



Simply Abundant VIP Podcast Group Transcript

Release Date 3/3/17

Title Why We Try to Be a "Good Friend" and Often Fail

Greetings! How are y'all doing? I'm doing just groovy. I really am. And I have such a fun topic [laughter]. I was going to call it Being a Shitty Friend. And the reason is I have found-- and usually, this is the case with a lot of my podcasts, is that it's not one conversation I have. It's several. Whether it's in my personal life, my professional life, life, life, life [laughter], whatever you want to call it, it always seems like there's a lot of conversations that sort of converge at once, or events happening at once. And it spurs me on to deciding to do a topic.

And that's pretty much what happened here, and that is to be talking about how many of us feel like we're shitty friends, right? Like for me, I used to feel like I had to work so hard - and this is from when I was a kid - I had to work so hard to build friendships because I felt there was some invisible flaw I had. Something horrible about me. Maybe I was disfigured, and I didn't know it, and still, that wouldn't make me a bad friend, or unworthy, would it? But to me, there was something that other people had I did not have. I did not possess it. I didn't believe I possessed it. And that was a painful place to live. And I know I've talked about this before, but I wanted to go off on a little bit of a different perspective today on this, but it really was something painful for me, and I know for other people. And that's why I'm doing this.

So I was talking to somebody, and she was saying how she feels like she loses friendships, and she doesn't know how, and she doesn't know why. And she wasn't saying this in a victim, or in an unaware manner. She was really saying it a matter-of-fact way, like, "I don't know what it is, but I tend to lose friendships. Like there's an expiration date that happens." And she doesn't know why. And she doesn't know how. And I totally understood what she was saying. It's like, "Oh, my God. Yeah. I get it." Like somehow, some way, maybe for me they were going to find out about me. They were going to find out that I was a fake, I was a phony, I wasn't really who I said I was.

And when I was younger, that could be because I was nice to everybody, right? I was nice. I could not handle making an enemy. And yet, I still made enemies even without trying because that's just how human beings are. We can't control how other people perceive us, or what their beliefs are, or their unexpressed anger, or their unexpressed emotions, until maybe they explode one day. I don't know. Or they just quietly back out of your life, or they stop taking your calls. And you hear stuff like this all the time, where someone's been best friends with someone, and then they just stop talking to them. And they don't know why, right? Or you're the person who stops talking to someone because maybe you can't express yourself.

But the point is I know, in the past, my whole thing was I would rescue people. I would fix people. I would always be like Dear Abby. And if I'm like Dear Abby, how can you get rid of Dear Abby? And the person I was talking to was saying she felt like a shitty friend. She just expects, because she's honest, for people to eventually be like, "I don't want to deal with this." And I know that feeling, because I went from fixing to being honest [laughter]. And when you go from fixing to being honest-- even though I was always pretty honest, I wasn't really a liar. I just didn't always say what I felt, or what I thought, if I thought it was a threat to the other person, or a threat to the relationship. And I

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started to become more honest about my feelings, and standing for myself, there were friendships that could not withstand the heat of that.

And there were mistakes I made too. I said things out of turn. I said things I probably shouldn't have. But none of it ever came from a bad place. But yet, you can't control how other people perceive you when you speak. You can say all sorts of things, but they're going to hear you how they hear you. And therefore, even if you're trying to be someone's best friend, you can be a shitty friend, and you don't even know. And that's what I was talking about with this other person.

And it's kind of interesting because most people who are friends usually have their heart in the right place. Not always. There are people that have selfish motivations that are-- and when I say selfish, meaning completely self-absorbed, maybe even narcissistic, but where it's only about them and their happiness, right? And there's people running around the world like that for sure. But we're really not talking about them today.

For me in my life, I realize through talking to other friends of mine that perhaps they share some of what I have, and some don't share some of what I have. In other words, we're all different, right? And I talk to people who I'm coaching, and I find people struggle with this, right? How do I act? Who am I? I want to keep my friends. I don't want to be alone. I want to feel like I can go have fun with my friends. And we can, but you have to be real if you want to sustain a relationship.

