the under-earth of your visible life:

All you do and say and think is fostered

Deep in its opaque and prevenient clay.

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

So this is a fun announcement! TOMORROW the podcast will be ONE! So who’s ready to celebrate! The first five people who go rate and review AND share about the podcast will get a free Starbucks drink from me! When you leave your review, make sure you let me know via email so I can find you! (Not in a creepy way. Geez. Calm down.) When you share on social media, just tag me on Instagram @kerrahfabacher or screen shot and send me an email at info@kerrahfabacher.com.

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 editing.

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

1. From *Try Softer. A*undi Kolber. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *The Listening Life: Embracing Attentiveness in a World of Distraction.* Adam S. McHugh. InterVarsity Press: Downers Grove, IL. 2015. (179, 181). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)