

[00:00:00] <music>

**Stephanie:** Our guest for today's episode is my friend Amy Weatherly. Amy is a wife, a mom, an author, and a co-creator of Sister I Am With You. She's passionate about helping women embrace courage, confidence, and purpose for their lives, and helping them make really good friends.

I recently read the book that she co-authored with her friend, Jess Johnston, who we've had on the podcast before. And it's called, *I'll Be There (But I'll Be Wearing Sweatpants)*. I loved the book, right up my alley, right. But there's one chapter in particular that Amy wrote, and it was so good and I loved it so much, I knew we had to have her back on the show to talk with us about it.

Here are just a few of the questions I'm asking Amy in this episode. I'm asking her, how do our personal insecurities affect our friendships? Why does how we feel about ourselves matter for friendship? We're talking about how to build confidence in ourselves and truly love ourselves. I asked her, once we find competence in ourselves, how do we bring that confidence into our friendships, and so much more.

Amy has amazing wisdom when it comes to friendships, and she's so much fun, you guys are gonna love her.

But before we dive in, if you've been considering going to therapy lately, you've been thinking that that might be something that you need right now but you've been wondering where to find a good counselor or how you might be able to afford it, there's a resource I wanted to make sure to share with you. It's one of our amazing Girls Night Podcast sponsors, Faithful Counseling.

[Faithful Counseling](#) is a website where you can get matched up with a Christian counselor for professional online therapy sessions. This truly is the easiest and most affordable way to find a faith-based counselor. Now, you may have heard me talk about Faithful Counseling before, but just in case you haven't, I wanted to tell you a few quick reasons why I love them so much.

The first it's really easy to get started. All you have to do is go to their website, fill out a form about yourself, what you're going through, and what you're looking for in a counselor, and within 24 hours, Faithful Counseling will connect you with a licensed, vetted, faith-based professional counselor.

Second reason I love them is that it's easy to schedule. Once you're connected to a therapist, you can start communicating with them in less than 24 hours. You can also log into your account at any time and send a message to your therapist and you'll get timely and thoughtful responses back.

You can also schedule weekly video or phone sessions. And the best part is you can do it all virtually. No commute, no awkward waiting room time, less time away from work. You can even do your sessions in your PJs.

The third reason I love them is that it's so easy to find the right counselor for you. In order for counseling to be truly beneficial, you have to find a counselor you really connect with. And often we don't find the right person on our first try, so then we're stuck going through the whole process of breaking up with our counselor, which can be awkward, and then starting from scratch to find a new one.

But with Faithful Counseling, if you don't love your counselor or if you find that you're looking for something different, you can switch by clicking a button. It's easy and it's free. They really make it so easy to find the best fit possible.

And then the fourth reason is that it's easier to fit into your budget. Now, I love traditional in-person counseling, but it can cost more than \$100 per session, which just makes it a total no-go for so many of us, especially in a time when the economy is in flux. But Faithful Counseling is significantly less expensive, and they have financial aid available. If you sign up with this special link they gave me, you can get 10% off your first month.

Friends if therapy is something that you've been considering or something you think might be helpful for you right now, head on over to [stephaniemaywilson.com/counseling](http://stephaniemaywilson.com/counseling). That link will give you 10% off your first month. Again, that's [stephaniemaywilson.com/counseling](http://stephaniemaywilson.com/counseling) for all the info and you can get 10% off your first month of counseling there too.

All right friends, with that said, let's jump into today's episode.

[00:03:49] <music>

**Stephanie:** All right, friends, I cannot wait for the conversation that you were about to hear. I'm sitting with my friend. We've talked once before, but last time we were like, "All right, we're friends." So I'm just calling it 100% official. I'm sitting with my friend Amy Weatherly. Amy, thanks so much for coming back on the show.

**Amy:** Oh, my gosh, thank you for having me.

**Stephanie:** For women who haven't gotten to meet you yet, tell us who you are, what you do, and a fun fact about yourself.

**Amy:** Okay. My name is Amy Weatherly. I am a writer and... mostly I'm a mom. I mean, honestly, that's what I do more than anything else. But I write. I co-authored a book called *I'll Be There (But I'll Be Wearing Sweatpants)* and it did pretty well. That was I guess over a year ago, which sounds crazy but yeah came out over a year ago.

I co-run a page called Sister I Am With You over on Facebook. We're on Instagram too but honestly we're terrible on Instagram. We're so bad at it. Maybe one day we can get it together.

**Stephanie:** Same.

**Amy:** Fun fact about myself is I was voted goofiest female in the eighth grade and I was devastated at the time and now I'm like, "No, you are still the goofiest."

**Stephanie:** Did they give you a trophy? I hope they gave you a trophy.

**Amy:** Somewhere I got a little something but I threw it away because I was so embarrassed. I was so embarrassed.

**Stephanie:** Eighth grade Amy, that is an artifact. We need that now.

**Amy:** I know but I was so... you're like, I can't get like best smile. I can't get... It was fun to be around friendliest, best dressed, good lord, anything but goofiest. I remember going home being like, "No one's ever gonna date me."

**Stephanie:** Most likely to have all the guys have a crush on them and ask them out. Yeah, like where was that one?

**Amy:** That was not for me.

**Stephanie:** Well, goofiest, I think that is the best. That's the best. I love that.

**Amy:** I mean, and it's still... I'm like, Amy, you should have just rocked it because you were." I mean, I was. I am.

**Stephanie:** I mean, listen, when we're in eighth grade we don't know how to play to our strengths yet, or we don't know how to embrace our strengths yet. I mean, it's kind of what we're gonna be talking about.

