



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 87 – Deepening Friendships Through Hard Conversations

Eryn Eddy & Elisa Morgan with K. B. Newton

[Music]

K. B. Newton: People hear heart conversations and they're like *Oh conversations from the heart, that's cute*, but HEART is really an acronym, right? So I talk about HEART Convos. It stands for the five conversations that every relationship dynamic needs to thrive, okay, and those five conversations just form the HEART acronym. So they're Honest conversations, they're Elephant-size conversations, they're Authentic conversations, they are Real conversations, and they're Transparent conversations.

Eryn: Hmm.

[Music]

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*.

Eryn: Welcome to *God Hears Her*. I'm Eryn Eddy.

Elisa: And I'm Elisa Morgan. Who are your closest friends and why are they your closest friends? Well what kind of conversations do you have with the people that you are the closest to?

Eryn: Sometimes when we think about friendship, we don't always think about the importance of our conversations, especially the hard conversations, and how they can build closeness between us.

Elisa: Yeah. So today, we're talking to a friendship expert, Kristin (K. B.) Newton. She's the creator and founder of HEART Convos, an organization that helps people build authentic relationships through having hard conversations. She's the author of *Friend Tips, Volume 1*, a book with insights on how to create valuable connections. She's married to Mike Newton, and they have a daughter.



Eryn: We are so excited to talk about friendship with K. B. Newton on this episode of *God Hears Her*. Elisa, every time I think that I have gotten really good at something, I learn that I still have learning to do.

Elisa: Uh-huh. It's called life, Eryn.

Eryn: It's called life.

Elisa: Life, yeah, yeah, a girl.

Eryn: Well that's good. There's grace in that then, like...

Elisa: Yeah, yeah. [Laughing] Or at least you've got good company. I'm the same way. [Laughter]

Eryn: I'm glad I'm in good company. Speaking of good company, I'm so excited to talk with our guest K. B. Newton, who speaks on friendship, and that's one thing that I feel like I'm like *Oh, I'm such a good friend*. And it's like the moment I think I'm a good friend, is the moment that I'm like *Oh, I got too confident*. [Laughter] *being a good friend*. K. B. Newton, welcome to the show.

Elisa: Yeah, we're glad you're here.

K. B. Newton: Oh, thank you so much for having me. I'm excited to have this conversation today.

Elisa: Hmm, that's kind of what your expert at is conversations, right? [Laughter] Except you call them something much cooler. What do you call them?

K. B. Newton: HEART convos, yeah, you know, HEART...HEART convos.

Elisa: That's cool. I like that.

Eryn: I love that, and I can't wait to dig into what your currently doing and what's kind of shaped you though to this point now, I want to hear about it.

Elisa: Mmm.

Eryn: Will you share with our listeners where ya from, where'd you grow up, and where you live now?



Elisa: And how'd you become K. B., just the initials too? Throw that in there too okay.

K. B. Newton: Okay.

Elisa: Okay, okay.

K. B. Newton: Okay, so my government name is Kristin just for anybody who wants to know.

Elisa: Your government name.

K. B. Newton: My government name, and the reason why I say *government name* is 'cause I am a military brat, and so at the age of three my mom got married and we moved to Japan, ah England, Germany,...

Elisa: Wow.

K. B. Newton: ...like by the time I was in, you know, ending middle school, I had probably seen most of the world that a lot of adults don't get to see.

Elisa: Wow.

K. B. Newton: And so...military brat, we landed here in Virginia, and so when people ask me where I'm from, I usually say Virginia...

Elisa: Hmm.

K. B. Newton: ...and so I went to...

Elisa: But you could say the world. Yeah. [Laughing] To the world, yeah.

K. B. Newton: Where I usually say *I don't know*. [Laughing] *Where ya from? I don't know actually*. Oh, and so I would say that, you know, because I was in Virginia for high school and went to Virginia Tech, you know for college that those were very informative years, and obviously shaped a lot of me, and so um, yeah, Virginia's where I'm from. I currently live in Indianapolis, Indiana with my husband, Mike, and



our four-year-old [Amarie], um I would be shocked if she did not find her way down here to where I am at some point.

Elisa: Perfect. Perfect.

Eryn: I hope she does. Amarie come.

K. B. Newton: I'm hiding...I'm hiding in the corner of a basement currently, but ah you know, she...might find her way to us.

Elisa: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: And so, yeah, that's my family. That's where I'm from, and you know K. B. came as a nickname. I am a DJ by profession, and so DJ KB is my name...

Eryn: I love that.

K. B. Newton: ...um as an artist it kind of just stuck...

Elisa: Ah, okay.

K. B. Newton: ...and so DJ KB is what most people know me as if they know that I'm a DJ and I can't get rid of it, so K. B.'s what they call me.

Eryn: I love that.

Elisa: That's cool.

Eryn: I love the inflection of DJ KB. That's fun.

Elisa: I do too. I love that.

Eryn: That's fun. Oh...

Elisa: Lots of initials.



Eryn: How did you get into becoming a DJ. Were you always interested in music and, I mean, how did that come to be?

K. B. Newton: I do come from a musical family. My mom was a jazz singer...

Eryn: Oh.

K. B. Newton: ...when we were stationed overseas. I was in band. I was a band kid. I played trumpet, and drum major my senior year. I've never played an organized sport in my life; however, I am an official DJ for the Indiana Pacers...

Eryn: Come on!

Elisa: Whoa!

K. B. Newton: ...you know, the Indiana...Indiana Pacers, so I've been doing that since 2013, and so I am at basketball games all the time.

Eryn: Wow.

K. B. Newton: Like I'm in arenas...I'm in arenas all the time, but I do not play sports, and so yeah, always just been musical, and...

Elisa: Wow.