If you're not being real, and nobody else is being real, and then you become real, you're probably not going to keep those people around that aren't being real. One of the basics - and it took me a long time to get this, and I've even talked about it with friends of mine - is there is this feeling of-- I know from how I grew up, I didn't have a right to my feelings. I've talked about that before.

And so when you have certain friendships, and you don't talk about, let's say something someone does, and it hurts your feelings, right, it's not that you want to punish them, or beat them up or make them horrible, like, "Oh, my God. You're a bad person." You can say it with a lot of love, like, "Hey, you know what? When you invite me over and you ignore me, it makes me think that my time isn't really valued here. And therefore, if you prefer to do that, then I just won't come," right? It's not like you're trying to punish someone, but you're saying, "Look. If this is how you're going to be, then I have to make a choice. I have to make a choice whether I want to put myself through that or I don't want to put myself through that. I get to choose." And you should choose because if you don't, then you're going to sit there, and grit your teeth, and be angry at your friend, or whatever they happen to be, right, not expressing yourself, waiting for them to get a clue.

They're never going to get a clue because people will think their behavior is acceptable toward you if you don't say anything. If you don't speak, people don't know. And again, it's not to blame them or make them a bad guy but a lot of times, people have trouble with those kind of conversations, or saying, "Hey, you know what? When you said this, it bothered me." People have trouble with that. People will stop talking for years over stuff like this. It's simple in how I'm saying it, but if you look back on a lot of your friendships, and you could see where the breaking point was, or where it just couldn't go any further, a lot of the time it had to do with the fact that someone's behavior, or both people, their behavior was not working in a relationship.

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If you have a problem with someone, and you don't say something, how are they going to know it's a problem? What are they supposed to do? Maybe you need people to crawl back to you for some reason. "Okay. I know you're mad at me because you stopped talking--" this totally reminds of my mum, [laughter] by the way. "You stopped talking to me, and I must have done something, and I need to know what it is, because--" this is like my childhood. And I swear to you, I'm [laughter] sitting here thinking about that and thinking about stories I've heard from other people or I've read. And it's just funny because there's some kind of weird expectation, like, "Oh, I'm just going to go crawling back for something I don't even know what I did. Or maybe I know what I did, but this other person isn't taking responsibility for what they did." Because it always takes two to tango.

And so friendships can get really fucked up when we don't have transparent communication between us. A lot of times we're trying to protect each other. "Oh, I don't want to say something to him or her because then it's going to mean this or then it's going to mean that." But it only gives more meaning to things when they're unspoken because then that leads you to someone's behavior is different towards you. You're wondering why. And if you ask them and they say nothing, what are you going to do? You're going to go, "Okay, I'm enjoying this or I'm not enjoying this." And I can say to somebody, "Hey, I'm not feeling a connection here. I'm getting that you're not really wanting to connect, and that's okay I just have to take care of myself, and I'm going to go ahead and I'm going to do that." Whichever way you want to do that, right? That's your choice. But the thing is, when you feel a sense of something being wrong with you like I did, it can be really, really hard to step into, "Okay, I'm going to say something." Or, "Okay, maybe this friendship doesn't work for me." Because you may be collecting people like collectibles [laughter] that you put on a shelf or books you put on a shelf, right? And I would just feel grateful that people liked me.

Like I would have a good day if I knew all of my friendships and all my relationships were in order. That was the only way I would know that everything was okay for me. If not, I wasn't functioning well. I would always feel anxious or I'd feel off. And it wasn't until I started to really, really open myself up to myself, and feel my feelings, and start to look at different friendships in a different way, and get to the, what am I doing, how am I showing up.

And here's the thing. It wasn't step by step. I mean, there were things that happened with a variety of people that caused me to have to look, and recognize, "Wow. If I've really been paying attention over a period of time, I would have noticed that things were going downhill, and they weren't going to go back uphill." And we do that a lot. We do that in relationships, period. Right? We go into denial, or we ignore, or we think, "Oh, maybe that's not really happening." But it is. So my point in even sharing this is, many of us might suffer from "I'm a shitty friend" syndrome [laughter]. It may just be that, and that's okay. And I'm saying this totally in a joking manner because you may be in friendships where you have rules you can't live up to. Or you may have a friendship where you've grown in different ways. And that's okay. That doesn't make you a bad person, and it doesn't make the friendship horrible. It just may mean that it's time for a break, or it's over. Right?

