Be Known, the Podcast

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Episode 94: Retell the story you’ve been telling about yourself

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This is Be Known, and I’m Kerrah Fabacher. You’re listening to episode \_\_\_94\_\_\_. 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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Sometimes I keep it simple here and just quote someone wise. The other day a person was telling me about a narrative she’s believed about herself for many years- that she’d want certain things out of life from a young age. That her life would look a certain way because she’d get those things she wanted. But now she’s not sure she wants those same things anymore, and that was disorienting— it felt like she was almost betraying herself in a way, that something may have been wrong with not wanting those things anymore, or that she failed, that she didn’t reach a goal she’d set many years before.

As I was talking with her, she realized that narrative she’s told herself about herself for many years, a narrative that didn’t fit anyone. And she said something like this, “I need to retell the story I’ve been telling myself about myself.”

Haha! I know this is a mouthful.

But stick with me.

Because this is a powerful principle.

We all have a narrative, a story, we believe about ourselves, relationships, the world, and God.

From a young age, we begin believing things about it all.

Words and actions from parents or other caregivers, siblings, extended family, teachers, coaches, peers, pastors, social media and other media sink in and we begin to hold them as the full truth.

We believe all kinds of things.

If we don’t get married by certain young age (in the south in America at least), then will we ever? And all the family starts asking all the time about it.

Or we have to get a college education in order to be successful.

Or that we need to develop a strong career before starting a family.

Or that we should do x,y, z with our money.

Or that we should stay at home with our kids because that’s what good moms do.

Or we believe we’re stupid because someone told us we were.

Or that our body isn’t good because someone made fun of it.

Or that you are a failure if you …

Or that no one will accept you as you are because they never have.

Or that we’re beautiful because people said we were.

We believe narratives that are expectations, narratives about responsibility, about identity. About the world and how it’s supposed to be. About God and how he is and what he expects of us.

We are bombarded with messages about these things from a young age. All. the. Time. It’s exhausting, honestly.

But much of our healing work, our maturing work, involves retelling these stories we’ve told ourselves. The narratives others have told to us, too.

We can be co-authors of our story from this point out, but if the story we’ve told ourselves is not truth, not helpful, not kind. Not compassionate. Not gracious. Not realistic or whatever, then we need to retell it.

We can change those narratives.

We have the power to do that.

If someone told you you were lazy so much that now you believe you’re lazy, then maybe it’s time to look in the mirror and say, “I’m not lazy. I try my best.”

If someone told you a fulfilled life is one where you get married and have kids, maybe it’s time to tell yourself something like this, “I can live a fulfilled life as a single person. I don’t need or have to have a spouse or kids to fulfill me and give my life meaning.”

If someone told you something that doesn’t sit right about God, then it’s time to research and figure out if you believe something different and why.

If someone told you you can’t be successful without good grades and a college degree, you can tell yourself, “I don’t have to have a college degree to be successful or do meaningful work.”

If you always say negative things about your body around others, begin with saying “my body is a good body.”

Do you hear where I’m going with this? In some forms of therapy, these are called self-affirmations, positive cognitions. Seriously whatever you call them, just know that our words have power.

And if we continue to tell ourselves a story about ourselves, others, God, or the world that isn’t true or helpful or kind, then we can change the story. We can change the narrative.

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I’d like to end with a quote from Rupi Kaur:

Healing is …. a practice that has no end or finish line. It is never compete. It will remain a work in progress as long as you walk this earth… Healing is being compassionate. Knowing that even at your best, there will be downward spirals. Healing is bringing all of yourself to the table and saying I probably have no idea what I’m doing, but I’m still going to try. Healing is beginning where you are. (Healing Though Words, 221).

Retelling these stories is hard and brave. And doesn’t happen overnight. We have to do practice it over and over and over. And on the days the old narrative creeps in, we do it again. Compassionately. With patience for ourselves as we see what a good relationship with ourselves can actually be.

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Thanks for sitting a while with me. I trust that retelling your narratives about yourself will help you take a step toward wholeness so you can finally see what good relationships are made of.

To finish up, the transcript for this episode will be 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 the team at Wildfire Creative Co for editing.

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