K. B. Newton: ...and DJing just really came as a medium to reach inner-city kids.

Eryn: Oh cool.

K. B. Newton: Honestly. I graduated from college, felt the Lord calling me into full-time ministry and went to Roanoke, Virginia to a ministry called Acts 2, and they did two things that worked really, really well.

Eryn: Hmm.



K. B. Newton: They would throw a party—a Christmas party—where kids would come to their building, there would be food, and games, and music, and, I mean,...

Elisa: That's cool.

K. B. Newton: ...you're talking like a 100 to 150 kids like packed in this room, and they would share the gospel with these kids every night.

Elisa: Wow.

K. B. Newton: And that is how I started DJing, because the gentlemen that is now my husband, but at the time was not, he was moving to Philadelphia, and they were like *Somebody's got to keep doing the music for the parties*, and I was like *You know, I could figure this out*. [Laughing] And then the rest is history...

Eryn: Amazing! I love that!

Elisa: Amazing!

Eryn: Okay, so wait. So if you touch on that a little bit. How did you meet your husband?

Elisa: Mmm.

K. B. Newton: I met him at this ministry. He actually hired me, and so...

Elisa: Oh!

Eryn: Oh!

K. B. Newton: Um, he did.

Elisa: A workplace romance, wow.

K. B. Newton: No, not at all. [Laughing] Not at all, please. Not at all, no. So my husband is an incredible man, you know, God-fearing man, and my senior year at college was the massacre at Virginia Tech, so mass shooting happens...



Eryn: Oh, no.

K. B. Newton: ...and at point, you take a look at your life and you're like *What am I doing? What do I feel called to? Why am I still here? Why wasn't I one of the thirty-three individuals?*

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: You know, like all these things, and so you start to reevaluate. Well he, just again a series of events orchestrated by God obviously, like led him to call me. I was kind of the leader of the campus ministry at the time. He was looking for volunteers. I said *Well, do you have any full-time positions?* And he was like, *Oh yeah, we're always looking for full-time staff and you have to raise support.* And I was like *What is raising support?* It was this whole new thing, and so I ended up being hired to work at that ministry, and he was only there for a year, and he was actually engaged to another woman while I was there, so there was really no interest...

Eryn: Huh.

Elisa: Okay.

K. B. Newton: ...like at all. He was my boss,...

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: ...we worked together, and then he moved. And a year later, after just kind of navigating a broken engagement, meeting with his pastor regularly, his pastor after years started asking him questions about what he would be looking for in a woman that he was interested, and he had these four things that he was looking for, and every time he talked to him about these four things, he kept saying that I came to mind.

Elisa: Ooo.

Eryn: Oh, wait, wait, wait.

K. B. Newton: And so...



Eryn: I want to know what the four things [Laughing] are.

Elisa: Yeah, so intentional. [Laughing] Yes indeed.

K. B. Newton: Oh my goodness! Let me tell you.

Eryn: Okay tell us about it.

K. B. Newton: I...I probably...I'm wondering if, thought you would remember them, she had to obviously love God...

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: They had to be good friends, which is interesting...

Eryn: Oh.

K. B. Newton: ...you know, what a man would call a friend and like what builds friendship amongst men and what builds friendship amongst women.

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: But ah they had to be good friends, she had to love God, they had to be good friends, she had to treat the people in her life well...

Eryn: Mmm.

K. B. Newton: ...and she had to be submitted to the authorities in her life currently.

Elisa: Wow.

K. B. Newton: And so those...those are the four things.

Elisa: Whoa! Those are good!



K. B. Newton: So this day, every time we tell this story we laugh because he was like *Now, I don't know if Kristen thought that we were good friends, but I thought we were good friends, and that was enough for me to pursue her.* [Laughing]

Elisa: That's cool.

K. B. Newton: And so, you know, even today I'm like *Mike, I want to make sure that our connection with one another is solid, that it is deep, and that it is meaningful, and we're not just kind of going through the motions, you know, of being Christians who are married and who are building a family and doing all the things and checking all the boxes, but that we are like...*

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: ...*in it.* You see what I mean, and that we...we know one another like intimately and deeply...

Elisa: What I'm hearing underneath this, K. B., and boy you've really got my attention, you're not super old. You're a relatively young woman. You're very intentional, and you're very intentional about connection and relationship, trust, being known. I wonder if you could just for a second also take us back to Virginia Tech because you threw that in there and I was like *Wait!* You know, you were there then.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: How have you become this intentional woman of who you are? How has God used the circumstances, your resilience no doubt from being a military brat. Your third-culture kid stuff of being raised globally, you know,...

K. B. Newton: Yeah.

Elisa: ...how has God used that, and you go *I need to be intentional.* How's that happen for you?

K. B. Newton: You know, you're right. It feels like that movie *Slum Dog Millionaire* where as he's on this game show, he just so happens to know every single answer because as he reflects on his like life events, they've all kind of led him to this moment, right?



Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: Where no one should know what this is, but he has a memory associated...

Elisa: Uh-huh.

K. B. Newton: ...with that experience, and so now he's like *I know the answer*. And I feel like that's how it's worked for me when it comes to relationships. My mom got pregnant with me and did not marry my biological father, which I'm thankful that...

Elisa: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: ...she didn't just go through the motions of saying *Yes, I'll marry you because we're pregnant*. Right?

Eryn: Right?

K. B. Newton: Because my father has not walked a healthy road, and so it was just her and I for along time. I look at my four-year-old daughter and I remember being four years old having to sit outside of my mother's night classes and just to know like sit here, you know, like do what you've been told to do. You know, there was no iPads at the time.

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: There were no like, you know, devices to keep me busy. I just needed to know *This is what I'm asking you to do for this amount of time, do it*. So I felt like at a very young age I was asked to be aware, I was asked to be responsible...