You're just moving in different directions. Doesn't mean that that could be forever. It could, but who know? But you want to make sure it's okay with you. And that's one of the things that's hardest to go through, when you feel like you're a victim, and things happen to you, and you don't feel like you're in control of it. And let's say one of your friends disappears off the face of the earth. And you don't even know what you did, but you're going to victimize yourself, because you're going to kick your own ass, you're going to tell yourself all sorts of stories, or you're going to make them the bad guy. Right?

It just is a horrible mess when we don't have clear communication. And so when you feel like you have all the responsibility for what transpired, and your friendship falls on you because the other person is the victim, what're

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you to do? Right? What're you to do there? The other person's a victim, and you're the asshole [laughter]. It's not true. It never is, because there's things that happen, again, takes two to tango. It's never just one.

But it's interesting when someone wants to build a case against you, or you want to build the case against someone. You go and find evidence, or what looks like evidence. So then you can point the finger, and say, "They're bad," or, "They're wrong," or, "They're not my friend," or whatever it is you need to tell yourself. Okay? Or you say to yourself, "I deserve better," or, "I'm not that way." Well, I'm going to say you are, because you're friends with them. So on some level, you've been relating to them.

Now, if you're both walking away from the friendship, then you may not be relating on any level anymore. But in the past, you were. And so when you have to be the perpetrator, which I have been that, oh, I don't know, quite a few times-- wasn't trying to. Was trying to be the opposite. Was trying not to be a perpetrator. Was trying to be a perfect friend, a good friend. And then to find myself as this asshole was pretty shocking. I mean, I look over my adult life, and at different times that that happened, and that I think is the hardest.

Like when I talk to clients, and they say the hardest thing is to be misunderstood, and I go right there. I think, "You know? All those times I was misunderstood. All those times people blamed me, and they didn't take responsibility themselves." The good news is that I can't have those kind of relationships in my life anymore, and I don't. And to the best of my ability, I try to be very clear with my friends how I feel what I want, what responsibility I'm willing to take on, and vice versa. And the hope is that we're all doing our part. And then if we come to the point of, "Hey, you hurt my feelings," or, "Hey, what you said bothered me," or, "Hey, that's not cool," that we're going to do that. And I try to do-- like I said, I try to do things on a regular basis, so that it doesn't end up being some kind of weird explosion [laughter], weird drama.

But we all struggle with this stuff. Like I said, I was having this conversation, and it was like, ding, ding, ding, I have heard this so many times before from so many people, and I really wanted to address it. So you want to be forgiving to yourself, and kind, and compassionate, with yourself. Come from love. You are human. You are going to fuck up.

Like right now, I look at my relationships as unconditional relationships. I am unconditional in them. I don't have a bunch of rules. I'm unconditionally always kind, compassionate, and loving, even when I feel crappy, or I'm cranky. And I'll tell somebody, "I'm really cranky. It's not you. It's me [laughter]." Because it is, and I want to take responsibility for that. I don't want to put that on someone else. And I'll say if I-- like I have a friend who'll go, "Do you have time to talk?" And I'll be like, "You know what? I'd love to talk to you, but I really just want to not talk to anybody tonight," because I'm tired, or I'm cranky, or I'm not going to be a good listener, or what have you.

I never used to take care of myself like that. I would always drop everything. You need me? Okay. I mean, and this was when people needed me. It wasn't, "Oh, you want to go do this?" Like very well [go?], "No, I don't really feel like doing that that was different. But if somebody needed me, with air-quotes, by the way, "Oh, I was running out the door. What can I do for you? Let me do that," regardless of how I was feeling. Regardless that they really even needed to be rescued, I was doing that. And I will tell you it made me a very angry person, because I wasn't taking care of me. I was busy cleaning up everything for everybody, because I felt that's how you got love. I felt that's how people would be my friend, and it's not. I don't have those kind of relationships anymore. Those were really painful.