I'm gonna be linking to our last conversation because I just loved it. But I want to just have you give a backstory a little bit. You talk about friendship a lot, and that's what your last book was about. Tell us how this all started. Like fighting for female

friendship, teaching women how to be good friends to each other, how to receive friendship. Why is this something that you've talked about with women?

**Amy:** I think it's so funny because I did not realize that I was talking about friendship. I was just kind of like doing these... They're basically like diary entries. Like, okay, nobody wants to talk about feeling insecure, I'll talk about it. No one talks about how hard it is to feel left out even as a grown woman. Okay, I'll talk about it.

I feel those things are how hard it is when you think you're really close to someone and then suddenly like, boom, no, you're not. No, you're not. And how hard that is and how, as an adult, I never thought I would experience those things. Ever. I thought that that is teenage stuff and once you're done with it, you're done with it.

So it was really diary injuries. Honestly, they weren't anything... I wasn't trying to do anything radical. And then over the course of talking about being insecure, and talk about, you know, feeling like I was sometimes left out, not in a bad way, not like, Oh, poor me, I'm left out. These are normal human feelings and most of us experienced them but don't want to admit it out loud because, you know...

Anyways, but as I would write about these things, other people would tell me, they're like, "Oh, I love the way you talk about friendship." And in my mind, I wasn't talking about friendship. I was just talking about the way I felt and the things I had experienced. I just didn't want people to feel alone is really it.

So then I started realizing that, oh my gosh, yeah, okay, this all does have to do with friendship and this has been an area in my life where I've always struggled. And you know, believe it or not, the goofiest girl in the eighth grade doesn't always have a lot of friends. Not everyone wants her to sit at their table.

**Stephanie:** Because eighth grade just has no taste is why.

**Amy:** They don't know what is good.

**Stephanie:** No, they don't know what's good.

**Amy:** I was fun. But just kind of struggling with that, finding who you are and knowing who you are and being okay with it. Just being okay with it is such a big part. And I think because I've struggled with it for so long, that just became something that was near and dear to me. So I don't know, I just put it all out there and other people told me I was talking about friendship. And I was like, "Oh, yeah, okay, that is about friendship. Let me dive further."

**Stephanie:** I love that. Tell us about the book real quick. I mean, again, we'll link to the other episode, but I just want to hear... Just give us a quick rundown of it because we're really gonna dive into a piece of it today.

**Amy:** Yeah, that was so much fun to write. I wrote it with my friend Jess. Jess and I we're running Sister I Am With You together. I had gotten this random idea, like it was a very random idea. Jess and I had never even met in person. We were like phone friends. She lives in California, I'm in Texas.

And I got this random idea one day and I just called her up and I was like, "Jess, do you want to start a page called Sister I Am With You where we just talk about friendship? That's it. We only talk about female friendship. I've kind of done a light, very light, maybe a five-minute research on the subject." And I was like, I don't think there's any space that's really like this. Are you in? Do you want to do it with me?" And she was like, "Yeah, okay, yeah, let's do it."

So seriously, Sister I Am With You was born in 5 to 10 minutes tops. It was just an idea that came to me and it felt really powerful and I was like, "Okay, let's do it. Let's see what happens." And then Sister I Am With You on Facebook grew to... we had 100,000 followers within a couple of weeks. It was crazy. It was crazy.

I'm trying to think how... I mean, we had a million followers within a year. It was just nuts. It was nuts. It was crazy. And clearly we just tapped on something that women were craving. And I hate that women struggle with it. You know, I kind of wish it wasn't a sore spot for women, but it was like an open wound and kind of like, "Hey, let's write about this."

So Jess and I started the page Sister I Am With You, you know, and at that point, it grew so fast and I had my own page. So then publishers kind of want you to write a book. And I was like, "Yes, I will write a book but can Jess please do it with me?"

So, yeah, we wrote this book together. And it's about friendship, but more than friendship, because I think the first step to friendship, and everybody wants to skip the step, but the first step to friendship is really being comfortable with who you are and knowing who you are. That's really the first step. Because if you don't get that right, the friendship is going to be a whole lot harder. I'm not saying it won't come but it can be significantly more difficult.

Because it's more, you know, everybody wants to be popular and everybody think that is it. But it's not about being popular. I don't care if you get invited to everything in town and you are playing all the bunco and you're invited to all the stuff. That's not what it's about.

You want to belong. You want to have a place to belong. You want to have people who know who you are, the dark parts of you, the deep parts of you, the hurting parts of you, the successful part of you, the whole of you. You want to have a place where people will accept all of that and will know all of who you are. And I think until we really know ourselves, we just... it's like we walk around wearing a mask. And that mask makes belonging pretty hard.

**Stephanie:** I think that we have this idea that popularity is the opposite of loneliness and it's just not. We've all experienced being surrounded by people but feeling super alone. And I think that that's what a lot... No one is immune to this. And a lot of times the people who are the most popular on the outside are feeling the most insecure, are feeling the loneliest on the inside and more invitations like doesn't actually scratch that itch. It seems like it would, but it doesn't.

**Amy:** Not at all.

**Stephanie:** Because behind your mask you can be really alone back there. And it's also a lot of work to keep it on.

**Amy:** Oh, it's so much work to keep it on. And that's where I think I was for just a really long time. I kind of fell into writing on the internet and blogging. Like I didn't mean to. I wrote something in this private, little, teeny tiny group that I thought maybe 100 people would read and then it went insanely viral. Like it just got copied and pasted and it's all over the internet. And it was the first thing I'd ever written. It was the first thing I'd ever written.