Elisa: Uh-huh.

K. B. Newton: ...I was asked to notice patterns for my safety, right?

Eryn: Mm-hmm.



K. B. Newton: So I just at a very young age, just kind of learned independence, and then like you said, you see different parts of the world and you've learned how to...how to adapt, how to really survive in all these different spaces.

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: You come back to the States; you're trying to figure out how...how do you belong because you're different from all the kids, right?

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: And so you find yourself at a college as a minority, right? There weren't a lot of black students at Virginia Tech when I was there...

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: ...and you're trying to figure out again *Where do I fit in?* I came to know the Lord...I would say that I really started walking with the Lord in college, and so there's that part, and so then you hit...I'm senior year. I'm ready to go. I'm looking forward to my future. I'm waiting to hear back from these grad schools, and this massacre happens, and it just shocks you. It is the biggest disruption you could...

Elisa: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: ...ever experience in your entire life. And disruptions are opportunities. And most people don't see disruptions as opportunities, but if you see it as an opportunity, it really can reset you, so I found myself on a certain course, I had a certain trajectory in my mind for what was going to come next, and when this disruption happened, I was like *I need to reevaluate my why*. Now did I call it *my why* as a senior in college? No.

Elisa: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: But that's essentially what it was.

Elisa: Yeah.



K. B. Newton: I was trying to reevaluate...*like why am I here? What have I really been created to do? What am I passionate about? Because if life is this fleeting, if life is this short, I don't want to waste any time doing something just because someone told me I should do it or because of a check or because...like I want to what I'm super passionate about,* and at that moment, I realized like strip it all away. I'm not made for corporate American. I want to do life in relationship with other people, so I became a missionary in the inner city, and that's where it all started.

Elisa: Mmm. Mmm. Thank you for unpacking that. And all of us have disruptions...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: ...whether or not God forbid they're a school shooting, but we have disruptions, and I love what you just said, you know, disruptions are a...a time to stop and reexamine and thank you. Thanks...thanks for taking us through that.

Eryn: Yeah, and to...and to reset. They are opportunities to reset when we do experience a disruption in our life. Even just the last few years that we've all experienced, it's such a disruption to our rhythm, our routine, the way that we connect, but it does show what matters to us and what we want to be more intentional on and about and that's just...it's so beautiful that, you know, in what was extremely painful to experience, how God has worked that in you to be able to connect and create connections amongst people and learn how to have authentic relationships and friendships and, I mean, what you do now with HEART Convos and your book *Friend Tip*, right? Volume 1...

K. B. Newton: Mm-hmm. *Friend Tips*, yeah volume 1.

Eryn: Which I'm like *Friend Tips, Volume 1*. When's volume 2 coming out? [Laughing] I saw there was a volume, and I was like *Okay, I want to know the next volume*. [Laughing] Um I think it's so neat how God has just used what you've come from and created the woman that you are now. So I want to dig into friendships and authentic relationships, because there was something that you put on social that I was like *Oh, I want to know this question*. [Laughing] And it's what are three of the hardest things to say in friendship?

K. B. Newton: Well.

Eryn: First of all, how did you get to that and then what is that?



K. B. Newton: Well, let me just say to that specific question, because it was a reel that I did that I thought was extremely funny, and, you know, I'm kind of just mouthing the words, you know, underneath what this man is saying. He says, "The three hardest things for most people to say are 'I need help,'...

Elisa: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: ...'I was wrong,'...

Elisa: Ooo.

K. B. Newton: ...and 'woces...Worcestershire sauce. [Laughing]

Elisa: You just proved it. [Laughing]

K. B. Newton: And I thought it was the funniest thing, and so I use it as just kind of a...kind of a lead in...

Elisa: That's awesome.

K. B. Newton: ..., you know, for people...

Elisa: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: ...like *What are the three hardest things to say friends?* It's like *I need help, I was wrong, and Woces...Worcestershire sauce...sauce.* [Laughing] Ah.

Elisa: Why did they call it that, yeah.

K. B. Newton: Listen, I don't even...I don't know, but when I think about, you know, HEART Convos and friendship and all of the things...

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: ...I...I struggled with friendship for a really long time, and some of that has to do with my experience and my...in the narrative that I was telling myself. That felt very real to me for a long time, and



it's no longer real to me now, but I allowed my life to kind of be dictated by these two narratives, and the first one was that people can leave for any other reason and they just want to.

Eryn: Hmm.

K. B. Newton: Like people can leave. They don't need a reason, and I felt that way about my biological father.

Elisa: Hmm.

K. B. Newton: That before I was even born, you know, you opted out, and my husband's on staff with Young Life, we do a lot of work with teens and the inner city teen moms, and then those fathers, and I admire their effort sometimes to get in there and like *Okay I'm going to do this*, and they are like *I can't do this*, because it's just such a heavy load, and I can empathize with that because it's like you got in there and it was heavier than you thought it was going to be, and I'm not...I'm not justifying you leaving, I'm not saying you should leave, as much as I get that, because I couldn't for a long time connect the dots for why my dad left before I even gave him a reason to leave...

Eryn: Hmm.

K. B. Newton: ...is what I felt like, right?

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: Yeah, yeah.

K. B. Newton: So that was the first big story that I started to believe. The second big story was that nothing lasts forever. And that was really just as a result of being a military brat. Like *Hey this is going to be...*

Elisa: Hmm.

K. B. Newton: ...*what it is for three years, maybe four.*

Eryn: And that was in your life was that you...



K. B. Newton: Yeah, we're just going to transition.

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: I had to reset every three years, and it almost is like a...a clock to this day still goes off in me and says, *It's time to do something different.*

Elisa: Wow.

