



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 39 - How to Share Your Story

Eryn Eddy and Elisa Morgan

Eryn: After I started getting comfortable with being vulnerable, with other people peering in and giving perspective advice, helping me shape it and...and form it in a way that it can be received to help somebody, I just started praying. And I was like, "Lord, like, this is Your story. This is not mine to manufacture. Like, You know my story better than I know my story."

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Voice: You're listening to *God Hears Her*, a podcast for women where we explore the stunning truth that God hears you. He sees you, and He loves you because you are His. Find out how these realities free you today on *God Hears Her*.

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Elisa: Welcome to *God Hears Her*. I'm Elisa Morgan.

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Eryn: And I'm Eryn Eddy. And we all have a story to share, whether you're writing a book or just sharing with a friend, bonding with a co-worker, or being vulnerable in front of a large group of people. So, let's spend some time talking about our stories and why it's important to share them with others.

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Elisa: And since you just finished writing a book, Eryn, you should have plenty to talk about, right? I would love to hear more about your own journey of learning to share your story. So let's get to it. This is *God Hears Her*.

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Elisa: Eryn, *So Worth Loving* is a bit like a memoir, you know? So it's...it's your story. Now, it's your story on a specific topic, but you're very vulnerable. You're very honest. You share your not-so-great choices as well as your better choices. You show the process, not just the product, of your learning. And, you know, so it...it's not like it was a novel. And it's not like it's a...oh, I don't know, a book about mathematics or



something like that, a teachy book. So...so I think when you're talking about this... And this is where I wanna invite everybody else in. When have you been in a place in your life where God has nudged you forward and then maybe off the cliff to share something in your story, perhaps with people you know, but even more with people you don't know, and you're not sure...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...what the response will be, but you know God's inviting you to this place...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...of vulnerability before others? Well, that's what we're talking about here, right?

Eryn: Yes. Goodness, yes, yes, yes.

Elisa: Maybe you've stood up in...in church and shared your story or maybe it's been at lunch, and you felt this nudge that I really need to tell my lunch partner something in my life. Or maybe...maybe it's at work and you're with a co-worker and you're online and it feels incredibly distant, but you know there's something between you, and you feel like God's asking you to unzip and go there. You know? Yeah.

Eryn: Yes.

Elisa: So I think we've all been in that space.

Eryn: Oh, yes. I mean this...this book definitely felt like I was jumping off a cliff. Especially when I hit send to my editor...

Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: ...for the first time. And somebody reading my words and being able to have an opinion on them and telling me if they are right or wrong or if I should configure the way the sentences or... And I think that we do experience that in whatever way, like you said. Like, if it's going out to lunch and sharing something in us, in hopes that we're going to be met with acceptance, grace, definitely a lot of grace, for all my grammatical errors that I had in that book. Grac...goodness gracious, thank you for editors. I love...I love ellipses.



Elisa: And...and you know, to jump in there and tease that apart. You actually just mentioned two places that were super vulnerable. On the one, it's just telling your story which is wha!, you know, enough, you know, to tell my story...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...to people I don't know. That's a lot. But then it's the way you tell your story or the way you do your job or the way you teach or the way you parent or the way... So, you know, it's like pulling apart your words, you know, when...when...when chapters come back to you on your computer, and there's red instead of black typing, you're like, "Whoa!" You know? So, you...you've got two levels of vulnerability. You know, one is your...your pure story, and the other's how you share your story, you know, your methodology, if you will.

Eryn: Why do you think we have fear in sharing our story? What do you...where do you think that comes from?