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And if you can even see yourself in any of that, it's that you're not being very kind to you. And I'm looking at the fact that when you feel like you're a victim, and you feel someone has done you wrong, and you're saying your friend is horrible-- doesn't even have to be your close friend. It could be an acquaintance. It remind me of high school when I'm saying this. It's like I just got an image of someone in high school, who [laughter] a lot of people blamed for everything she did. And everybody was like, "Oh, my god. She's so bad. She's so horrible." But that's not really true.

But when you're in high school, you don't know any better, right? So we had to make somebody a bad guy. We had to be the good guy. And you can apologize when you're the bad guy, and grovel, but sometimes people don't even want that from you. Right? So what does that say about your relationship? Somebody wants to feel good at your expense, and it's better to make themselves the victim, and you the jackass. So that is not a friendship that really has any place to go. It has nowhere to go. That's just a painful situation, but it's good to look inside, and see why you were there in the first place. What did you want to get? Because unless somebody's killed somebody, like your friend's killed somebody, or slept with somebody like your boyfriend, or your girlfriend, or what have you, I'm talking about things like that, you don't have really a leg to stand on about anything. You don't. And a lot of times, you need to own your shit. And if you don't own your shit, I guarantee at some point, your relationship will blow up with other people, because other people get tired of carrying your load. Other people aren't here to carry your load. Not in that way. You have to be personally responsible for your own emotions, your own words, and everything you do. And when you fuck up, you fuck up. You're a human being.

So why can't we have relationships with other people, friendships that reflect that. Hey, you're a human. I'm a human. Hey, what a good idea. Let's be friends. And that means I am going to be compassionate towards you, and vice versa. But I'm also going to be honest. And I'm going to say things. And I love that because I have friends that're pretty direct with me. And I'm pretty direct with them. But not in a jerky way, because we're all doing it out of love, right? But man, I'd rather have somebody do that than walk on eggshells around me, or be afraid to say something to me, because that's no fun. And that doesn't make anybody feel good. Not the person who's walking on eggshells, and surely not me. And I'm sure you can relate to that.

We want to have people that're in the mud with us, right? They're willing to play in the mud, and have a good time, and build mud castles, and all of that. That is the best, right? Sitting there and having fun with your friends, that is awesome stuff. I love that. But you have to have a solid foundation to do it. And I think that's why most of us feel like we can be a shitty friend. I know I can. And sometimes I still feel like, "Oh, my god. Tracy, you're being a shitty friend, because you're not wanting to talk, or you're not wanting to go do that." Sometimes I [come?] up, and that's old stuff for me. That's from childhood and that'll slap me in the head. Because the thing is if you don't take care of yourself, and you are always, always, always at other people's disposal, you're not a happy person. I guarantee you're not. You're not taking care of yourself.

And you can see a pattern happening over, and over, and over again. And when you see that, you need to take heed to what is it you're doing, because you're doing something if you have a repetitive pattern. It isn't just other people. It's how you set it up, right? Maybe I set myself up to be found out. Hey, I'm not really this rescuer [laughter]. Hey, I'm just a regular human. Whoo. And that's kind of exciting, I think, personally, to just be a human being, and to have other people love you as a human being, and you love other people as a human being.

I don't hold any ill will towards anybody at this point. And I say that, I may get off this recording, and think about something, and go, "Oh, my god. I'm still pissed off." But I really don't feel like I'm pissed off. I feel like I've come to a point of peace with a lot of things that have happened in my lifetime. And I'm talking all up and down in my lifetime.

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Because the thing is that to be authentic, and to be truly who you are, is a special thing in this world. That's a thing to be treasured, and that's a thing to be shared. And we should all be sharing our authentic gifts. Everything about us.

And people should be able to say something to us. Not putting us down, but saying, "Hey, you know what? When you did this, it's how it made me feel. And I'm saying it made me feel a certain way, because it triggered me. You didn't make me feel that way. This action triggered me to make me feel that way." Or, "That word you said, it triggered me. Did you know that? You probably didn't know that, and I'm sharing that with you."