K. B. Newton: *It's time to switch things up.* And so naturally if you just take those two narratives, what kind of friend do you think I was? I was a very flakey friend. I was very inconsistent. I was kind of present when I was present, but when I wasn't, I wasn't.

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: Right? I think now in 2022, they call it *ghosting*, right?

Elisa: Yeah, right.

K. B. Newton: Like you're ghosting people. You're...you're cancelling people. Like that...I just kind of did that if it was convenient and it worked great. If it didn't great. If you wanted to leave, bye, like it...it just wasn't...it wasn't good, and I...I really didn't have the tools to cultivate deep, meaningful connections with people, and I just did life on the surface. I'm extremely outgoing, extroverted, but was I was hiding in plain sight.

Elisa: Hmm.

Eryn: Mmm.

K. B. Newton: And did not really feel known by others, and so that is when like the discontent that was happening in that three years, just like launched me into a space of like *I need more. I want more. I'm not going to be able to walk with Jesus if I don't figure this relationship bit out*, right?

Eryn: Yeah.



K. B. Newton: Because my relationship with God, yes, is my relationship with God, but if He's left me here on this earth and didn't take me to be with Him, I'm like, *He wants me to do life with other people, and I've got to figure out how to do this...*

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: *...in a way that is significant and that is a reflection of the gospel, and I don't want to be walking in fear and worried every two seconds if...if I open up my...my heart and then become vulnerable, this is going to go south.* Like I just...I needed to figure it out, and that was really the catalyst for learning how to have a HEART conversation...

Eryn: Mmm.

K. B. Newton: ...and also pursuing deep, meaningful connection in my friendship with other people.

Elisa: Mmm.

Eryn: That's so beautiful, K. B. And so I want to know like in that time, I would imagine you were presented an opportunity to ask for help, which is hard to do. Did you ask for help or did you just do it?

K. B. Newton: I did.

Eryn: Okay, and what was that journey like and who was it? And how did you learn to trust or...

Elisa: Yeah. That's good, yeah.

K. B. Newton: All those things, yeah. I wish I could have said that it just came to me one day and I did it, no.

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: After the shooting, I had the opportunity to go work at a Christian sports camp. Not to do anything athletic, but...

Eryn: Yeah.



K. B. Newton: ...I was [Laughing]...I was brought on staff to work at this Christian sports camp called Summer's Best Two Weeks City Kids,...

Elisa: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: ...and the culture at this camp was the most vulnerable, transparent like accepting culture that I had ever experienced in my life, and...and again at...at the beginning I didn't see it, but what really opened my eyes is they used to do this thing every morning called Morning Hugs, where the men staff and the male staff and the female staff would hug each other, you know, separately, like all the guys would hug each other every morning and just say, *Hey, good morning! Like how you doing?* Like and these aren't just like awkward church side hugs, these are like bring it in, you know,...

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: ...kind of hug. And so I'm like, *I have to hug twenty women every day for the next two months.*

Elisa: Hmm.

K. B. Newton: *This is going to be something.* And so...

Elisa: Mmm. Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: ...like physically in my body, I was uncomfortable...

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: ...and they could tell. Like *She's cool and it just seems fine. She's not soci...socially awkward or anything, but she is really like adverse to this hugging thing, right?* I'm literally like guarded in these hugs, and what I realize by the end of that time is that that was how I was living my life. I was walking around guarded, and anytime anybody tried to get close, I would tense up and I would, you know, my...my guard go up, I would shut down. I would try to pull away. I...I could not open my arms completely, because when you get a good hug and you give a good hug, I mean you are fully exposed. I mean, arms are wide open, the core of who you are is just there.



Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: And there were people who were waiting to embrace me...

Elisa: Mmm.

K. B. Newton: ...and to accept me and to welcome me in, right, to deep meaningful connection and community, but again, I had my arms, I...my shoulders were up. You know...you know it. Your shoulders go up to your ears, you're arms go like, cause you're like *Ah, I don't want to do this*, right?

Eryn: Mm hmm.

Elisa: Yeah, yeah.

K. B. Newton: After that I committed. That was the moment for me where I...I asked for help. I said, *I need this in my life moving forward. I don't want this just to be a moment*, 'cause we all have those. We go to an event or a conference or have this great experience and it's like, *If this could just be my life*,...

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: ...*like that would be awesome!*

Elisa: Sure, I can do it then, yeah.

K. B. Newton: And the director of that camp...his name is Timotheus Pope, his wife Kendra, they both said to me, they said, *Oh this is absolutely possible...*

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: ...*for you*. And that for me was the first time that there was hope in my ability to live freely in my relationship with God, in my relationship with others.

Eryn: Hmm.



[Music]

Elisa: When we come back, K. B. will explain the meaning behind the acronym for HEART Convos and how we can use it to deepen our friendships and have the hard conversations as well. That's after the break on *God Hears Her*.

[Music]

Eryn: *God Loves Her* is the newest book in our *God Hears Her* series. You know, we all just want to be reminded that we are loved, and in this devotional, women writers share personal stories about God's love that is unconditional. Not only can you receive love from Him, but you'll want to share it with others. *God Loves Her* is perfect to take on the go or to curl up with in your favorite spot at home. Get one for yourself and share it with a friend who can use a special reminder of God's love. God to godlovesher.org to order. That's godlovesher.org. Now back to the show.

Elisa: I know there are people listening who are going *This is exactly me*. And they're probably not sure who to ask for help from or what it is they really even need help with.

K. B. Newton: For sure.

Elisa: But I...I know there are people listening who are going *I want so much more than what I have, and yet I'm terrified*.

K. B. Newton: Mm-hmm.

Elisa: What do you want to say to them, K. B.? I mean how do we take our baby steps towards real, authentic relationship?