**Stephanie:** We write books.

**Amy:** English is hard.

**Stephanie:** It is hard.

**Amy:** But yeah, it's like the first thing I'd ever written and it went crazy viral. So it's kind of when I was like, "Okay, God, okay, God, I guess we are doing this." So I kind of just fell into it. But it came at a time in my life where I had just... There's this really great quote I'm trying to think who it's by. I can't say it because there's a couple of words in it. But it is a really cool.

**Stephanie:** You can say it.

**Amy:** Can I say it?

**Stephanie:** Yeah.

**Amy:** Okay. I never know what kind of-

**Stephanie:** No, we're okay with well-placed cuss words. Go ahead.

**Amy:** I'm trying to think of who it's by. Who wrote Eat Pray Love? Elizabeth Gilbert.

**Stephanie:** Eat Pray Love. Elizabeth Gilbert. Yeah.

**Amy:** So the quote is something along the lines of "I've never known anyone who changed... Wait. Something about everybody I know who's ever really changed their life it's because they got tired of their own bullshit.

And that quote just kind of fell through to me because it was I was just tired. Like, I tried so hard for so long to have people like me. Like I am very much a people pleaser. I am such a people pleaser. We talked about this before I was on. I'm really hard on myself. And I tried for so long to just wear that mask, to just be who I thought I was supposed to be. I wanted to be the goofy girl. I wanted to be like the girls together and the girl who is put together and the girl who had the answers and is like always really nice, just to be really, really nice.

And I just finally got tired of it. I kept losing friends. I couldn't figure out why. My dad got really sick where he had both kidneys removed. You know, every phone call is like, "Is this the last phone call? Every time you talk to him, is this the last time you talk to him? "

And is it hereditary disease? So at the same time, I'm kind of struggling with maybe I'm about to lose my dad. I'm going and getting tested for all of the stuff. And kind of hits me that like, okay, so like, in 20 years, I mean, you might be having both of your kidneys removed. You might have to survive off of dialysis.

And I just finally decided I didn't want to live with that mask on anymore. I didn't want to live trying so hard to just be enough. I just wanted to live. I just wanted to live. I just wanted to feel free. I just wanted to be myself. I wanted to be all of me.

You just kind of want to play all your cards eventually because you've held so many of them close for so long that you feel like if anyone knew this, then they're going to talk bad about me. Or if anyone knew this card, then I'd be kicked out of this group. If anyone knew this, then they wouldn't care. I just want to get to a place where like, "Okay, I just want to be able to lay them all out. I am just tired.

Anyways, my dad lived. He got a kidney transplant. He's doing well. But that was just that time in my life where that is when I... And that's when I started writing. It

was like this huge shift in who I was as a person. And I went from it like... It cracks me up because I very genuinely at A&M... I went to A&M, I was in this group of whatever, not a sorority, but something kind of along that and I got voted like girliest girl because I would literally wear high heels all across the A&M campus.

Like I dressed up everywhere I went. I was full makeup. I had a boyfriend break up with me because he was like, "I don't even know what you look like without makeup. You can't just throw on a T-shirt and jeans." I'm like, "Well, I know, but this is just who I am." And it really wasn't who I was. I was just trying so hard to, again, wear that mask. And if that meant being pretty, then, okay, that's the mask I'll wear. I don't know.

**Stephanie:** That's a great example of like that mask ended up in disconnection. It didn't end up in more connection. That was the reason the relationship ended. To me, that's one of the things that there have been friendships in my life that... a friendship can start great, it will continue on in a really great way or it'll end based on vulnerability, based on the fact, whether or not I feel like we really know each other. And at some point, that choice has to be made. And if it's not...

Going back a little bit, I think that I'm so with you in the fact that at some point I just decided I can't do bad friendships anymore. It's so exhausting. It's so hard. There were years, decades where I felt like I had to... If I walked out of the room, I was going to be talked about. And I felt that way because it was true. Or like if I left my seat at the table, it was going to be taken or they were going to get rid of the chair. Like, there wasn't going to be a spot for me when I came back. So I just felt trapped a little bit.

I felt like I was treading water, trying to stay afloat in my friendships, trying to save my spot, trying to always be there because I didn't want to be kicked out or I didn't want to be talked about. Like you said, trying to figure out who they wanted me to be so that I could be that person, so that I could just have the love and the connection that I wanted. But even when I was there, it didn't feel like love and connection because it wasn't really me.

**Amy:** Right.

**Stephanie:** I will never forget I was 25 when I was like, "I can't do this anymore. I'm exhausted. I can't do this anymore." And that was the first time that I made a rule for myself. I made a couple, actually, about who I would be friends with and what I wouldn't tolerate anymore. And it was like, I'm going to risk disconnection. Like maybe I'll end up by myself, but I think being by myself would be less lonely than being in the kinds of friendships that I've been in.



So I can't be friends with you if I feel like I'm going to walk away and you're going to talk about me behind my back. I just won't do it. Or I cannot be friends with you if I feel like I have to be someone different to be here or I can't be friends with you if I feel like my spot at the table is conditional or temporary or, you know, based on merit that I can win or lose at any given moment just at the drop of a hat.

The thing that's so cool is that there are friendships out there where you really can belong and where you actually have a spot and they'll save you a spot. I can't remember if I've told a story on the podcast before, but I went on a girls' trip with three of my best friends this last summer, and we were going down to my friend's parents' lake house.