And it's not that you're blaming, but you're sharing something. Because it's not necessary that people, again, make a feel that way even though we say that word a lot. But it's the trigger. It's something they do, and they do it unconsciously. See, this is the reason you have to be aware. Most people do things unconsciously. They're not purposely trying to hurt you. There's just something going on in them.

But the more you communicate with your friends, and you say, like I'm saying, "When you did this, it was a trigger. It made me feel a certain way." Well, the friend might go, "Well, tell me about that so I can understand better." And so you tell them. But you don't tell them from the point of trying to change them or to get them to be a different person. You tell them because you're sharing something that has meaning to you, and maybe even as you're explaining it you're realizing, "Wow, they triggered me and they didn't even know it and it has nothing to do with the present moment. It's so in the past." And you may be able to get past it just by your own emotional recognition of it right? Or your friend might go, "You know what? When I do that, I can see how that would affect you. Wow. Okay. I might be more mindful next time. Or I might not because I'm a human being [laughter] and I'm not perfect." Right?

But the thing is, it's that you don't want anybody walking on eggshells, but you definitely want to have communication with people. And this is in all relationships. It's not to make people responsible for our emotions, but it's to let them know what's going on with our emotions. It's to let them know, "Hey, you know what? When you don't talk to me and I'm calling you and you don't answer, it makes me feel as though something's going on. Is there anything going on?" "No." "Okay, well, I am going to have to go with that then, and I'm just going to go about living my life like I always do. And I won't ask you again unless there's something you want to share with me." That's what you want to look at, right? You want to be able to do that or you notice someone's behavior is different.

"Hey, what's going on?" "Well, you know what, I was kind of pissed off that you did this." And you're like, "Whoa, what did I do?" And you realize that the person's anger is perhaps because they did something that was over-the-top. They overcompensated, they were people-pleasing, and they were trying to get you to do something, right? Or vice versa. You were doing it. What do you do with that? Well, you practice kindness and compassion. You get in your heart, and you go, "Wow, I'm sorry that you're angry, but this isn't my part. This over here is my part, but this isn't my part." You don't have to claim what isn't yours. You don't have to take responsibility for what you didn't do. Because if you do, you're going to be angry. Or vice versa. See how that works?

Anger comes when we do not express ourselves fully, first of all, and we run right over our own boundaries. Or we don't even act like we have boundaries. Or we just expect people to act in a certain way, and then they don't, and we can't deal with that. And then we're angry. But we're not angry for the right reasons. We're angry because we're expecting everything around us to show up a certain way and it doesn't. So the thing is, is that with friendships, you want to have people in your life where you can be really honest with them and vice versa.

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I feel like if my friends are pissed at me, they can tell me. I would hope so. And that I'm not going to give them the silent treatment, or ignore them, or talk about it to other people if they're mad at me. Or if something happens, I'm not going to go, "Oh, well, I'm not going to talk to you. I'm going to ignore you, or I'm going to go and bitch to my other friends about what a jerk you are." I don't do that. I'm not in high school. But a lot of people still do. I hear 80-year-old women doing this stuff, right? Why? Why because it's how you feel about yourself because of your own insecurities. So you want to be able to bring your insecurities to your friendships. In other words, you want to claim them, right? You want to be responsible for them. The more responsible you are for those things, the smoother your relationship is going to go because you're going to realize if somebody triggers you, "Hey, you triggered me, but I know it's because of my insecurity. I know it's because I feel this or that." And your friend can give you compassion. Instead of them getting defensive, it's, "You know what? When you triggered me, and I know it's this insecurity. It's this feeling of I'm not good enough. And it's not about you. But this is what happens, and I'm really trying to work on this whole I'm not good enough thing."

And your friend can be right there with you. Even though they had a part in it inadvertently, everybody can work on these things together. And that's what makes a relationship grow, is to get through the hard parts and come out stronger, right? Or as one friend said to me look at what happened over here. Look at what happened with this whole situation that was a really negative situation. She's like, "You and I got closer. You and I became better friends." Even though the situation that happened really had nothing to do with her, and I, and our friendship, it was because of that. And I thought, you know what, it was something that was a ding, ding, ding, ding moment [laughter], where you go, "Wow. That's so true. That's so cool. Good always comes from crisis."