K. B. Newton: Ooo, that's a loaded question, but the first step is the belief that it is possible.

Elisa: So like what you just described there, this *bam* of it's possible.

Eryn: The hope.



K. B. Newton: It has...it has to be possible. Here's what true about people. We will never consistently behave in a way that is inconsistent with our beliefs.

Eryn: That's right.

K. B. Newton: We won't...we can't do it. Now, and you can see that in just people's resolutions, right? You make resolution at the top of the year because you feel that it's the time to do it, everybody's motivated, and it's like everything's high, and you...you feel that bit of like *Oh I can do this*.

Elisa: Mm-hmm.

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: And then you go to do it, and then at some point, you get down the line and you're not doing it anymore. Or you are doing it, and then you start to sabotage what you're doing. Why? Because you don't really have the belief embedded in your self-conscious...

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: ...that this is who you are, how you are, and why you are, right? And so, until we change the belief part, going through the motions to do anything, you know, is not going to last, and I think when I first became a Christian, I was first led into a behavior change...

Elisa: Ah.

K. B. Newton: ...before I was led into that soul change. Do you get what I mean?

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: Like our...my mind, my will, and my emotions being in the habit of submitting them to God every day to understanding like how God has wired me, who...how He has uniquely shaped me. What I felt like I had to do...I'm like *Oh, I am not the natural description of what people would coin as the "godly Christian woman."* Like my temperament is a little too um brash. I'm a little too direct. I fill up a lot of space when I walk into a room. You get what I mean?



Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: Like I have a lot of talent, a lot of gifts, and I'm um...and they are on display often and all these things.

Elisa: This is a whole 'nother conversation about...

K. B. Newton: And...

Eryn: I (Inaudible)...

K. B. Newton: This is a whole 'nother conversation.

Elisa: What is a gentle and quiet spirit really mean.

K. B. Newton: Right.

Eryn: Right.

Elisa: Okay, let's go. Let's go. Yeah.

K. B. Newton: But I just thought I was like *Oh, I have got to fall into a certain kind of mode. I have got to start doing a certain kind thing* without really like allowing the truth of the gospel to start just completely transforming every bit of me.

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: You get what I mean?

Elisa: Mm-hmm.

Eryn: Mm-hmm.



K. B. Newton: Um and me completely immersing myself into the truth of the Scriptures, who Jesus is, what He has to say. You start kind of just falling into these ways of being and these rituals and certain doctrines and ways of thinking and patterns of you know belief and all these kinds of things.

Elisa: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: So first step for you, if you're at that place, you've got to believe that it's possible. You have to believe that as far as God is concerned, you were made for deep, meaningful connection. You were made for deep, meaningful connection with Him, right?

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: And then with others. Period. A lot of people, especially in, you know, the black church context will say, you know, there's a song that is really popular. It says, *As long I've got King Jesus, I don't need nobody else*. And I hate that song, um because what I think it does is it perpetuates this lie...

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: ...that my relationship with God is all I need. It is, but it isn't.

Elisa: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: Because...

Elisa: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: ...literally Jesus says that everything that we believe hinges on two major things, and that is: the command to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, body, and strength, but then, this other part that I think falls short, and that is to love your neighbor as yourself. So again, well it's like it should matter. It's all about like, you know, you see people falling away from the faith or a leader you know like does something...he falls from grace or...or somebody, you know, disappoints you or whatever, and it's like it doesn't matter because I'm...you know, God is consistent, and God is the same and I...and I'm like uh-huh. Like the way that Jesus has set it up and even God set it up in the beginning is that one, it's not good for man to be alone. Period. That's not a...a promo or an ad for marriage, right? [Laughter] You know what I'm saying? Like...



Elisa: Yeah. Yep.

K. B. Newton: ...it's...

Eryn: That's good, yeah.

K. B. Newton: ...you know.

Eryn: If you think it's...

K. B. Newton: Right. It's not...it's not just a talking point for marriage, we need...

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: ...relationship with God and relationship with other people. Now when we die and go to heaven, oh, you talking "Holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty," like if we get to heaven and God's not there, I don't want to go! Right? It's all about God. You know what I'm saying? Like when we get there. But while we're here on earth, there is a level of community that I think we've been called to as Christians that we don't esteem.

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: And...and so again, I can get on so many tangents from here, but I would just say again that first part has to be like this is God's design. Connection is God's design for me and not just connection on a shallow level, but on the...at the deepest level, and not just in my marriage, right?

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: And not just in my romantic relationships, but in my friendships.

Eryn: Yeah. That's good K. B. What do you feel like are some things that create division in friendship?

K. B. Newton: Hmm.



Eryn: That maybe you've experienced, or you've observed where you're just like *Gosh, the enemies winning there?* You know?

Elisa: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: Yes.

Eryn: What are some things that you've seen?

K. B. Newton: When trust is broken that will ruin a friendship.

Elisa: Mm-hmm. That's as tough one to come back from. That's tough.

K. B. Newton: Absolutely. Here's what I, you know, what I know is true about trust. People think that trust is...because trust is broken in one big moment, they think that it's built in one big moment.

Elisa: Oh, yeah.

Eryn: Mmm.

K. B. Newton: And really trust is built in a lot of little moments stacked on top of one another.

Eryn: That's good.

K. B. Newton: And it's just the daily life. *I saw you be honest with me here. You called and asked how I was doing there.*

Elisa: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: *You showed your concern. You were patient with me here. You forfeited a right here. You made me laugh here.* Like all of those things are building trust. But it only takes one big moment to knock all of those Jinga...Jinga blocks down it feels like, right?

Elisa: Yeah.



Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: It does, yeah.

