This is Be Known, and I’m Kerrah Fabacher. You’re listening to episode \_\_\_58\_\_\_. 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.

In episode 43, I talked about safe people. I told you what the characteristics are of unsafe people, and I even did a short IGTV about how we can love unsafe people. But there were some questions asked by some followers that I haven’t been able to answer yet.

Today’s episode is called “When Safe People are No Longer Safe.” It was one of the questions brought to my attention: What do we do if our safe people don’t feel safe anymore? It has taken me a long time to write this episode or even address this topic because I’ve lived this. I know what it means for a safe person to no longer feel safe. I’ve lived it more times than I’d like to admit. Most of the relationships that ended my life (or simply faded into nothing) were because of this. I no longer felt safe or maybe that person no longer felt safe with me.

And safety for me is kind of a big deal.

Because *deep* relationships are important to me. And there is no depth without safety.

Not for me.

Usually, in true Kerrah fashion, I would tell you of what this has looked like in my life. I value authenticity. You guys know this.

But for today, those wounds are a bit too personal for me to share. My own safe people are the ones I trust with those stories. However, I still want to answer this question: What do we do if our safe people don’t feel safe anymore? I just won’t be as self-disclosing. Cool?

I want to tackle this in two parts. In the first part, let’s talk briefly about what

kind of actions could lead us to feel unsafe with a safe person. In the second, we’ll answer the “what do we do…” question.

Okay. First, these are some things that can make us feel unsafe with someone who’s been safe for us. Who’s been a great friend or long-term partner. Who’s proven themselves to be loyal and genuine and caring and trustworthy. Who no longer feels the way anymore.

# The things that make us feel unsafe with someone who’s been safe in the past:

- Betrayal of trust

- Serious boundaries crossed

- Public or private humiliation

- Abusive behaviors

- Manipulative, controlling behaviors

- Deception and lies

- No longer taking any interest in your life

- No longer prioritizing the relationship

- Withdrawal

- Treating you like you are small, insignificant, or stupid

- Gossiping about you

- Making decisions that consistently hurt you

- Selfishness

- Lack of mutuality, reciprocity, and freedom (see episode 38)

- Unfounded accusations

- Pushing their values on you

- When their expectations of you or the relationship become unhealthy or unrealistic

These are just some things I can think of now, but I’m sure there are so many more. I’ve been on the giving and receiving end of some of these harmful behaviors, and I’m consistently learning what it means to be a safe person, too.

But these are the kind of things that begin to make us to feel unsafe. Like we can’t trust a person anymore. Like we can’t be known as deeply (or maybe even at all) by them anymore. They’ve crossed too many lines, and there might not be any coming back from that stuff.

Now, like I said in the last episode, *everything is redeemable.* However, not everything is going to be “fixed” and not every relationship reconciled. I’ve seen some close relationships in my life come back from terrible things. And I’ve seen some fade away.

I still grieve some of those relationships that ended because of things mentioned above, but it makes me even more grateful for the safe people still in my life. Because there is still hope for us to have healthy, whole, authentic relationships even if we’ve had our safe people hurt us.

# So now what? What happens next? What do we do when someone we love and trust hurts us so badly they no longer are safe?

## 1. Take some time apart.

It could be directly stated to the other person why you need time away from them or it could be more indirect, and you simply pull away. The former option is usually the better one, but there are some situations that don’t require you to say those things. Some situations just require you to get out as fast as you can. This time apart can be helpful for you and other person, to give some space for clarity and wisdom about how to proceed. It can help someone process their hurt or how they hurt the other. (Though the one who’s hurt you may not always even think they did anything wrong. Just know that’s a possibility here.) This time apart can also help you discern whether this is a relationship worth saving or if it’s time to let it go or its it’s simply time for more boundaries to be in place. Be intentional with this time apart. Pray. Seek counsel. Take your time.