And we were all going down to the dock. We were going to just hang out down there for the day. We all had our towels and there are four of us and I went to get a snack or something so I was late coming down. And when I came down, my three friends had their towels lined up, but they had my towel down there also lined up with an open spot saved for me.

And I had felt this kind of panic as I was in the kitchen getting a snack, thinking there's not going to be a spot for me. "I'm going to get down there and I'm going to have to like sit on the end drum and have to sit on the other side of the dock. They're going to have found their beds at a sleepover and there's not going to be one for me because I was there early." I just felt this like preemptive left-out feeling. But when I got down to the dock, they had saved me a spot. They had saved me a spot. And I just didn't know that friendship like that existed for so long. But it does.

**Amy:** It does.

**Stephanie:** It just does. So grateful for the work that you're doing because you're showing us that it does and showing us how to get there. I listened to your book, which was really fun because I feel like I got to hang out with you and Jess.

**Amy:** That added in a lot of trouble. Not a lot of trouble. But I can't tell you how many times they were like, "Amy, you have to stop moving your hands. You can't talk with your hands."

**Stephanie:** Because you're like hitting the microphone and stuff.

**Amy:** And they're like, "You have to sit still. Stop getting so close to the microphone." "I'm sorry."

**Stephanie:** It was so fun. It was so fun getting to be there with you guys as you talk to us through the content. It was so good.

[00:22:29] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Our Girls Night sponsor for today is an amazing company called [ZocDoc](#). Summer is almost here, which also means my schedule is filling up fast. And I know that so many of you all can relate. As a result, if there is something that's going to make my life easier, especially when it comes to my health, I am all ears.

This is why I was instantly intrigued by the ZocDoc app. Finding a doctor through their app is a seamless process with just a few taps on your screen to find the quality care you need. Not only is it easy, it's also reliable. ZocDoc has thousands of medical professionals that are ready to help you, listen to you like a friend, and get you the care you deserve.

Now, if you're not familiar with them already, ZocDoc is the only free app that lets you find and book doctors who are patient-reviewed, take your insurance, are available when you need them, and who treat almost every condition under the sun.

Let's be honest, when I'm not feeling my best and trying to hold it all together, the last thing I want to do is use up all of my energy browsing the internet for hours, trying to find a doctor with decent reviews that I can trust in that takes my insurance. But with ZocDoc, you can find and book a doctor that aligns with your needs with just a few clicks on their app, which means no time wasted and you can get to feeling like yourself again so much faster.

One of the best parts about the app is that it has verified patient reviews from real people who made real appointments. And I love that. Every month millions of people use ZocDoc and I'm so happy to be one of them. It's my go-to whenever I need to find a quality doctor in my area and it has saved me so much time so that I can get back to the things that matter most.

Friends, I'm so happy to get to share ZocDoc with you. Go to [zocdoc.com/girlsnight](https://zocdoc.com/girlsnight) and download the ZocDoc app for free, then find and book a top-rated doctor today. Many are available within 24 hours. That's [zocdoc.com/girlsnight](https://zocdoc.com/girlsnight).

**Sponsor:** Our sponsor for today's Girls Night episode is an amazing company called Earth Breeze. For the past few years, I have been trying to be more conscious about selecting products that are better for me, my family, and for the environment. And that includes my laundry detergent.

I think most of you guys would agree that the massive plastic jugs that most detergents come in are inconvenient and awkward to store away. And on top of that, 91% of them are ending up in landfills and oceans, harming our planet and marine life. I, for years, have thought there has to be a better solution. And that's why I'm so happy to have found Earth Breeze.

Now, if this is your first time hearing about them, Earth Breeze, laundry detergent eco sheets look just like dryer sheets, but they're not. They're actually a liquidless laundry detergent that completely dissolves in any wash cycle. That means you no longer have to lug your heavy plastic jugs around or clean up the spills or the mess that they can cause.

Personally, I dread the time when I get to the bottom of the laundry detergent jug. They feel so hard to clean out and so it becomes this huge chore if I'm going to recycle it but I feel terrible just throwing it away. So I've been looking for a way to get my laundry clean without so much waste. And that's why I've loved switching to their eco sheets.

They're easy, convenient, and work for all lifestyles, and they're great for those of us who have sensitive skin, which is my whole family. The packaging used for eco sheets is lightweight, biodegradable, and plastic-free, and so you don't have to worry about washing out or recycling huge jugs.

And Earth Breeze will deliver right to your door via free carbon-neutral shipping at a frequency you get to choose. And the best part is you still get a powerful clean that fights stains, odors, and has your clothes looking and feeling fresh.

But friends, trust me, you need to try it for yourself. And you can do this with a risk-free 100% satisfaction guarantee. If you don't like it, Earth Breeze will give you a full refund. No questions asked. No return necessary. So there's no reason not to try them out.

Switch from the old-fashioned goo to something new. Right now my listeners can subscribe to Earth Breeze and get 40% off. Go to [earthbreeze.com/girlsnight](https://earthbreeze.com/girlsnight) to get started. That's [earthbreeze.com/girlsnight](https://earthbreeze.com/girlsnight) for 40% off. Earth Breeze, thank you so much for sponsoring our Girls Night. We just love having you.

[00:26:49] <music>

**Stephanie:** There was a part in the book that just stood out to me above the rest. And it was when you were talking about insecurity and the fact that our own insecurity and us not knowing ourselves and us not feeling comfortable in our own skin, that that

really can rub us in friendships. And that's something that I just don't think I've heard talked about enough.

