This is Be Known, and I’m Kerrah Fabacher. You’re listening to episode \_\_\_36\_\_\_. 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.

There is a big trend in pop culture right now surrounding the topic of setting personal boundaries— no longer saying no to yourself and not letting others mistreat you anymore. It’s a “I choose me; F you” movement, and I want to spend some time today helping you see this from a healthier angle and also to show you boundaries aren’t all about you. A boundary defines a relationship— where I end and you begin. They aren’t meant to separate us from the world or keep us from caring about others in the process. They are meant to cultivate a deeper self-respect, a deeper self-love, but also a deeper other-respect, and other-love.

Y’all know I’m all about self-respect and learning to say no and how to take care of your own needs. This girl cares about boundaries. But we shouldn’t snub our noses at the others in the process.

We shouldn’t completely neglect the needs of others in order to meet our own. That’s not love. We should treat others with the same level of respect that we want to receive. For some, this will come naturally, but for others, this is going to stretch us to uncomfortable places. But having good boundaries doesn’t just have to do with you. Having good boundaries means we respect others’ boundaries, too.

If someone says no, we need to honor their no. If someone is uncomfortable, we need to respect what they need. If they don’t want to share something personal, we shouldn’t push them to. If they don’t like hugs, we shouldn’t be hugging them. If they seem to have intentionally pulled away, we should allow them space. I know this is hard if a person hasn’t communicated these things clearly or you are just itching for the relationship to go back to normal, but if they have communicated it, we are responsible for respecting what they want.

Remember there are different kinds of boundaries that we need to respect: material (time, money, resources), physical (any body contact or proximity), emotional (deeply personal topics), spiritual (maybe what a person is comfortable discussing in front of another or parts of their faith journey that may not everyone to know, maybe boundaries with spiritual leaders, their value system), and relational (who is in their life, and who isn’t; who is close and who isn’t). We need to keep these in mind when thinking about how to better respect their boundaries.

So how can we do this practically?

1. Pay attention.

 Goodness, we walk around with our eyes so focused on ourselves and our lives and our needs and our feelings and our responsibilities that we forget to look around us sometimes. We have stopped being students of others. We have stopped paying attention. So it begins with that. Pay attention to how people react to you, if they shut a specific conversation or form of physical touch down (whether directly or more subtly). Are they looking you in the eye? If not, maybe they are uncomfortable. Are they answering your question? If not, maybe they don’t feel safe to answer. Pay attention to their body language and tone of voice and choice of words they use. What are their boundaries like with others? How do they like to spend their time? Many people do not verbalize their boundaries because they don’t know how or just don’t feel safe to. Your job is to just notice.

2. Ask.

 This seems so juvenile, but seriously, so many would appreciate if we we have the guts just to ask— to ask how we can help them, how we can serve them, what they need, what boundary they want in a specific situation. If we can read discomfort in their body language or tone, we can ask if they are okay. If someone does not feel very safe with you, they may or may not answer. But many would feel so seen and respected by the question. Be gentle and kind in your approach, remaining humble and non-judgmental. Invite their vulnerability here. Ask before you reach in for a kiss. Ask if someone is okay with a hug. Ask if the person needs to have some alone time instead of coming to hang out tonight. Ask if it’s okay come by. Be the one who is curious.

3. Affirm.

 If they are so brave to actually share their boundaries with you out loud, take a moment to let them know you’ve heard and that you will agree to it. For example, a person tells you they don’t want to talk about that thing right now. You tell them you understand, and that you will drop it for now. Or a person says they can’t come to the thing tonight because they need rest, and you say, “Girl, get your rest!” We need to verbally honor what they say because setting boundaries is so vulnerable and humiliating for some people. Be the one who listens and affirms them, even if you may disagree with their choice.

4. Follow through.

 One thing that I hear all the time from clients trying to set better boundaries is that others may show they hear and respect those boundaries, but never follow through. The more this happens, the more unsafe the relationship feels. Follow through. Respect the boundary, whatever it is. If this person isn’t okay with you living with her anymore, it’s time to move out. If this person cannot loan you anymore money, stop asking him for it. If this person expects you to be on time, be on time. Be the one who follows through and respects the boundaries others set directly and indirectly. They pull away from your hug— you don’t try to force the hug. You back up and honor their personal space. Another disagrees with your belief about something— you be a good listener and don’t force your belief onto them. Someone else is a recovering alcoholic and isn’t comfortable around alcohol— you never have alcohol around her. Someone else really needs us to help meet a need, and we do anything in our power to try to help (if the relationship isn’t toxic.) the Bible tells us how to live, and we strive to live that way. We pay attention and ask. And we affirm and follow through.

We honor the boundaries of others. We honor their needs. Their feelings and wants and thoughts and beliefs. We honor their stories and differences. This is one of the greatest ways we can love a person. By being the ones we don’t push others to their breaking points, who talk to them as equals, who listen to their “no” and accept their “yes.”

Maybe, just maybe in this process, we will begin to see more people respecting ours, and isn’t that what we all want?

Let’s be the ones who show an unheard-of amount of respect to others.

I’ll end with this quote from the @boundariesbooks instagram: “Appropriate boundaries actually increase our ability to care about others.” May it be true for us. (May 30, 2021)

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

Did you know that I have a course out called *The Boundaries Bootcamp?* In this course, I teach you a crash course in boundary setting with a unique twist— incorporating a five-principle framework I created to help people learn how to openly and honestly communicate. The course is a go-at-your-own pace, 6- lesson course. If you know you need more help setting boundaries in your own life, this may be the right fit for you. Check it out right now at [www.kerrahfabacher.com/shop](http://www.kerrahfabacher.com/shop).

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.