Elisa: Let me throw this out there. I remember reading a quote. This is from Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. And you might remember her as having been the First Lady with President John F. Kennedy and then his widow. Later she became a book editor. Amazing. She spent a long time in her life in a New York publishing house. And I read a quote in a news magazine one time, where she said, "When we share our story, we give away a piece of ourselves that we can never get back." That paralyzed me, because I thought...because I was writing at that time a very vulnerable book too, and I thought, "Well, I'm not going to write this then. I don't want to give away pieces of myself I never get back." But I think what she meant is that when we share our story, no matter how pure or clear we are, we put it out there, and the reader or the listener, if it's an audio book, can do with it whatever they want. They can make whatever interpretation they want to. Let me give another example. When I was new in my role at leading MOPS International, mothers of preschoolers, I had to give this talk. And I was trying very carefully to open space for all mothers to be included in the ministry, whatever their choices were, wherever they were serving, however they were mothering. And I remember I...afterwards this one woman came up to me and she said, "Thank you so much for saying that women...moms of preschoolers can be in the workplace. Thank you for advocating for that." And I said, "Okay." And the next woman said, "Thank you so much for saying every mother of preschooler needs to stay home with their kids." And I went, "Um..." And I had been very careful to say kinda neither in terms of a...a yes or no, an...an ultimatum.

Eryn: Yeah.



Elisa: But listeners hear, readers see, through their own grid. So when we put our story out, as you're talking, Eryn, I think there is a reality of we do have to let go of it and let God use it. And that can be uncomfortable.

Eryn: My goodness, it can. There is a book when...my landlord gave me when I was sharing how, like, the process of writing a book. So it's called *When People Are Big and God is Small*. And it talks about the fear of man over, like, the knowledge of Who God is and what He can do with us. And I started just, like, peering into that book and reading different pieces of it. And I started realizing the reason I was fearful to pursue something that was out of the ordinary, something that I don't feel qualified in, something that I feel maybe insecure in, was really not the confidence in what I think God can do through me, but more of the fear of what people are going to think of me and fear of judging me. It's like being on that other side of the table, where you're vulnerable. I realized that I was starting to feel that way. Like, that's kind of how I lived a...a lot of my life in different areas. Does that resonate with you at all?

Elisa: Yeah, duh. You know, I mean all...all...all the time. And...and so what...what I wanna know, Eryn, is, you know, here you are a year, year and a half later, and your baby's out in the world. And your words are out in the world, and your story is out in the world. And...and all of our listeners, I just so encourage you to open her book, *So Worth Loving* and read Eryn's heart. You know, how have you come to grips with it and even to peace with telling your story?

Eryn: You know, I started... After, you know, I got through the first wave us submitting the manuscript for the first time, and there were so many back and forth times in this last year. It was like, "Oh, they're gonna love it. There's not gonna be that many edits." And then it, like, came back as, like, a bloody mess. And then I'm like, "Did they like anything?"

Elisa: "So good! I'm amazing!" "No, I'm not." But see, right there. I wanna tease that apart.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: Just because you had red all over your manuscript, just because...

Eryn: Yes.

Elisa: ...they used red ink to say, "Nope, nope, nope," that doesn't mean your story or you...

Eryn: Exactly.

Elisa: ...have no value...



Eryn: Yes.

Elisa: ...or did it wrong or blech. You know? And you...

Eryn: Yes.

Elisa: ...you teased those apart, didn't you? You were able to...

Eryn: Yes.

Elisa: ...begin to pull those apart and go, "Oh, wait. Wait," right?