I know you already kind of mentioned it, but I want to dive into that way deeper. How does insecurity impacts friendship? How do those two meet and how does... I guess why does how we see ourselves matter in friendship?

**Amy:**

I mean, good Lord, I mean, insecurity will rob us of everything. I talked about this like, you want a bad marriage? Be insecure. You want to really struggle with being a mom? Be insecure. It's friendship? Be insecure. It is something I really struggle with. Even in business, I know that the only person who is likely to stop me is myself. I'm likely to get in my own way is my insecurity.

But in friendship, I think there are a lot of risk because when you're insecure, don't like yourself. Okay. So I think that if you don't like yourself, you're constantly looking inward at what is wrong with you. Like just picking yourself apart. So you assume other people see those same things. You assume other people feel those same things.

So if they say something the wrong way, you're easily triggered by that because in your mind, they've picked on this woman and they see this insecurity and they picked up on it, too, which probably isn't true. It's probably not true at all. It is in your head. Does that make sense?

But if you're constantly looking for what is wrong with you, then that's what you find. I mean, I always tell my kids, I was like, "You will find what you're looking for most of the time." And if you believe that people are going to leave you out, guess what?

And if you believe that people are going to leave you out because you're not (blank) enough, then you will find that. You will find reasons to assume that they don't like you. You will find reasons to assume they don't want you. You will find all of those things and it will become this huge barrier between you and this person. You will be passive-aggressive. You will sort of take a couple of steps back.

Because I think one of the hardest things about friendship is that there are places that feel comfortable and there are places that will accept you fully as you are, and there are beautiful friendships that will stretch your towel out for you. But we want those friendships to happen from day one, and they don't. They're awkward at the beginning.

Like even with my best friends now, like my very, very, very one of my very, very closest friends, I don't know what I would do without her. But at the beginning of

the friendship I struggled with, like, Wait, does she like me? Does she know where is this, dah dah dah? And it took a lot of investing for me to just "Okay, Amy, keep going. Don't get in your own way here. Keep going. She has actually done nothing to make you think that she doesn't like you. That is in you. That's your insecurity."

I think what insecurity is in a lot of ways, like we want to protect ourselves. We want to protect ourselves from not being hurt. We want to protect ourselves from not being rejected. And so we can look for signs that the other person maybe doesn't like us, then we're going to instantly push them away. And we think that's a way of protecting ourselves.

**Stephanie:** It's like, I'm going to back up first before you... Like if you're going to decide you don't like me, well, I'm going to quit this before you can.

**Amy:** Yes. And then we get in our head because I can tell you, one of the most common, common comments that I see all the time is like, first of all, there are two things that really just annoy me. Not annoy me. That's not the right way. But just like, maybe want to scream because I'm like, "No, that's not true."

**Stephanie:** Yeah, for sure.

**Amy:** Like, well, all women are just catty and all women are mean. And I'm like, No, that's actually you. You're the problem there. You are assuming that all women are mean. They're are like 4.5 billion women on this planet. You think they're all mean? That's not a "them" problem. That's a "you" problem. That's a "you" problem and you've got to get that right.

I'm sorry if you've had some bad experiences, but not all women. All women make mistakes, so have you. All women have made mistakes, so have you but all women are not mean and all women are not catty and all women are not looking for reasons to push people out. Women are actually hurting and desperate and lonely and craving friendship like they never have before. We're just all trying to find our way home.

So if your first gut instinct is like, "I don't trust women, they're all mean," you've got to work on yourself and figure out why you feel that way because you will push everyone away and it has nothing to do with who they are.

The second one is really that, like, I've been hurt so many times, so I just feel like it's better to be by myself. I don't even give anybody a chance. No. Which breaks my heart because genuinely we were not made to do life alone. Like all of the studies suggests that that is one of the biggest indicators of your overall happiness is it comes to your connections.

Harvard just released that study. And overall, even like the span of your life, like how long you're likely to live has to do with how lonely you are. The best kind of exercise for you has nothing to do with what you're actually doing. It's group exercise because you're in a group.

We were not made to be alone. We were not made for that. And you will continue to crave it. And you can stuff that craving down and you can tell yourself you don't need friendship and you can tell yourself you don't want friendship and you can tell yourself you don't want other people, but deep down, yes, you do. Yes, you do.

But you're going to have to get past the hurt and the fear of rejection and figure out how to make that happen. And it's so hard to trust people because we've all been pushed away before. It's hard to trust people. It's hard to trust when people have not liked us before, when people have not wanted us before, man, that gets in your head and that's what you think is coming next. That's what you're avoiding coming next.

But I think if we can get over our insecurity and be like, "Okay, listen, I like me. I may not be the funniest girl, I may not be the one who is showing up with homemade cupcakes, and I may not be the one who has it all, but I am the one who would answer her phone call at 3 a.m.. I am the one who will be there with Starbucks. I am the one who will let you be yourself and let you have those messy, ugly, terrible moments. I can do that."

Once we get confident in that and we get over that insecurity, then I think we just breathe. And I think when we breathe better, the people around us breathe better, too. I think when we are comfortable with ourselves, we give people a space to be comfortable with who they are. When we take our mask off other people, the right people are ready to take their mask off too, and it just creates a better environment.

So getting over that in spirit. And it stops us from being... We feel really confident. You're not that scared of being rejected anymore because you don't look at it as rejection. You don't look at it as there's something wrong with me. You kind of switch gears and go, Okay, that just wasn't the right fit. That's fine. I will find my place. But you know what I'm saying?