## 2. Discern what is your next right thing.

Recently, author Lysa Terkeurst told the world she and her husband are officially done. Her story is long, and I won’t share it all here, but after years of trying to work on their marriage after his infidelity and other issues, she finally came to the decision to end their marriage. After they’d renewed their vows and publicly talked a lot about how God was redeeming their relationship. And then he cheated again. And that changed everything. She knew then that her next right thing was to end their marriage, no matter how painful that decision was. It seems she made the one that was right for her, that she honored God through it all.

I appreciate her story so much because she chose to listen to God for each step and do what he was asking. There was a season where that meant a long separation. There was a season where that meant extensive couples counseling. And there was a season that meant reconciliation. And now there is a season of ending.

I can’t be the discerning voice for you in your relationship. Friendship, coworkers, partner, family. You have to listen to your body, to your emotions, to the Spirit within you, and to the Word. You have to consider what is next for your now unsafe relationship. Because hear me, you don’t have to stay in it (esp. if nothing changes) and you don’t have to pretend nothing happened. That would demonstrate a serious lack of self-respect. And not everyone needs to be in our inner circle, especially after doing things like I mentioned.

Here are some questions to help you along:

Is this a relationship worth fighting for?

What did this person do to hurt me?

What hurt so much about it?

Is there any coming back from that hurt?

Has this person committed to change and growth so they never hurt me like that again?

Is this relationship life-giving or life-draining for me? And why?

Can I live without this person?

If I think I need to end this relationship, why haven’t I?

If I think I need to stay, what support do I need?

What boundaries need to be in place if I do stay?

What boundaries need to be in place if I don’t?

If I’m called to forgive, does that mean reconciling or simply letting go?

What is God asking me to do here?

## 3. Seek Counsel

If trying to discern on your own or through prayer isn’t giving you a clear next step, then seek counsel from a trusted friend, mentor, pastor, or counselor. You may get different opinions for different reasons, so filter in what is helpful and filter out what isn’t. But ultimately, the decision is yours.

## 4. And do it.

Sounds easy enough, but this is often the hardest part. Implementing the boundaries. Ending the relationship. Reconciling. Forgiving. Letting go. Whatever it is you’ve discerned as your next right step.

This is the hardest part because it takes the most bravery. The most courage. The most vulnerability. If you do decide to remain in the unsafe relationship, maybe you aren’t as close anymore. Maybe that person isn’t someone you prioritize spending time with or even talking to. Some boundaries need to be in place. If you decide to end the unsafe relationship, I hope you’ll take the necessary steps and have the hard conversations that come with that. And then I hope you’ll allow yourself room to grieve the ending.

I know this is such a hard conversation we are having here today. So hard that I can barely even have it. I know that no one wants to sit and talk about the potential ending of a relationship or whatever. I know we want to believe that our safe people will always be our safe people.

But the reality is that sometimes they aren’t.

And we need to know how to handle that, and we need to know it’s okay to feel angry, or sad, or betrayed, or disappointed when they aren’t safe anymore. It’s okay to walk away or have strict boundaries. It’s okay to tell them how you

feel and it’s okay to forgive and give them another chance. There’s no clear cut right decision here. There is grace here.

I want you to hear me say, I’m sorry. I’m sorry this happened to you, and you have permission to feel however you feel. But I do hope you’ll hold on to the hope of better relationships in the future. I hope you won’t close your heart or put up walls of protection and isolate from others because your safety has been taken.

Not all people will hurt you. There are still safe people out there.

To end, I’ll share a quote from Cloud and Townsend’s book, *Safe People.*

*Love is abiding, timeless, and unchanging, just like its Author. Find people who love you, and love you well over time, like he does: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb. 13:8).*

Thanks for sitting a while with me. I trust that knowing what to do if your safe person doesn’t feel safe anymore will help you take a step toward wholeness so you can finally see what good relationships are made of.

For any links and resources I’ve mentioned in this episode, look at the episode description where you listen to the podcast.

To finish up, the transcript for this episode is 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.