This is Be Known, and I’m Kerrah Fabacher. You’re listening to episode \_\_17\_\_\_\_. 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.

I began 2020 with a group of 27 writers who were then strangers. We all had been brave and signed up for the hope\*writers Mastermind cohort for this year. We began meeting on Zoom at the beginning of January, but those strange faces don’t feel so strange anymore. We not only have supported each other’s writing work over the year, but we have become friends. Like real ones.

At the beginning of the year when we had nothing in common except a decision to say yes, we began all making personal writing goals for 2020. We used our Full Focus Planners and wrote out 10 big goals for the year and how we planned to accomplish them, and even wrote down WHEN we hoped to achieve each goal and how we would reward ourselves for reaching them.

We were all on fire, getting so much done and making great progress, and then the world turned upside down. The pandemic changed our job situations, our home lives, and put quite the damper on our writing work for a while. We were feeling lost, like we were in a fog, just like the rest of the world.

We had come into 2020 with expectations of what it all could be. We had great dreams and plans about what life would look like, of great things that could happen in our writing life.

And then all of a sudden we had to adjust those expectations. And that did not feel fun. It felt like giving up. Like giving in to a negative mindset, like accepting defeat.

But when we learned to adjust, to be flexible, we then entered into a new season of immense progress… more so than we had had before COVID even happened.

It was almost like the adjustment was exactly what we needed.

Because life never goes quite like we planned, does it?

Relationships can be like this.

And let’s all laugh together because that’s the biggest understatement of the year.

I think when we think about adjusting expectations in relationships with others, it can feel a lot like “settling” or living in an inauthentic way that does not feel true to ourselves. We should be able to get what we want and we won’t tolerate any less. That’s what we say.

For the majority of this year, I had a quiz up that assessed the seven main signs that our relationships may be unhealthy. Each participant would see which personality was them in relationships: The healthy one, the one with unhealthy boundaries, the one with poor communication, the selfish one, etc. The goal was to help enlighten the participants in the area where they may have needed to grow the most. The quiz is on pause for now, but if you want the link to take it, send me an email at info@kerrahfabacher.com.

One of the seven signs that a relationship is unhealthy is having unrealistic expectations.

Remember these relationships are not just romantic. They are familial, friendly, and even professional. When expectations are unhealthy and unrealistic from one or both parties, all that follows is disappointment. A lot of disappointment.

There are some who don’t really have any overt expectations at all of others in their lives. They go with the flow and are usually the ones who tend to be people-pleasers. The live to please others, and often place very high expectations on themselves. But on others? No. Those expectations are almost non-existent. An example could be a person who starts going to a new church and likes the teaching, likes some people they have met, and immediately begins serving. They do not expect the preacher to be bible-knowledgable or held accountable for any questionable leadership decisions. They just do what others ask. Maybe another example could be when a person gets married because they are “in love,” and just worship their spouse. Their whole purpose in life is to work to make their spouse happy. So much so that they never expect anything in return. And they become empty versions of themselves over time, not even sure who they are anymore or what they need. Go back and listen to episode 15 for a great tool on assessing your own needs and working to get them met.

There are then some who have very low expectations of others. Maybe because they have been hurt too many times, and they just assume the worst in everyone. That everyone is going to let them down, no one can be trusted. Or they only expect failure of the other, and never expect anything good. This could be a parent that expects nothing more than lies from their teenager because of whatever reason, instead of giving their kid a chance to live honestly. It could be an expectation that a situation will never change or that there will never be any happiness or fulfillment in that relationship. This is a very sad state of being. And it’s lonely. Ask me how I know.

And there are some with expectations that are too high or unrealistic for the other to be able to meet. The unspoken or spoken, known or unknown expectations do not fit who the person is, their strengths and weaknesses, their journey in life, or maybe even their season of life. Or the expectation is so high in the clouds that the other person would never actually be able to to meet it. This could be an expectation on your spouse to be sexually intimate even though there has been little to no emotional connection or your spouse is exhausted or in pain. An expectation for your friend to always be able to come hang out even though you know she doesn’t have a lot of time or money right now. This could be an expectation of your partner to “complete you” or for your employees to be able to work overtime all the time or for the people you lead at church to come to every.single.event.for.the.rest.of.time. It could also be an expectation for you 7 year old to understand how to do something only a teenager would know how to do. Or expectation of complete perfection in every way. No excuses.