When you're insecure, it's like, "Oh, well, they don't like me. Of course they don't." Any you like pile it on this works of reasons not to trust people and not to like yourself. But when you are really confident and you're like, Well, it's not that they didn't like me, it's not that anything's wrong with me, it's just that you want to fit.

**Stephanie:** Oh, that's all so good. That's all so good. The thing about like this is what's coming next is really... I think we like... I'm sure that there are studies about this. But we're

natural pattern finders. Like we find a sense of place, a sense of security, a sense of understanding of the world when we can go, "Okay, blue, green, blue, green. What comes next? Blue.

It's so hard to not imagine you're in a similar situation with a friend, that you're having déjà vu like crazy. It's so hard to imagine that you're not going to end up in the same place that you did not prior friendship or that they're not about to drop the same shoe that your last friend did when they ended up with you. Like, how do we let go of that next step and make space for there to be a different... to go in a different direction?

**Amy:** Yeah, that's really hard. That's actually something I've been studying quite a bit right now because it is very hard. It is very hard? And we're all... Not all. I shouldn't say all people, but a lot of us are really scared of rejection because we've been rejected before. Again, we built these patterns, like this is what's coming back.

One of the things I like to think about... Let's say I drew a picture of a tree and I wanted you to draw a picture of the same tree. And let's say I took the picture, I covered up the bottom half and had you draw the first half. This is something like I think writers and drawers do, I don't know, artists.

**Stephanie:** Artists, people who-

**Amy:** If you do the best job possible, I would flip that upside down. Does that make sense? So that the tree was upside down. And then cover up the other half. And the reason why is because your brain will naturally be that part of the paper that's covered up and try to imagine what the tree looks like without having actually seen what the tree looks like. Does that make sense?

**Stephanie:** Yeah.

**Amy:** Okay. I feel like I'm doing a terrible job here. But your brain will naturally try to fill in the rest of the picture with what your brain thinks belongs there. If you're an artist, then you really want this person to recreate what you've done well, you'll flip it upside down because then your brain has a harder time filling in those holes.

**Stephanie:** Okay.

**Amy:** But I think sometimes if we can just do that with friendship and realize like, "Okay, I'm trying to fill in holes there that aren't actually here. I'm assuming a lot of things that don't actually exist. I hope the best thing that they said in the worst way possible, is that fair? Is that right?" Because something I want... Sorry, that was really confusing. If you want to cut that out, you can.

**Stephanie:** No you're fine. You're fine. I just want to draw it.

**Amy:** I know, but your brain will try to fill it in without not having actually ever seen it. And then we do that to people, too. There's a lot of reasons why we do that to people. This is our natural instinct that keeps us safe a lot of the time. But a lot of the times I think the thing that keeps us safe is also the thing that keeps us lonely, and so we have to be careful of that.

One of the things I'm trying to get to because I'm not the best at it, I tend to see the best in everybody and I really like everybody and I can brush over a lot of stuff. But then I can flip to the wrong side. If you get on my bad side, I can get to a place where I only see that in you. That sounds terrible to do that. Well, I think. I don't know.

**Stephanie:** Oh, yeah.

**Amy:** Oh, not very often. More times than not I sugarcoat everything. I'm trying to get to a place where, like, "God, don't let me see only the good in someone. Don't let me see only the bad. Let me see the truth. I want to see the truth in them." And if we can get there, then we won't assume the worst. We won't assume that everything that they said was a slight against us because it's normally not.

We won't assume that every action that they have taken was a way to insult us because it's normally not. People are normally like, we are the center of our own universe, but we're not the center of their universe. They're not out there trying to make our life awful. They're just living their life too. And sometimes we step on each other's toes. But our assumption is they, "Oh, they're out to get me. They just hate me." They probably don't. They're probably just living their own life, and they're doing the best they can, too.

**Stephanie:** My girls are two and a half, which is almost two and a half, I guess and they're going to be starting pre-preschool here soon. And I'm totally nervous about it because I'm like, "Oh my gosh, what if we take them to school and drop them off and they think we abandoned them?" Or "What if they're too young for this? Even though I'm like, "Oh, they're going to love it. They can't." Like if they knew what was coming, they'd be like, "Take us now." I'm going to miss them so much. Are we going to...? I have all these doubts and fears.

I was talking about this in counseling a couple of days ago because this is how real this is for me. I've worked through kind of each my fears about the girls going to school in this next phase. The last one was, what if they get to school and someone's really mean to them?



I'm picturing my worst friendship moments and I'm so scared that they are going to like have to live through them. And I know that I can't stop it, and I know that I can't keep them out of school to avoid people who could potentially be mean but probably won't be. Or like some kid will be mean, but like they're going to be okay.

But I had to really walk through what happens if that does happen. I've done this in different ways, in different areas of my life, and it's always been helpful. But like, okay, then what? Then what? Then what? Let's get to the worst-case scenario.

So, worst case scenario, they walk into school as two-and-a-half-year-olds. Most two-and-a-half-year-olds don't talk. So it's hard to be a bully when you can't really talk. Honestly, probably they're going to have a bunch of friends. But say that someone has the wherewithal to be able to speak as a two-and-a-half-year-old and to be able to be intentionally cruel as a two-and-a-half-year-old. Well, if that's the case, what happens? They come home and they're sad. Okay, Well, then I talk to them about it.