Eryn: Yes. Well, it's... So I looked closer at the red, bloody mess on the manuscript, and I see it looks bad, but it's really not that bad. They're just trying to help me tell my story better by helping delete a run...like, helping with a run-on sentence. But in the...after I started getting comfortable with being vulnerable with other people peering in and giving perspective advice, helping me shape it and...and form it in a way that it can be received to help somebody, I just started praying. And I was like, "Lord, like, this is Your story. This is not mine to manufacture. Like, You know my story better than I know my story." And in the process of the book, I would just pray every time I looked into what I was feeling about the journey of it, when I was writing it, when I was receiving an email from it, when I was thinking about marketing and thinking about, just, you know, book sales and all those things, those external pressures, you know, that you see and you experience. I just kept praying, like, "God, when I look into those things, You speak up. When I look in, You speak up. Replace any...any thought that is going to mislead me down a path that's not honoring to my story and what You have done with my story. Lord, just disrupt that thought. Replace it with Your thought." I just kept praying that over and over and over again. And I...I share a story in the book. It's in the second chapter, I believe. And it's called Uprooted. And I...I share about this tree on my parents' property that I go home one day... I remember this tree, just being this most beautiful tree on my parents' property. And they have 16 acres and just beautiful country land in north Georgia. And it had been just uprooted, and it was laying down on its side. And all the roots of it were just exposed, and there was a gaping hole in the ground. And I just remember being like, "What happened to this tree? Like, what happened to it?" But I did feel a little bit, in the book process, like I was uprooted and all my roots were exposed and there is opportunity for people to look in and speak up about what they see.

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Elisa: And when we come back, Eryn will explain more about imposter's syndrome and ways to work past the challenging thoughts of feeling unqualified. This is *God Hears Her*.

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Eryn: If you're a fan of this podcast, sign up for our *God Hears Her* email newsletter and find even more inspiration and encouragement from women just like you. These weekly emails are filled with stories you can relate to and other fun goodies that will brighten up your walk with Jesus. Go to godhearsher.org and sign up today. That's godhearsher.org. Now back to the show.

[music]

Elisa: You know, not everybody's gonna write a book. But everybody does have a story. And it's God's story in them. Practically speaking, how do you know that God is nudging you to open up, to be vulnerable, to share something in your life? All of us may not have... I always like to call it a...a Valerie Bertinelli made-for-TV-movie story to tell. You know? You know?

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: But how do we know if we...if it's time for us to share in a conversation without making it, like, all about me and I'm so cool and taking over the conversation? You know?

Eryn: Yes. You know, I think that in order for us to know whether or not we should engage with sharing our story, we need to first ask questions with the person we're sitting with and sit in what they're sharing with us and their story. I think sometimes it's easy to hijack somebody's sharing.

Elisa: Yes. It is.

Eryn: You know? It's like they're opening up, and the next thing you know, you're like, "Yes, actually let me tell you my entire journey so that..."

Elisa: I've done. I've done that. Yup.

Eryn: I have done that too. And it's like that was not helpful, necessarily. So I do believe in the power of telling a story. However, sometimes people just want us to sit with them as they are sharing their story. And us asking questions. But sometimes we don't always have to share our story with somebody. Even if it's aligning, even if it's similar. Unless there is a prompting to it, I don't think that we always have to share our story.



Elisa: That's good, Eryn.

Eryn: And I think sometimes we can use the ability to connect with somebody as they are sharing. Like, the emotions that we've experienced from our personal story, when we connect with somebody, that does come out. Like, maybe we don't tell our...

Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: ...story, but we're still able to connect with the emotion that...

Elisa: That's great.

Eryn: ...they feel.

Elisa: Yeah, you're exactly right.

Eryn: You know?

Elisa: And, you know, one other guideline, boy, I've learned this the hard way too, regarding telling your story, make sure it's your story. Make sure it's not...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...your kid's story, your husband's story, your best friend's story, your mother's story. I mean the stories...

Eryn: Yes.

Elisa: ...we share really need to be our stories. You know, when I wrote *The Beauty of Broken*, I was really careful to say, "This is my story." It's not my kids' story. They would have a totally different story, and I respect that. This is my story of how I experienced and how I perceived it. And I can be all wrong. But this is my story. So we don't have permission to share other people's stories.

