**45: The Dangers of Oversharing**

This is Be Known, and I’m Kerrah Fabacher. You’re listening to episode 45. 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.

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Have you ever been in a small group and there is that one person who is the talker? You know who I’m talking about right now, don’t you even act like you don’t. Heck, you may be the talker, ha! (I may or may not have been the talker in the past. But I digress.) The talker answers most of the questions, speaks up the most about ideas or thoughts or beliefs, seems to like being heard and being right. The talker usually takes up most of the time allotted for the group with little to no regard for the others in the room.

Or you meet someone for the first or second time or you’ve only “met” online and they begin telling you all the things about their life that you really don’t need to know.

The talker is the one who tends to overshare. An oversharer discloses an inappropriate amount of detail about his or her life to people who’ve got no business knowing all that stuff.

You see someone post details about their relationship break-up on Facebook. Someone on Instagram tells you every detail of their trauma in light of being a “good” writer and reaching their audience in an authentic way. The man at bible study who tells everyone the details of his problematic porn use. The person in a working group who talks about everything her narcissistic husband did to her and how she is struggling financially. The wife who spills all about how unsatisfied she is in the bedroom.

Yikes. These things make the counselor in me just cringe.

Because like we talked about a couple of episodes ago, not all people are safe people. There are risks to sharing, especially when one shares too much with people who aren’t safe. And let’s take that a bit further — your safe people don’t even always need to know the inns and outs, the every gory detail.

I know this podcast is called “be known,” and so that must mean we need to *make* ourselves known as much as possible. While there is some truth to that, we don’t need to “be known” by everyone. It’s really only a small group of people who need to know us deeply. And honestly, oversharing with people who aren’t your people only gives a false sense of intimacy. A false sense of knowing.

We think if someone can know the depths of our pain or depression or addiction or trauma, then they will know us more, or want to know us more. We share sometimes in light of it being a calling or ministry or to help someone through their similar issues.

And, again, while that is just fine sometimes, it’s not appropriate all the time. We are all longing for deep connection with others, but we have to be wise about how we go about getting it.

When you hear the word, “overshare,” you may immediately think about social media. I’m currently 33, and Facebook was just coming onto the scene when I was a senior in high school. Before that, we had nothing similar but Myspace, AOL instant messenger, and Xanga. Ha! Y’all remember those? We had dial up internet, one phone line most of the time, and texting was 10 cents a text. We weren’t on our phones or computers much at all. Pictures were developed, not posted. Our lives were more private.

Now in the world of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TicTok, Snapchat, Pinterest, Youtube and all the social media outlets, we are sharing more and more of our private, personal things with strangers. We are craving the high that comes from being known.

But the crash is much worse than the high.

Because oversharing is not safe.

Why?

**1. It can hurt more than help.**

You have no idea what someone else may have walked through in her life before you met her. Your story may trigger symptoms of PTSD, depression, serious mental illness, or even suicidal thoughts. Your story may make it harder for her to move forward and heal, when you probably wanted it to do the opposite. I tell people this all the time when sharing about their trauma and pain- sharing your story may retraumatize someone else who hasn’t healed or been able to move past it yet. We never want to risk retraumatizing someone. Yet, we *do* in light of getting the attention we seek. The “connection” we seek. And that’s messed up. It’s okay and good to share your hard story with someone you know and trust, someone who can emotionally handle it. It’s not good to share all of that with people outside that inner circle of safety.

**2. It opens the door for unwanted opinions.**

Can you seriously tell me you want all your Facebook friends to know the details of your divorce and then hear what advice they have to give you? Do you want every follower to tell you how to manage your money or your body or your past hurt? Do you want strangers to tell you how to raise your problematic child? I mean, I don’t. I don’t want or trust all of those points of view. But when we overshare, there is that risk that someone will come in to “rescue” us from the pain we’ve shared, usually the kind of people who are people-pleasers or codependent. Years ago, when I felt brave to share about our miscarriages, I was careful to not share the more traumatic moments *and* keep it authentic enough to be relatable. Some have even told me *that* was oversharing because apparently sharing about miscarriage publicly is still taboo. So I had people judging me for sharing, and then I also had people try to be “helpful” and tell me things like, “well, at least you have other healthy children,” or “at least you didn’t have to hold your dying child in your arms.” People said all kinds of things that,overtime, I learned to filter out. But no one wants those opinions. And people don’t understand the value of silence. Geezum. We don’t always need to get a word in. That’s for the overshareres and the responders.

**3. It can drive people away from you.** Because listen, people don’t always like being around the talker, the oversharer. It makes others uncomfortable almost feel sorry for the person who isn’t picking up on the social cues of the conversation enough to know that too much is too much. So instead of bringing people closer to you, your oversharing is moving them away from you. That’s not intimacy or connection. That’s short-term attention that doesn’t evolve into anything deeper because people get annoyed with the oversharer, especially if that person never gives the other a chance to speak and share her story, too. It feels like a one-sided, self-centered conversation that does nothing for the other party. So you start getting unfollowed and losing friends and people stop wanting to be around you because it’s not fun.

Listen to me, you know how much I value authenticity and vulnerability and being brave to share your story. I believe in it deeply, because without it, we *can’t* have connection with others. But, we must be wise with our story. Not everyone needs to know.

So how can check our hearts and our motivations before we share? How can we make sure we are doing this wisely with discernment and understanding of who is safe for the conversation? I think we can ask ourselves these questions:

1. Is this person safe enough for me to share my hard story? (Go back and listen to episode 43 and 6 to think about who is safe and who isn’t.)

2. What is my goal in sharing this story? To help this person? To get attention? To feel known? (Be honest)

3. If I share this story, are there pieces that need to remain between me and God because they are too much for this context? If so, what pieces are safe to share?

4. Has this person I’m talking to been through anything similar?

5. How can I share my experience without retraumatizing the other person? If I can’t, maybe I shouldn’t share it at this time.

6. Am I also willing to give space for the other to share her story in a safe place? Am I willing to be a nonjudgmental listener instead of trying to rescue her from her pain?

7. Is this a story I can share with the masses, or is it one that needs to stay in my inner circle?

8. What cues in a conversation tell me I may crossing into the oversharing territory? Am I able to pay attention to those cues and not only on my own agenda?

Can we be willing to stop, be still, and think before we speak? Your motivation may be as pure as gold, but it doesn’t matter when your sharing becomes problematic oversharing.

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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.

If you need a safe outlet to share your story, I hope you’d consider working with me one-on-one in coaching. Though I am also a counselor for those who reside in Louisiana, I can work with others in coaching on issues like this— on sharing your story but also knowing when not to. You can read more about my coaching services and the difference between that and therapy on my website, [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. And you can always follow along with me over on Instagram @kerrahfabacher.

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.