And worst case scenario, if they can't solve it themselves, which they're two and a half so they probably can't yet, so I talk to the teacher or I talk to the other mom. Well, let's say the other mom is just a terrible person who is out to make all two-and-a-half-year-olds feel terrible through her terrible little child.

Okay, well, if that's the case, well, then we separate from them. Maybe the girls could be in a different group than this kid in class or maybe there's a way to just give them space. So if you're going to be terrible, you be terrible but here we're just going to keep living our lives. But then that doesn't work.

Well, then maybe we switch classrooms? Okay, well, then say that this mom and her tiny little child are the biggest mean girl terrors ever. Well, then there are a million schools here. Like, we can find someplace else to go.

Because the truth is that if that mom and that daughter are that terrible and no one else cares, and they're able to sway the culture so far in that direction to be terrible and mean and make everyone else feel small and no one else is fighting back against it, then those aren't our people. Then those aren't our people.

And we get to make decisions, to move ourselves, to be in places where we are surrounded by people who are going to be our people. And that's a decision that I get to make for our family because I am a grown-up. And that is what we talked about in therapy last week.

But I think that that just like walking down the road of "And then this. And then this. And then if this happens and if that person doesn't call me back, well, then I can ask them why." And if worst case scenario, they say, "I think that you are the goofiest girl in class and I don't want to be your friends," then you're like, "Well, if you don't want to be friends with someone who's goofy, I don't have the same value."

So I think that we're not going to think the same things are funny. We're not gonna... Like, okay, then it turns out that you're not the right person for me. And it may be really sad, but we're going to wake up the next day and we're going to be okay.

I should have seen this coming, that walking your kids through... I'm so early in this. I'm right at the beginning. I have no clue what I'm doing. And they're two and a half. So I haven't gotten too far into this. But this is my first experience of like, "Oh my gosh, you guys are going to go through some of the things that I went through. I'm going to have to relive some of this stuff like through you and I'm going to have to walk you through it and I'm going to have to find the things that I've learned are the things that I wish someone would have told me. I'm now the parent to guide you through this stuff and it's so crazy.

And some of this stuff is going to bring up feelings. And even just the idea that someone could be mean to them totally brought things up in me. But I think that it's so interesting that parenting them, those same options are the same options that we have.

Like if you cannot work out or fix a conflict with someone by talking to them, by making a different choice, by being honest with them... if you can't work something out with them, you can also move to a different table. If you can't get to a good place with that kid in the football, go find other kids to play with at recess. Like, go play on a different part of the playground. Like that is an option for you.

And that's an option for us as women too. Like if you can't get through to the people that you're, you know, your coworkers or the friend group that you're in, like if it's not getting better, you can go find something else. That is an option.

Also, creating something else is an option. I think all of those things... It's just so cool to think we're talking about playground, but all of those same options exist for us too.

**Amy:** It's like we're all waiting for someone to invite us and we're all waiting for someone to befriend us. The truth is, if we're all waiting around, then nothing is ever going to

happen. So be the initiator, be the inviter. That doesn't always come natural to me because, like I said, I do get insecure and I really get in my head a lot.

But what is the worst thing that happens if you invite somebody to coffee? They tell you, no. Okay, you can handle that. I even at one point... There was this day and I really wanted to play. I had like 2 hours' worth of free time. I think something got canceled and I had 2 hours and it was this beautiful day and I really wanted to go play tennis. So I texted the first couple girls that I will play tennis with every once in a while. And I'm terrible at tennis. I'm so bad. I'm not out there like, oh, oh.

**Stephanie:** I know. I'm totally picturing you.

**Amy:** I want people to know that that is not me. I'm out there just having a really good time being terrible. I'm just out there having a good time. I don't play. I don't get really into it. But I just wanted to play tennis. It's beautiful.

So I call it the couple of the girls that I normally play tennis with, they are busy. I think I got to three people and I was like, "Amy, no one's going to play with you. No one's going to play tennis with you. Stop. This is stupid. This is stupid. Everybody's going to say no."

And then I stopped and I thought, "What if I changed the way that I'm thinking about this?" And instead of looking at those as rejections because, like I talked about earlier, I do genuinely believe most of us are scared of rejection. So what if I stopped and I stopped looking at those invitations and they're telling me no as rejections?

And I started looking at that as an open door between me and this person. And I just opened up that door. I said, "Hey, I like you. Hey, I would like to spend time with you. Hey, I think you're cool. I'd like to know you more." And I just opened up that door so that if they ever feel like inviting me, they're going to know I'm not likely to reject them. I'm a safe space because I opened that door between us."

So I changed my thought that day and I was like, "How many doors can you open? How many times can people tell you no? Do it. Just ask as many people as you can, get told no a whole bunch today. But instead of looking at like it's easy, we look at no as a slam door. And what if we changed our way of thinking and we looked at it as we push that gate open between us and that person?"

Let's be the person who does that. Let's put someone else's fears to rest. Like if they're scared of rejection, cool, I just made it less likely that they're going to be scared. If they feel like no one's likely, cool, I just told them someone does.

Someone like you. Someone wants to spend time with you. And that's a really good thing.

So we just all have to stop waiting for other people to ask and we have to stop waiting because there's power, there is power in taking hold of that, being like, "I can do this. I can send this text. I can ask this person to coffee. I can get out of my comfort zone for two seconds. I can get out of my comfort zone." And that is where the power friendship is. I am capable of doing these things and I'm capable of making these things happen. I don't have to wait.