K. B. Newton: And so trust I think is a huge one. I think what...a lack of heart con...versations is one, and, you know, I'll explain what that is because people hear heart conversations, and they're like *Oh conversations from the heart, that's cute*. But HEART is really an acronym, right? So I talk about HEART Convos. It stands for the five conversations that every relationship dynamic needs to thrive, okay, and those five conversations just form the HEART acronym. So they're Honest conversations, they're Elephant-size conversations, they're Authentic conversations, they are Real conversations, and they're Transparent conversations.

Eryn: Hmm.

K. B. Newton: So when we break down all five of them, an honest conversation is a conversation where you're being truthful. There's no deceit. Right? Like if you ask me *Hey do you want to hang out tonight?* And I don't. I'm honest about that.

Eryn: Mm-hmm. [Laughing] I love that. That's true.

Elisa: I do too.

Eryn: It's like *Now?*

K. B. Newton: I feel the...I feel the freedom in the relationship to just say *No, I'm tired. I don't...I don't...or I don't want to go*. I don't even have to have a reason. *I don't want to go*.

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: Right? That honesty is a Jenga cube, right, in the trust tower being built.

Eryn: Mm-hmm.



K. B. Newton: So honesty. Elephant-sized conversations can go one or two ways. It can be addressing an elephant in the room, right? Just talking about the thing that stinking up the place right now...

Elisa: Mmm.

K. B. Newton: ...that nobody wants to...nobody wants to talk about. Or it could be the...the conversation that is a big heavy conversation. So those are conversations about our traumas, about our fears, about maybe, you know, boundaries or expectations that we have, right? An authentic conversation is the conversation where you feel the freedom to show up as your most authentic self. You're not trying to be who I want you to be or who you think that I want you to be. You're not pretending to be someone that you're not. You are showing up as your most authentic self in this space. A real conversation is not about being real, it's about addressing real issues in real time, and if you're married, you know what this means. That means that you're having the conversation today about the dishes in the sink that eventually turns into the conversation about what you never do and [Laughter] three months ago...three months ago this happened.

Elisa: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: And I didn't say anything then, but I'm saying it now.

Elisa: Yep.

K. B. Newton: Like it's like we...like today let's just talk about the real issue right now...

Elisa: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: ...because those conversations really give us the chance of actually changing this relationship.

Eryn: That's so...

Elisa: Totally. Yeah.

Eryn: ...that's true.



K. B. Newton: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Eryn: In real time...in real...when you do that it really does protect the relationship down the road from that three-months moment.

K. B. Newton: Oh absolutely. It's a...a protection for you to be in the habit of keeping short accounts of one another, right?

Elisa: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: You don't have this long leger of like...

Elisa: Right.

K. B. Newton: ...offenses, but not just that, you know, if you think about the last couple of years and the tension with race and even conversations now around Covid, like those are real conversations in real time that oftentimes people don't want to talk about. Like they're like *Well is this an issue right now? This is the issue right now, so we have to talk about it.*

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: Now you might not be in the habit of talking about it, you might not want to talk about it, you might not be used to talking about it, but if this is the pressing issue right now against the church or against...or for me right now, then please make space for it.

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

Elisa: That's good, yeah.

K. B. Newton: Right? To have this real conversation.

Elisa: Okay.



K. B. Newton: Um the last one is the transparent conversation, and that's really just when you allow people to see through to the things that they wouldn't see unless you show them. So a lot of people think that the quality of a relationship is measure on what the other person can just know about you.

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: *Oh they just know like my expectations, or They just know...*and I'm like, *Yeah, that's the perfect set up for* [Laughing]...

Elisa: They can mindread. Yeah.

K. B. Newton: ...for...for disappointment, right?

Elisa: Yeah!

K. B. Newton: It's like no, you have got to be honest...you have got to be transparent and let people see through to that. This is the things that they can't see, right, and so.

Elisa: And that's...that's a real pitfall because we expect people to be able to know us.

K. B. Newton: We do.

Eryn: Right.

Elisa: If they really know us, and that's impossible.

K. B. Newton: Right, yeah.

Eryn: And then we punish them...

Elisa: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: ...if they don't meet those expectations...

Elisa: That's so...yeah.



Eryn: ...or the knowledge...

K. B. Newton: Correct!

Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: ...and then we just punish them and then it's about us. Aghh! [Laughing]

K. B. Newton: Yeah, so those...so are the two things. If you're not having HEART conversations that will ruin any friendship.

Elisa: One...one more question on this. Say you really want to have a HEART convo with a certain people, and you want to have that kind of real relationship...

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

Elisa: ...but they never do their work.

K. B. Newton: Mm-hmm.

Elisa: And, you know, you're doing the H-E-A-R-T...

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

Elisa: ...and they're doing the H and the T. [Laughing] You know, or something. What do you do? Do you suggest we walk away, or do you suggest we have a real conversation about it or what do you suggest?

K. B. Newton: Ooo, that's a great question, and um the answer is not a simple one. I wish I could say it's one plus one equals two and if they're not giving the one, then it ain't two...

Elisa: Yeah. Yeah.

K. B. Newton: ...and, you know, that's it. But we know that relationships are nuanced and that nothing works like that, right? And so I always say *Yes, no, both and*.



Elisa: Mm-hmm.

Eryn: That's good.

K. B. Newton: Yes, no, both and, you know because it could be all of the things, right? I will say this that every relationship is not created equal, and people should understand that. And I teach this thing called "The Five Levels of Connection" or also known as "The Friendship Tiers" is what I call them.

Eryn: I love that.

K. B. Newton: And I explain that, you know, in friendship there are five levels of connection. You've got connection with strangers, acquaintances, compatriots, comrades, and then your inner circle. And if you think of it like an ice cream cone, like it's wider at the top and it's smaller at the bottom, right, you always will know more strangers than you have in your inner circle. Your inner circle might have two or three people...