Eryn: That's so good. It's...it's ownership. I think that's a beautiful thing. And I think sometimes we think, "Well, nothing dramatic or big or anything, no breakdown or anything has happened in my story, so I have nothing to offer. I have nothing to share." And I think that, too, is a lie. I think that is a lie of the enemy because I think that we are so intricately wired and we are so different and unique in so many different ways that he wants us to believe that we aren't qualified to share to our story or we don't have anything to



share or offer to somebody because it doesn't look like X, Y, and Z. And I...I think that we can still have, whether it's big or small or little or however you want to define your story, I think that God uses big and little and all over to...to reach somebody else. And, yeah, sometimes we don't have to share our story, but then sometimes I think we do. And I don't know. I think Scripture is an example of, you know, helping somebody feel less alone in their story. When I read Scripture and I see how heartbroken David was, I feel...I feel less alone. So I do think that stories... And when he's a roller coast...David...

Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: ...roller coaster of emotions.

Elisa: Totally.

Eryn: And I'm like, oh thank goodness...

Elisa: I'm not the only one.

Eryn: ...there's somebody that... Yeah, I'm not the only one, you know? So I mean you've written... We've talked about this. You've written so many books and shared your story in so many different places and... And then you have a blog, where you share women's stories. And... How do you, and what have you seen when you share your story, how do you share it in a way where it's not centered around you? Where it's not like, "Woe is me," and it's not, like, you know, self-absorbed. What have you seen?

Elisa: Well, I think... First there's one thing I want to say is that there is a place to tell your story that is all about you. and it's all for you. Absolutely I think we need to do that, because they're not going to know our story until we tell it for ourselves. So what is that place? It's before God. It's before a trusted friend. It's before a counselor. It's before a pastor. You know? So we've got to know our story honestly, out there, all about me first. We really do. But then there's a way in which we can share what we've learned about our story, where, as one of our mentors, Hadden Robinson, shared, is that we don't make ourselves the hero of it. Okay, we've processed it. We've done our work, if you will. And we're not the hero. We're able to share vulnerably, "This is what I've been through, and this is what I've learned. And I...maybe something in this is helpful for you." So, pull back...

Eryn: Yes.

Elisa: ...do the work of, what is my story, honestly before God? And then as I share it with others, let me be careful to steward it, remembering it's God story in me. What has He brought about? How has He shifted? How has He shown up? What have I learned? And what am I continuing to learn?



Eryn: That's so good.

Elisa: So, Eryn, you talked a few minutes ago about imposter's syndrome. And...and that's...that's a big one. Can you unpack...? What does that mean? And where did you struggle with it? And maybe you still do.

Eryn: Oh, I still do. It's just always...it just shows up every time. Like, different ways. I'm like, "Oh! I didn't realize that I feel this way."

Elisa: So what is it?

Eryn: And then I take a turn. So imposter's syndrome to me... Well, after I read that book, I recognized it is fear of man instead of confidence in God.

Elisa: Of men or of...?

Eryn: Man, like, just people. Fear...

Elisa: Humans.

Eryn: ...of people. Yeah, humans.

Elisa: Okay. Okay.

Eryn: Fear of people's perspectives and opinions on telling me if I'm qualified, if I'm capable, being able to discredit me. Who am I to think...? You know, they're going...people are going to find out that I am actually not that smart. You know? Or I'm just not that much of an expert at X. Or I'm not that good of, like...

Elisa: Yes.

Eryn: ...if somebody's listening, like, I'm not that good of a mom. People are going to find out I'm not that good of a mom. Or I'm not that good of a friend. Or I'm not that good of an employee of...especially if somebody's excelling quickly in their career. It's like, "People are going to find out I'm not that good." Like you almost...

Elisa: Yeah.



Eryn: ...feel unqualified.

Elisa: Like you're an imposter, like, I'm just a fake. And...

Eryn: Yes.

Elisa: ...I've been able to pull it off on these different platforms and these different roles in my life and my job. But if anybody really found out, they would see, "Oh, she is so not." I mean just not.

Eryn: Exactly.

Elisa: Right? Okay.

Eryn: It's like...

Elisa: Okay.

Eryn: ...feeling like you're going to be exposed, and people are going to find out you're a fake.

Elisa: Yeah. And...and where did you stumble into that in the process of sharing your story?