And so you can't save all your friendships, or go back and repair them all, but in your mind, you can. In your heart, you can. If you look back on everything, and you come from compassion, and you see it more clearly, you see your part, you see others' parts, you can feel better. See, I'm all about, let's just all feel better. Let's all get vulnerable. Let's all take emotional risks. We're going to feel a hell of a lot better. Let's get out of judgment. Judgment doesn't do anything. Judgment keeps you locked up in a prison you want to do that. You want to get into vulnerability. You want to feel your insecurities. You want to own them. Because then you're not putting them on other people to fix, or you're not putting them on other people, period. You're owning them. You find your voice. You say the truth.

Most of us feel the need to be liked, and to have somebody dislike us will make us go into strategy. It won't keep us in our heart, but that's where you want to stay and come from a loving place. If you know somebody's upset with you and you say, "I'm sorry," or you say, "Hey, want to talk about it?" And if they choose to or not, it's up to them. But the thing is, you can't get closer to people unless you plan on being vulnerable. And this isn't just in intimate relationships, right.

This is all across the board. I'm talking about your love relationship. I'm talking about your friendships. And it's so funny. I don't watch any of these reality shows, but when my one daughter comes to visit, because she happens to tape all of her favorite housewives shows and whatever reality crap is on there, she-- yeah, I'm not a big fan of reality TV, in case you can't tell, but that's just me. Everybody's entitled to what they like. I don't find it escapism because I can't stand listening to the yelling and screaming that always seems to happen. That rattles my nerves [laughter]. And she watches it, and I just think, the bits and pieces I've seen, those are people I wouldn't want in my life because they don't treat each other with respect and they don't treat themselves with respect. There's no love or compassion, right? There's a lot of competition. There's a lot of gossiping. There's a lot of undermining. There's a lot of pain. That's not fun, and nobody's being honest. Or they think being honest is telling somebody how horrible they are, right oh, I'm going to be honest and tell everybody off. That's not honest. That's being a victim.

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When you tell other people off, you're being a victim. You are. Because you have given your power to whoever it is that you feel has wronged you instead of looking at the whole picture, and your part, and how you got where you are. They don't do that on the housewife shows [laughter]. So the thing is not reality to me. Even though they're called reality shows, I mean, I know they're edited to make the drama look bigger. But my goodness, I don't know how you could ever feel comfortable in a relationship with someone that you know they're going to talk about you on TV behind your back, right? So it's not really behind your back because you'll see it sooner or later. And it's just so funny. It's like those aren't real friendships. That's not a friendship. So remember that.

Become as honest as you can be, and loving, and compassionate, and kind. And then act from there. And when you're bothered, speak up. Be honest. Take your part. Don't dump it all on someone else. And if you're a shitty friend, you're like the rest of us [laughter], where we have our good moments and our bad moments. We have our up moments and our down moments, right? That's what it is. It's okay. It is okay. You are not perfect. And to have people around you who know that and love you anyway, lucky you, lucky me, lucky us.

So anyways, my folks, I hope you have enjoyed this podcast today. I am grateful as always that you tune in. And I look forward to chatting with you again. Have a good one. Bye-bye.

ACTION ITEM

This week, look at your friendships to identify a time when you tried to rescue them or fix something for external reasons (meaning you were doing it to be liked or “good” rather than helping authentically from your heart). Maybe you picked them up from the airport, but really didn't want to or had to sacrifice something important to do it (i.e. time with your family). How did you feel afterward? Was your heart full or did you feel resentful? Maybe you felt satisfied that you checked a box and could collect on a favor from them in the future. Those feelings tell you a lot about your motivation, and whether it's internal or external. The next time you find yourself doing something for external validation... stop. Sit with your feelings and be honest with that friend. That doesn't mean telling them they're doing something wrong; the honesty is in speaking your truth and following that up with action. Once you see the friend doesn't desert you (and if they do, they aren't a good friend to begin with!), it'll be easier to do next time and you'll start breaking the pattern.



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