This is Be Known, and I’m Kerrah Fabacher. You’re listening to episode \_\_\_70\_\_\_. 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.

Ok, so if you’ve been around here in this space for any length of time, you know I preach honesty about how we feel and what we need. There are levels of depth to that depending on the relationship and closeness and safety, but yeh. It’s important for us to be able (as grown up humans) to identify how we feel, how we think, and what we need and then to be able to clearly communicate those things with appropriate parties.

People aren’t mind readers. They won’t know any of this about you if you don’t speak the words out loud from your actual mouth. But here’s something I think we need to be aware of in this conversation: we may tell someone what we need and they are unable to meet that need. When we have unmet needs, especially after we’ve been vulnerable enough to express them out of our mouths, we feel betrayed and hurt. We wonder if the person even cares about us at all if they aren’t willing to meet a need we so clearly laid out for them. I’ll give you some examples to help you see what I mean:

You tell your boss you need a raise (and why). You are respectful and kind and assertive and follow all the rules about effective communication. Your boss considers your expressed need, and has to tell you there’s not room in the budget for your raise.

You tell your adult daughter you need her to help take care of you because you’re getting to the point where you can no longer take care of yourself. But your adult daughter is barely staying afloat emotionally because of some other serious issues in her life and working in a demanding job, and she is literally incapable of giving you the help you need. She may be able to help *find* you help, but it won’t always be from her. It can’t be from her. She can’t meet your every need right now.

You tell your friend you need more consistent conversations and time together, maybe you even are specific, like you need once a week phone calls or once a week hangouts. But your friend doesn’t have the margin for that much interaction. He’s willing to compromise and meet you in the middle, but is not able to meet your need for more consistent time.

You ask your mom to help you out financially because you’re struggling, but your mom is barely hanging on financially to pay her own bills and buy her own groceries. So she has to say she can’t help you right now.

You tell your hair girl you need a Friday appt, but she doesn’t work on Fridays and can’t meet your need.

You see where I’m going with this? I want you to hear this: Your needs matter just as much as anyone else’s. Our needs really are a constant reminder that we’re human. That we’re not superhuman. That we have limits, and we need to be attuned to those limits. That we can’t be an island, that we need others.

And knowing our needs and speaking those needs, again, is paramount to being able to be a healthy human and have healthy relationships.

But what if our people can’t meet the needs we share with them? I think we often will feel attacked when this happens, for whatever reason, and respond in several different ways.

We fight: we tell them they suck because they can’t meet our needs, in so many words, that they hurt us and are wrong and selfish and bla-de-bla.

We flight: we pull away from them and never ask them for anything ever again because they hurt our feelings.

We freeze: We don’t know what to do or what to respond because we’re shocked they said no.

We fawn: We say something like, “Oh, it’s fine. I didn’t need that anyway, or I can take care of it myself…” or “No, yeh, I don’t want you to be burdened or go out of your way.”

Y’all know these are trauma reactions, right? But that’s a conversation for another day.

Here’s also what I want you to know: We don’t have to implement our unhealthy trauma reactions to these situations. We can respond differently.

What does it look like to respond better when your spoken need isn’t met (or isn’t able to be met by the person you spoke it to)?

I think we have to be aware of unhealthy expectations that sound a lot like needs. We need to take a step back and check that. Am I expecting this person to be able to do something for me they are not able to do? If yes, that expectation is unrealistic and needs to be adjusted on your end. I can’t expect my adult daughter to be at my beck-and-call when she’s barely dealing right now. I can’t expect my extremely busy friend to carve out time every week to hang out with me. So look at your expectations and consider if any need adjusting.

Another thing I think that goes hand in hand with what I just said, is that we have to make room for grace, y’all. You are a human. And all your people are, too. And humans have limits. We can’t meet each other’s needs perfectly and at exactly the time the need is expressed. There’s only so much we can do. Can we enter into need conversations with this posture? This understanding that ‘I’m going to tell this person what I need right now, and they might have to say no. They might not be able to meet this need.’ Its a place of acceptance. Of understanding what’s in your control and what’s not.

Similarly, I think it’s helpful to change the narrative in our minds. We feel so personally attacked or betrayed when we share needs vulnerably and the other person says they can’t do whatever it is. But maybe their ‘no’ has nothing to do with us. Maybe they genuinely don’t have room in the budget to give us a raise. Maybe they genuinely can’t work on a Friday to do your hair. Their ‘no’ may be a no to empower you to seek help from someone else and not only rely on them to meet whatever need you have, but maybe their ‘no’ is more about them than you. Their ‘no’ doesn’t have to be a betrayal.

And really, y’all, we have to respect their ‘no.’ Some of us may want to fight so hard to get what we want, ehem, I mean need, that we don’t take no for an answer. We may guilt-trip the person to feel sorry for us, to feel like it *is* their responsibility to meet our need. We may manipulate and act victimized and even threaten with ultimatums. Guys, these are all super unhealthy ways of handling something like this.

Sure, if we feel upset when they say no, it’s okay for us to acknowledge that to ourselves and sit with that as we need, but it’s not okay to get into some power struggle to attempt to *make* someone meet our need.

Respecting their ‘no’ can sound like, “I appreciate your time and for hearing me out. I hear you are unable to help me in this way (or meet this need), so I will make the adjustments I need or find a way to get this need met.” And even specifically, “I’d like to revisit this conversation regarding a raise in 6 months to see if there is room in the budget then,” or “Fridays are my only time I’m able to get my hair down, so I’ll need to look for a new hair girl! Thanks for being willing to work with me!” Or “Would you help me with a referral if you aren’t able to come take care of me?”

I also think there’s something to note here that’s important. If this person can and should meet this need, it’s okay to expect that. Like, for example, if I expect my spouse to be a safe emotional place for me, that’s not unrealistic. He has limits to what he can give, sure, but that need is something he needs to help meet. Do you hear this?

I believe in us, friends. I believe we can continue to push ourselves to grow in these hard ways, to pull back and ask ourselves hard questions and live graciously toward other humans. But honestly, there are moments I just need Jesus to help me with this kind of patience and grace. Never forget, he’s ready and willing to help in your time of need.

Thanks for sitting a while with me. I trust that handling unmet needs with grace and acceptance will help you take a step toward wholeness so you can finally see what good relationships are made of.

Friend, I always appreciate how you consistently listen and support this podcast. It is one of my greatest joys to be a small part of your world! That being said, I do schedule in some breaks throughout the year, and I’m about to break for a few weeks! The Monday Minute will pause, too. I’ll return in August for some fresh content for you! Here’s to having a life-giving, life-saving summer.

To finish up, the transcript for this episode will be 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 being a great editor.

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