This is Be Known, and I’m Kerrah Fabacher. You’re listening to episode \_\_\_64\_\_\_. 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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When I was in college, a leader of a small group I was in told me when I was angry, everyone else around me picked up on it and they got angry, too. Or when I was sad, the room was sad. And when I was happy, they were happy. She was telling me to keep my uncomfortable emotions in check, to reign them in. Almost to put on a happy face because my emotional state affected everyone else too much.

Maybe it’s because I’m a 4 and don’t hide my emotions well. I don’t know. But that conversation never sat well with me. Over the years, I’ve realized something important.

I’m not responsible for someone else’s emotions. And neither are you. Our emotions and thoughts and reactions are our own responsibility.

I’m not going to pretend I feel something I don’t to make the room happy. That’s a people-pleasing tendency, and I’m not all about that.

We talk about boundaries a lot here in this space. Today, let’s talk more about emotional boundaries. Is it possible to not let someone’s emotions affect how we feel? What does it mean to have emotional boundaries?

There are so many directions we could go with this conversation, but I’ll try to keep it simple today.

One of the most important things to remember when talking about emotional boundaries is to remember where you end and I begin. To remember the line. I may come home from work and I’m tired, emotionally drained, and not in the mood to talk or engage much. I may even be more irritable. My emotions can influence the emotions of others. My irritability may lead to more tension in my home. More distance from my family who didn’t do anything to make me feel how I do. But that means I’m not handling my own emotions well.

Here’s what I mean. I know when I come home from work, I’ll always. Every. Single.time. be exhausted and emotionally drained. I’m a counselor. It comes with the job. How I handle those emotions are on me. If I come snapping at everyone in my family for no reason, saying hi and then going to spend the rest of the night alone, or being mean to my kids, I’m mishandling my exhaustion. Again, that’s on me. And when I mishandle my emotions, yeh, others around me may be affected.

But if I remember my responsibility— my emotions and my reactions— and take care of mine, then I’m not coming in being a jerk to my family after work. I’ve taken the time to calm myself, to take care of what I need before I walk in the door. And even though I still walk in the door emotionally drained, I’m able to be present with my family and patient with them. I’m not in charge of how they feel, but my actions do influence how they feel.

I can own what is mine— and work to effectively cope with the difficult emotions I have. I can practice deep breathing and self-care and prayer and whatever I need to do in order to manage my emotions well, and you can, too. What do you need to do in order to manage your emotions better? That’s in your control?

Another thing is to not pass blame or take the blame. I don’t ever need to say, “You make me feel \_\_\_\_\_\_.” No one makes me feel anything. We own our own feelings by saying something more like, “I feel \_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_.” You are acknowledging you feel a certain way when a person does something, but you aren’t putting how you feel on them. Does this make sense? If someone does the same to you, blames you for how they feel, like my small group leader did to me, it’s important to remember you aren’t to blame. And you can say that to someone who is blaming you for how they feel.

Now, to answer the question, “is it possible to not let someone else’s emotions affect how we feel?” I think absolutely, yes. It’s possible. But it’s okay if they do affect us. Honestly, that’s where empathy comes from. We can’t be cold and unfeeling, unaffected by any and everything around us. But we don’t have to feel angry when someone we care about is angry. We can listen and pay attention to others around us when they are sad or distressed or angry, but we don’t have to take on their feelings as our own.

And we don’t have to try to rescue them out of their discomfort either. We’ve talked about this a lot, but a big part of having good emotional boundaries is to stop trying to do whatever we can to “make” someone feel better. We can influence, but we can’t rescue. We can love well and serve well and be a compassionate listener. We can help meet needs and take care of someone, but we can’t make them magically feel something other than what they feel.

We can own our feelings and allow ourselves to feel what we feel and give others the same courtesy. This is what it means to have good emotional boundaries. To remember that our feelings are our own. No one is responsible for them. Just us. Just me. Just you.

It’s taken me many years to stop blaming myself for how others feel, to stop pretending and just be my authentic self. To realize that I’m not in charge of anyone else’s feelings. But I can be in charge of my own. I don’t know about you, but that’s so empowering and freeing. Let’s choose to be good stewards of our own emotions.

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

If you are struggling with your own emotional boundaries, I have a couple of spots open for one-on-one boundaries coaching. Check out how to work with me at [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.

A big thanks to my friend Robert Hargrove for creating the music for the show, and Alana Dawson, for editing.

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