Eryn: I think it was over time, for me, words that were spoken over me. So when I started pursuing something, those words that had been spoken over me from my past start rushing in. And then I'm starting to...to agree with them. I'm like, "Yeah. Who am I? They are going to find out..."

Elisa: Can you give an example?

Eryn: Oh, yes. Like, you know, I've shared in the past, like, people have said to me I shouldn't be on stage. I'll normalize divorce for young girls because of my past. And so things like that...

Elisa: Whoa.

Eryn: ...like, I know I've shared that story before. Those types of thoughts come rushing in. "Well, Eryn, you've got a book. Like, you shouldn't be sharing your story. You're going to normalize these things for people," or, you know, I've had... Yeah, I've had friends say things to me just even side conversations that have just...I've carried with me. Have you ever had...?



Elisa: That stick with you?

Eryn: Yeah! That just stick with me. Have you experienced imposter's syndrome? Any...anything like that? Please help me. Am I alone? Am I alone?

Elisa: You're not alone. You are not alone. I mean honestly, Eryn, I mean I'm a 60's _____ year old woman, and I am still struggling with it. I mean I...I get to host *Discover the Word* with these three amazing men and Brian, our producer, and I just think, "I don't know the books of the Bible in order." You know? And I'm supposed to be leading everybody in Bible study? I have a seminary degree. I have a Master's in Divinity, but y'all it was 40 years ago. You know?

Eryn: Yeah, yeah.

Elisa: I don't remember half this stuff. And so I do I constantly go, "You don't know what you're doing." And I...I do think it's...it's...it is kind of, if you will, the enemy's voice over us, just hissing this kind of...

Eryn: Yes.

Elisa: ..."You're a fake, and if anybody finds out..." So how do we combat...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...imposter's syndrome? Because if we listen to it, we would sit in our closets and never open our mouths, never share our story, never be who God made us to be, never let anybody take a peek inside who we are. How do we cope with it? How do we manage it?

Eryn: What I've been learning... Cause I feel like I'm still learning this. But in writing my story and then working through the fear of sharing it with people, knowing they will have opinions and criticism, some constructive, some hurtful, all of the thoughts that I have said to myself, like, "You're unqualified. You're a fake. People find all those things." In the last 2 years, wrestling with those questions, those thoughts, I have just asked the Lord, "God, like, what do You think of this thought?"

Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: And so He's... I think seeking intimacy with Him has helped me with reprogramming the imposter's-syndrome-type thoughts.



Elisa: I love your... This is very concrete. To write it down. And I think I wanna, just from my life too, add to that. When we hear an accusation, a negative response, as we share our story, whether it's our story or the methodology, the way we share our story, our story or the way we live it out, okay, maybe we tease apart and go, "Is this comment reflective of what God says is true?" If it isn't, we really need to put it aside. We need to look at it carefully, evaluate it, but then put it aside. And if the comment is reflective of what God says is true from Scripture, then we need to really hold onto it. I can remember when I first shared with my boss, the chair of the board at MOPS, that my teenage daughter was pregnant. And I thought...you know, I said, "I think I should resign. Obviously, I'm a failure as a mom." And he said, "Elisa, why would we want you to resign? Now there's one more mother of preschoolers in our world, one more mom for us to reach." You know, if we could, Eryn, can we just kinda offer out some...some tips or some guidelines here for every one of us who feels called (because we all are) to both understand and then share God's story in us. Because we're talking about a lot of things here. And I just wanna summarize them all up. You've talked about how you began to understand that the feedback you were getting was not to tear you down; it was to make it better. It was to make you better.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: Can you talk about that for a second more?

Eryn: Yes. I mean I think our ego only wants to hear positive things. But we...we can grow from constructive criticism. And I think that's the...the sharpening of our skills, sharpening of our talents, sharpening of sharing our stories, is when you do receive feedback. And I lo...I remember you sharing...you reminding me, when you receive constructive criticism, look at it and ask the Lord, "Is this something that I should take, or is it something I should let go?" And that was so...that has been so helpful for me, Elisa...