When expectations are all out of balance like this, so much resentment and disappoint build. In both parties. One may always live feeling like a failure because they are constantly letting the other down. Another may think they can do no wrong because their friends worship the ground they walk on. Or someone thinking they are always right because no one questions them. Or another not understanding what they are always doing wrong.

Here me. I’m not saying expectations are wrong. In fact, I think they can be a great thing so that the relationship is healthy and thriving.

But I am saying that we are a people who either feel like we deserve nothing or we deserve everything. And because of that extreme way of thinking, we have a really hard time figuring out these expectations. We either hold people to impossible standards or we hold them to none.

Think about the three most important relationships in your life right now.

 When was the last time you felt disappointed? In a small (ugh you didn’t do the dishes kind of way) or in a big (you lied to me) kind of way?

 If you could think just for a moment about this situation with each of the three people. Consider what about it made you feel so upset? So let down?

 Then go backward and ask yourself, “What did I expect of this person in that situation?”

 Weigh the expectation. Ask of it things like:

 Is this in line with who this person is? Their season of life or what they have been going though? Their personality style, strengths and weaknesses? Their schedule and daily demands?

 Is this a comparison game? Like did I expect this person to be like this because this *other* person is like this?

 Was this something this person should be responsible for?

 If you can look at these questions and safely assume that the expectation is not too high or too low or too odd or whatever, then consider if you have ever shared that (like using out loud words in an actual conversation) with them. If you are disappointed that your friend has stopped talking to you as often, did you share with her that you need to hear from her more? If you are upset that your spouse never does the dishes, have you told him that you need him to do the dishes? Unspoken healthy expectations can also lead to resentment. We think people should just magically know what we hope from them. But people can’t read your mind.

So if your expectations ARE healthy, do your people know about them? If not, it’s time to tell them.

If those expectations are NOT healthy based on those questions, then it’s time to make some adjustments. This does not mean your are settling and it doesn’t mean you are not being your true self. But it does mean that you may have to transcend yourself, as Ruth Haley Barton says. You may have to come above those expectations and make some changes that are more in line with the situation and who the person is.

We can still believe the best in people without always expecting the best in people. We can still believe someone has flaws without thinking they are the worst. We can still expect our people to love us without expecting them to love us perfectly. This is not a negative way of living. It’s a balanced way of living. It’s a gracious way of living.

Thanks for sitting a while with me. I hope that adjusting your expectations of your people when necessarywill help you make one more step toward wholeness so that you can finally see what good relationships are made of.

You can find me on instagram @kerrahfabacher or at my website, [www.kerrahfabacher.com](http://www.kerrahfabacher.com).

If you want an exercise about adjusting your expectations and seven more powerful exercises, you can find it over on the shop page on the website. It’s called eight exercises to get your relationships back on track. And for a limited time, it’s on sale for 5$. Get yours now!

And now available for any who need to set more healthy boundaries in your life, my course, The Boundaries Bootcamp, is now available in the shop, too! You don’t want to miss out on this intensive, yet simple and Doable method of setting boundaries in your life.

The transcript for this episode is on the podcast page on my website.

As a disclaimer, I may be a counselor and a coach, but unless I’m YOUR counselor or coach, anything I teach on my social media, my website, my email list, or my podcast does not replace your own personal therapy or coaching and the perspective of your counselor. Any client stories I share will be changed significantly to protect the privacy of the individual, as well. This is meant to be supplemental for your journey toward wholeness. And I’m thankful to just be on the ride, friend.

And a big thanks to my friend, Robert Hargrove, for creating the music for our podcast, and fellow hope\*writer, Alana Dawson for editing the show.

Until next time, friend.

I’ll see you soon!