**Stephanie:** I love that so much. One of the conversations that I have a lot with women and I'm guessing you do too, is... because we're in sort of like ministry-ish roles. I think that so many women are trying to figure out where they can make a difference in the world and like where... You know, I want to serve in some way. I want to be part of something.

We're all kind of like looking for our spot where we can make a difference. And it feels like you need to have the head pastor tap you to be the middle school pastor or to lead a small group or, you know, something like that in order to be able to serve.

The most powerful thing that we can do, that we can all do to step into ministry, to step into service with another person is to do exactly what you're saying, is to say, "Hey, I like you, you're not alone and you're not forgotten. I haven't forgotten you. I see you. I like you." And that's a free gift that we can give to everybody.

And I think that thinking about it that way makes it more... As women, we're pretty good at doing things for other people. So if we can think about it as doing this for someone else, it's less like, Will you do this for me? I'm going to do this for you. I'm going to tell you that I like you. I'm going to tell you that I would like to spend time with you. I'm going to put an invitation on your calendar. And if you can say yes, say yes. If not, that's okay. But at least you'll know that someone cares about you.

That is just this incredible ministry, if we want to think about it that way, or this incredible gift or this incredible service that we can do for the women in our life. And we can do it right now and it's free. It will also turn into beautiful friendships for us too.

**Amy:** It is actually in the book in chapter eight. The thing that I learned in chapter eight was I felt like I was trying to push my way into this mom group that they did not... weren't reciprocal of me being there. Which I do want to say too, because I saw something about this yesterday and it was like, you know, that group of like mean moms that always stand together and won't talk to anybody else.

First of all, why would we assume that they're mean? That's not fair here. Just because they've been friends for a long time and that might be their safe space and those might be their people, that doesn't make them mean. Because we can't be best friends with everybody and we can't expect everyone to be best friends with us. I don't know. I just saw that yesterday and I was like, "No, that's so unfair. That's so unfair. That's not right. And we have all these assumptions about these people that probably aren't true at all. They're probably insecure. They're probably trying really hard to make it work.

Those 5 minutes in school, that may be the only time they've seen-

**Stephanie:** Another human.

**Amy:** They're always there at the same time every day so they just talk to each other. I do think we can work on being more inclusive and like noticing other people and saying hi to people around us. But most people are insecure and they're just trying to get through too. So labeling people as mean.... I don't know. I just don't like it. I think it's better if we think better of each other.

**Stephanie:** And I think if someone is genuinely mean, if someone is genuinely spending the time in their day, their free time, which there isn't enough of it trying to make other people feel small, it's because they feel small. I just don't know that there are any people in the world who are just genuinely mean down to their core that aren't hurting.

**Amy:** No. No. There's normally a reason why. But there was this mom group and they had been friends for longer, and I was trying to force my way in and that wasn't happening for me, which that is no fault of theirs. It just wasn't happening. And I kept trying.

And finally one day I paused and I was like, "What are you doing? What are you doing? What are you doing? You are trying to water a dead plant and you're giving all your time and all your energy to these dead plants. Stop. Stop trying to make your way to the center of the circle. Stop. Who else is on the outside? Who else is not being invited? Who else is not being included?" Because there's somebody. There's somebody.

Like I told my son, "You're not the only one who's not being... You're not the only one they're not letting play football. You're not the only one they're saying no to. There's somebody else. If I were you, I'd go and find those kids, and I would work on starting the friendship with them. And I kind of did that. That same mentality. Like, Who else is on the outside?"

And I found one of my absolute best friends. She was new in town. You know, a lot of people we had is the same age. And I was just so focused on myself that I didn't even see that there was another person out there longing for friendship because I was so focused on myself.

But that's again, I think insecurity keeps us focused on us, and where we're really confident we have the power to pick our head up and look around and see other people. And when we can give the gift of friendship, it's so much more likely to be reciprocal. You know, when we find someone who needs a friend, they're going to be a better friend because they need it too.

So that was just a really powerful lesson that I learned of like, look for who else is on the outside. Know where you're watering. And if it's a dead plant, you don't have to be angry. You don't have to be bitter. Just start watering somewhere else.

**Stephanie:** I love it. Amy, thank you so much for coming on the show. Thank you for leading with vulnerability and for just being a really good friend to the people who follow you and to us today. And I'm just really glad to know you.

**Amy:** Oh, thank you, Stephanie. I'm so grateful too. Thank you for having me. This was really fun.

**Stephanie:** Friends, that was our last episode of Season 17. I feel like the season flew by, didn't it? We're going to be back in just a few weeks for brand new episodes in Season 18, and I'm so excited about what we have in store.

Before we go, I would love it if you do two quick things. The first is to subscribe. Subscribing to the podcast is the best way to make sure you never miss an episode. It's also a way easier way to listen because it's a way of starting bookmarking the podcast. You never have to go looking for it again, your Apple just automatically downloads the next episode when a new one's released. And it'll also let you know the second we're back for Season 18.

The other thing is that it would mean so much to me if you would take just a second to leave a rating and a review for the podcast. The way that iTunes knows to suggest the podcast to new people is by the ratings and reviews. That's how we invite new friends to our Girls Nights. So would you do me a huge favor and take just a second to leave a rating in a quick comment about how you like the podcast so far? It would help us out so much.

And thank you to all of you who've left those beautiful five-star reviews already. I can't tell you how much that means to me. Friends, thanks so much again for

listening to this episode and for listening to season 17 of the Girls Night podcast. I will see you in just a few short weeks for brand new episodes in Girls Night Season 18.