Elisa: Good.

Eryn: ...because I can take all constructive criticism and then go, "I am all these things." Almost so dramatically. But taking it, holding it, looking at it, and just going, like, "Holy Spirit, like, what do You want me to know about this? Should I keep it? Should I let it go?" That was so helpful when you...when you said that to me. So...

Elisa: Okay.

Eryn: ...man, yeah, when I think about us sharing our story, I think about how much the enemy does want to keep us entrapped in our thoughts, thinking that it won't help somebody or it won't help the next mom or it won't help our friend or it won't... Like, he wants to keep us in those thoughts. And then there is



a healthy way I also, I think, in asking the Lord, you know, like you said earlier, “Where do I...where do I share this story? When do I share this story? When do I share parts of this story?” Because I think sometimes with social media we almost can leak out some...

Elisa: Oh, that’s good.

Eryn: ...of the things that God hasn’t yet healed us. So I... And...and...and also helped us just process. you know? I think sometimes we think we have to, like, over...overshare. We almost overshare on social media. And I think we do that because we are still seeking for people to validate us instead of receiving the validation that God has already given us. So I think one, it’s, like, identifying, you know, what’s the motive and why we share? Identifying what type of criticism can we take in and let go? Those are some immediate thoughts, and I’m verbally processing, but those are some immediate thoughts that I have as it pertains to sharing our story and letting go of being fearful of others.

Elisa: One more question, Eryn. During the process of writing and now that the book is out there, how have you grown in your understanding that God sees you, and He hears you? And He loves you. How...how has it brought that reality home in your heart?

Eryn: I think some of the things that I write about, like, the childhood wounds, relationships, poor choices I’ve made, when I started not only, like, thinking about them, but really putting them down and then knowing people were going to see them, there were days, Elisa, that I would...I mean I would just be kind of paralyzed by fear and anxiety too. Just be vulnerable. And it was really being vulnerable with the Lord and trusting in Him and what He will do. And when I would pray that prayer, “Lord, when I look in, You speak up,” He actually met me. Like, He actually was there. Like, I know He’s always there. He’s omnipresent. I know God is not a feeling; He’s truth. But in those moments when I felt just almost paralyzed and would open up and share with Him what I was thinking and feeling and fearful of, He really did meet me. And it made me feel seen and known and loved and received, accepted by Him. It made me feel like He...He...He wants to share my story as a reflection of His adoration for me and His recovery over my life. And that has been so humbling and so loving, that He would want to use me? Like, He...He...He wants to use me out of everything that I’ve done or everything that I’ve experienced or thoughts that I’ve had. Like, that is such a radical love to be met with. And I think it’s not that He’s withholding an invitation to us. I think it’s us extending the invitation to Him, to be in those vulnerable places that we’ve yet to surrender to Him.

Elisa: The reality is we have to open that door for Him to come in and reveal His love for us. And you did. And He came in.

[music]



Elisa: Everyone has a story to share. This is *God Hears Her*.

[music]

Eryn: And before we close out today's episode, just a quick reminder that the show notes are available in the podcast description. The show notes not only contain the talking points for today's episode, but you will also find a link to connect with Elisa and me on social. We love to hear from you and answer any questions you might have or even just to pray for you. So, check out the show notes on our website, godhearsher.org.

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Elisa: The show notes also contain a link to sign up for the *God Hears Her* newsletter, featuring helpful articles and stories from women just like you, who are discovering what it means to be seen and heard by God. So sign up today.

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Eryn: Thank you for joining us. And don't forget God hears you. He sees you, and He loves you because you are His.

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Elisa: Today's episode was engineered by Ann Stevens and produced by Daniel Ryan Day and Mary Jo Clark. And today we also want to recognize Will and Londa for their help in creating and promoting this episode of the *God Hears Her* podcast. Thanks, friends.

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Eryn: *God Hears Her* is a production of Our Daily Bread Ministries.