This is Be Known, and I’m Kerrah Fabacher. You’re listening to episode 56. 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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I knew someone once who took much pride in her ability to assert her opinion or thoughts with little to no regard for how her words affected another person. She said what she thought and felt whenever she wanted. It didn’t matter if those words hurt someone’s feelings. It didn’t matter if that person thought less of her for saying it. Coming from almost a distorted sense of empowerment, she would unapologetically run over people in light of being her *authentic* self.

Girl, by all means, don’t apologize .

But is this what we really want?

To speak our mind in such a way that hurts others?

To be rude and condescending and harsh?

This isn’t what it means to live authentically, and it’s not what it means to treat others with respect as we learn how to be assertive.

Our words can bite.

And if the point of honesty and vulnerability is connection, then we aren’t getting the point. We are pushing people away when we assert ourselves in rude ways. It’s the fight response. A trauma response. A way to stand up for yourself and protect yourself from getting hurt or being disappointed. So you say what you think when you want. Screw everyone else.

But this is not loving. Or kind.

I know there are some situations where our words may need to be harsh- like when we are in actual danger or someone is abusing us. But our words can be assertive, yet respectful in other situations. They *need* to be. Or no real change will ever come about.

We often hear the phrase: *speak the truth in love.* But where does it come from and what does it mean?

It comes from Galatians 4:15 in the New Testament of the Bible. The apostle Paul is teaching the church in Galatia some key concepts about unity and maturity in the body of Christ.

Let’s read from verse 1 from the New Living Translation.

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. 2 Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. 3 Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. 4 For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future.

5 There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 one God and Father of all,

who is over all, in all, and living through all.

7 However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. 8 That is why the Scriptures say,

“When he ascended to the heights,

he led a crowd of captives

and gave gifts to his people.”

9 Notice that it says “he ascended.” This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. 10 And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire

universe with himself.

11 Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. 13 This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

14 Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. 15 Instead, we will *speak the truth in love*, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. 16 He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Though today, we aren’t going to do a deep exegesis of this passage, we will look at how we can speak the truth in love in our everyday interactions with others. We don’t need to remain silent — never saying how we feel or what we think or what we need. Doing that would come with many negative outcomes.

So, how do we know what to say and how to say it in a way that is kind and respectful of the other person?

**1. Discern *what* needs to be said.**

We don’t need to say everything on our mind. Be slow to speak. Think before you speak. All of that right? Well it’s important. Not everything in our head is meant to be heard. Discern what *needs* to be heard.

“I hate my boss. And he wears ugly clothes. And no one likes him. And I want to flip him off and squash his face in.” Guys, we really can’t say these things to our bosses (or anyone). You know that, right? I don’t care if he is those things and you really do feel those things. What is the actual issue (or issues)? How do you feel about those issues? What needs to change? Then say those things. Something like, “Boss, I need to tell you how I’ve been feeling about this issue.” Say what the issue is, say your feeling, say what you’d like to see change about said issue. No need to tell him all the things. No that’s not inauthentic or fake. It’s wisdom. You can lose people quickly if you have no filter or exercise any self-control in what comes out of your mouth. Name-calling, belittling speech, criticism, and cursing are all unnecessary when trying to be more assertive. Let’s try to toss those things out.

**2. Discern when a person can receive it well.**

I’m not naive enough to think you will always be able to perfectly know when it is the right time to say something hard to someone. And we can’t walk on eggshells all the time. But let’s not be so inconsiderate that you walk up to someone when they are clearly tired or frustrated already and tell them they did something you didn’t like. Come on. Let’s be a little more gracious. Notice their facial expressions, body language. Notice the time of the day and when they are usually at the worst in a given day. Notice the topic and who is around who may not need to be a part of the conversation. Notice if the person seems busyor preoccupied or hungry. Just be more aware of their nonverbal communication, their overall state and the context. Telling someone something you are upset with them about is ineffective when you don’t take these things into account. Because they won’t be able to hear you as well when they are hungry or tired or frustrated. Give them space to breathe. Then come back at a better time.

**3. Pay attention to your nonverbals.**

“It’s not what you say. It’s how you say it,” they say.

I don’t think that’s completely true, as I’ve already mentioned, but I do think our tone of voice and body language matters so much. People may hear something you didn’t intend when you come at them with your arms folded, legs apart, and looking stern in your eyes. If you need to say say a hard truth, the only loving way is to consider your own nonverbal communication. What is your body language communicating? Can you adjust your tone to sound less rude? Can you not yell? Can you take a deep breath, turn toward the person, look in their eyes, and then speak?

**4. Understand you can’t control their reactions.**

You can be so discerning and wise about what to say and when to say it and even how to say it, and the other person still gets their feelings hurt or reacts badly. None of that is within our realm of control. We are responsible for our feelings, thoughts, behaviors, reactions, words, and all of that. We have some influence over how another feels (with our tone of voice and what we say, for example), but we can’t hold any responsibility for how they react.

If they are hurt, we should take another close look at what we said, how we said it, and when we said it. If any of that was not done in love, we can apologize and work to change our approach. But if we look closely (and even get the perspective of another) and find our approach *was* loving, that is all we can do.

Speaking the truth in love feels like the way of Jesus. Like this is how it was meant to be done. There are moments when those words may have to be more firm and some moments where those words can be more gentle. We have to be willing to die to ourselves a little bit, lay aside our need for justice or to feel powerful for a moment, and simply consider how our words could affect another.

This isn’t people-pleasing. It can be if you take it to the extreme. This is simply using more discernment as we speak up and speak out.

I’d like to read the rest of Galatians 4 to you today because I think it will help us finish our conversation well.

This is verse 17-32 in the NLT.

17 With the Lord’s authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. 18 Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. 19 They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

20 But that isn’t what you learned about Christ. 21 Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, 22 throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. 23 Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. 24 Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

25 So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. 26 And “don’t sin by letting anger control you.” Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

28 If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. 29 Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

30 And do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. 32 Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

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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.

Did you know I have a course called The Boundaries Bootcamp? In this go-at-your-own-pace 6 lesson course, I teach you how to set boundaries in an effective way based on a framework of open communication never before heard because I made it! The course is not only ON-SALE right now for $27, it’s also only open until the end of January. Then it will be closed again for a bit. If you’ve been

wanting to sign up, don’t wait! It will be your last chance for a while! Visit [www.kerrahfabacher.com/shop](http://www.kerrahfabacher.com/shop) for more information.

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.