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: ...in it, right? But you can no countless strangers. According to social media, you've got four-thousand strangers in your life...

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: ...right, that you call friends. You know?

Elisa: Yeah. Yeah.

K. B. Newton: And so you've got strangers, acquaintances, compatriots, comrades, and then your inner circle down there at the bottom, and they all get smaller the deeper you go in relationship with folks. And so the question becomes, *Well what am I building a relationship or a friendship around with a stranger?* It's information essentially. That's why they're a stranger because you have no information about them.

Eryn: Yeah.



K. B. Newton: But when you start getting information about someone and you find out *Oh I'm from here too* or *Oh, like I knew someone who had a son who was in the Columbine shooting* or *Oh I'm married. Oh I'm married; you're married. Oh you have kids? I have kids. Oh you just had a baby? I just had a baby.* Like, you get what I mean? That creates an account for you, right,...

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: ...to decide *Do I want to move to the level of acquaintance with someone* because at an acquaintance level, we share the same investments.

Eryn: Right.

Elisa: Mmm.

K. B. Newton: So those are the things that as I'm gaining information about you, I'm realizing *Oh we have a lot of things in common and we're both doing this. Oh you go to this gym? I go to this gym.* Okay, we're invested in the same things. We have something deeper to build upon.

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: Okay? Then you take that relationship, and you decide to invest in it. Well the way that that relationship grows into a compatriot relationship is if you're garnering interest off the relationship. So it's not just that we're doing the same things, but we're receiving the same benefit from the things that we're doing, right?

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: And so then the relationship goes the same. I tell you this now, one of the reasons why a lot of transitions break friendships is because you were building your relationship on what you were both invested in...

Eryn: Mmm.

K. B. Newton: ...and when you're no longer both invested in that thing, you don't know where to go from here, right?



Elisa: Yeah. Yeah. You're working out together...

K. B. Newton: So you're not doing...

Elisa: ...and you quit the gym or something. Yeah. Mm-hmm. Okay.

K. B. Newton: Correct, or you were in college...

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: Okay. Yeah totally, right.

K. B. Newton: ...and now you're not.

Elisa: Right. Yeah.

Eryn: Yeah, or you were both single and...

K. B. Newton: That too. We both had investments in our single journey together.

Elisa: Mm-hmm. That's a big one, yeah.

K. B. Newton: We're not on the same journey anymore, and so that for some people it equals to them *We can't do life. I now need married friends.* Right?

Eryn: Right. Right.

K. B. Newton: *I now need people in this state.* It literally could just be 'cause we're in the same place, right, but then when I move because I don't know what's going on in your world, I feel like I have to leave. Well, again, what you're getting from the relationship if that is similar, right? We're not just going to the gym because we were trying to be cute for our class reunion. We're going to the gym because we both value health, right?

Elisa: Mm-hmm.



K. B. Newton: We're predisposed diabetics, whatever. It's like we have something deeper to connect on.

Elisa: Mm-hmm.

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: But then every relationship goes from what I call shallow to deep when you hit that comrade space. Comrade space says that we share the same intent.

Elisa: Hmm.

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: So our why is the same.

Elisa: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: So whether we're doing the same thing or not, whether I've talked to you in two months or not, when we get back together, we pick back up where we started...

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: ...because our why is the same, right?

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: And we learned that in our season together, and then you've got that inner circle where we share intimacy, and those are the five...

Elisa: That's awesome.

K. B. Newton: ...I get intimacy.

Elisa: That's very helpful.



K. B. Newton: ...intimacy is not to be confused with sex, right?

Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: Right.

K. B. Newton: Intimacy is when you allow someone to see into you so it's like *into me see*, that is intimacy, right?

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: So those are the five levels of connections, and I think that right there helps you to understand back to your question, how do you have a conversation with someone who's not communicating at the same level or degree that I am?

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: It could be because as far as they're concerned, you are or are not an inner circle relationship...

Elisa: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: ...or you are or are not a comrade or you are or are not an acquaintance. They might not feel like they owe it to it to that relationship. They might not know how to go deep in that way.

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: A lot of people really built their entire lives off those first three that I talked about. They don't even know what comrade or inner circle intimacy looks like.

Elisa: Yeah.

Eryn: Right. You know, I have two things. One, where can somebody find that if they want to see...



Elisa: A deeper...Mm-hmm.

Eryn: ...that somewhere. Yeah, if they want to dig deeper into that?

K. B. Newton: You can go to www.heartconvos.com/social.

Eryn: Okay.

K. B. Newton: It's a great starting block, and then from there, you know, there's so many others ways that you can really start diving into this work. There are challenges. I have a membership. I have all kinds of things so.

Eryn: That's awesome. That's awesome. Okay then my other question is more selfish. It's ah...[Laughing] I've experienced enough life to have friends that go through seasons and trials and know the ones that, you know, we're...we're speaking the same language, and then there's friendship where I'm like *We are on co...completely different expectations and lack of boundaries and...* When you do come to a point where you know what depth is and you know the friendships that you cannot talk to for two months and it's like *Oh my gosh! We can reconnect*. And there's no like anger, animosity, or where have you been, you know, stuff like that or you don't get easily offended, I guess I don't know if that's a harsh way to say it, but it feels that way anyways, but I'm recognizing there are some friendships that I've had where they're easily offended by the lack of what they see of an investment that I have in the relationship cause we're in different seasons of life. You know, I'm 34; they might be 24, but they think that we're on the same space. How do you communicate that person may not be in the same depth that they hope that you will become in their life? So let's talk about friendship and boundaries.

K. B. Newton: Absolutely. Absolutely. And I think that that scenario is more common...

Eryn: I think it is too.

K. B. Newton: ...in so many people's spaces, and a part of that is because going back to those friendship tiers, people typically don't have all five. Mostly they're just kind of functioning in the acquaintance and the inner circle. So we're either close or we're not. And I think western way of thinking...we're very goal-oriented people, finish-line people, kind of like, you know, I want the result kind of people, so you're either really close to me and then there's everybody else. Right? We have the very binary view for a lot of things. Whereas, if you think about it from an eastern way of thinking, there's this understanding that



relationships aren't as black and white, things ebb and flow. You could absolutely be in a relationship that feels meaningful but is not deep. You can absolutely have a deep relationship that isn't meaningful.

People are like *What are you talking about?*

Eryn: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: *You didn't make sense.* And I do this thing where I teach these four quadrants. You think about it as like these axes right, that exist, and you do have relationships that are shallow and not meaningful...

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: ...but you have relationships that are meaningful and shallow, and then you have relationships that are deep and not meaningful, right?

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: And then you have relationships that are deep and meaningful.

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: That's good.

K. B. Newton: And so when you understand that, you know, people are like *Well what is that you mean?* Well again, the person who is standing behind you Starbucks is not deep or meaningful.

Elisa: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: Right? You know what I'm saying? Like it's like they're not meaningful. Ah it could have been ten other people and it wouldn't have mattered to you that day, right? It's the same thing your doctor or nurse, that is a meaningful relationship, but it's not deep. I mean, unless you're going through like some illness, some crazy illness. Like whether it's one nurse or another nurse that cleans your teeth that day, it...this is significant to me. It matters, but it's not deep.

Eryn: Mm-hmm.



K. B. Newton: Okay? But then you think about relationships that are deep and not meaningful—somebody you did a mission's trip with, and you guys got close really, really quickly, right? And like this is a deep relationship, but if I talk you this month or next month or in three months, it doesn't really matter, right? When we connect, we will pick up where we left off, and then you have those deep and meaningful relationships that do require intensity, they require intentionality, and they require that depth, right?

Eryn: Mm-hmm.

K. B. Newton: And so when you think about these four different relationship dynamics you have, you could be being perceived in one tier that another person doesn't have you in and that's their prerogative. But most people don't understand that that's your choice to deem someone deep and meaningful to you whether they think you're deep and meaningful to them or not. And I know that every day people are fighting for reciprocity in their...in their relationships, and I hate the idea of reciprocity, because nothing in life really works like that.

Elisa: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: It's not...

Elisa: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: *...I called you twice; you're going to call me twice. Or I'm in a high season so you're in a high season, so we're both engaging at the same level.* Like you could be having the best season of your life—your business is booming, things are going well for you, and then your best friend is grieving the loss of so many things, and it's like to be fighting for reciprocity says that this person has to be somewhere that they're not or have a capacity that they don't have.

Elisa: Yeah.

K. B. Newton: Right? And so when we understand these things about relationships and that relationships aren't pretty and perfect and cookie cutter and fit in this box that we want them to fit in, then there's a culture established in the relationship dynamic that gives you the freedom to be busy and to not have time and I didn't call and I haven't called in three weeks, and the other person can decide I can either let the



space go because she's busy and she can't call or I can continue to call and check in on her just so she knows that I'm thinking of her and that she matters to me. I can be filling her bucket every opportunity I have because I've got the capacity and the ability to do that in this season...

Eryn: Mmm.

K. B. Newton: ...without having to always expect that she does that for me. And when people realize that how you show up in a relationship has nothing to do with the other person. When they really get that, it changes everything about the relationship and it really does give everybody the freedom just to be wherever you are any given day, right? And so I'm just asking you to have a HEART convo with me about wherever it is that you are, so you should feel the freedom to say *I am overwhelmed and busy and I...I just don't have capacity to...to call and to check in right now, and I don't know when that's going to change, you know, but I want you to know that that's where I'm at.* And once you communicate where you are with the other person, they have an opportunity to decide.

Elisa: Mm-hmm. A choice.

K. B. Newton: *Oh that's...that's okay. Like I understand. If you're okay with me just checking in with you and whatever, that's cool.* If you're not, for whatever reason you're not, you can say, *Actually, I would rather you not, you know, call or whatever,* if that again is...is for some reason triggering for you and you don't feel like that will serve you, you can say that, but again if people would just hold their friendships with open hands and know that fruit will come from the seeds that you plant. So like if...the grace that they are extending you will come back to them in the season when they need it. You get what I mean? And so do what the Scriptures tell you to do and treat people like you would want to be treated. Right? And so...and I don't think we have that lens in our friendships. I think we always...we feel like our friends owe us something. We feel like they...they, you know, like we have this kind of like audition demand kind of attitude when it comes to friendships, and those perspectives of friendship don't really get you closer to the deep, meaningful connections that you deserve and that you want.

[Music]

Eryn: K. B.'s advice on how to have hard conversations and set those boundaries is exactly what we all need for our friendships to thrive.



Elisa: I love her advice, and the explanations she has for how we all see friendships differently. Setting boundaries is a healthy thing.

Eryn: I agree, Elisa! Well, before we close out today's episode of *God Hears Her*, we want to remind you that the show notes are available in the podcast description. There you can also find a link to learn more about K. B. Newton and check out her free resource to help make friendships less complicated. There are also links to connect with Elisa and me on social. You can find these links when you visit our website at godhearsher.org. That's godhearsher.org.

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

[Music]

Eryn: Today's episode was engineered by Anne Stevens and produced by Mary Jo Clark, Daniel Ryan Day, and Jade Gustafson. We also want to recognize Brian and Barry for all of their help and support. Thanks everyone.

[Music]

Elisa: God hears her is a production of Our Daily Bread Ministries.