

241 10 Things You Can Stop Doing the Hard Way

[00:00:00] Welcome to the Encouragement for Real Life podcast. I'm Julie Lefebure, your host. Life is remarkable, sometimes raw and always real. And some days we could use a little extra encouragement for our real lives. Here you'll find that. Along with personal life impacting stories, helpful life hacks, timely inspiration, biblical insight, and a fresh perspective.

The Encouragement for Real Life Podcast equips you to be a light in this world and to shine bright wherever God has you. I'm glad you're here today.

Julie Lefebure: Welcome back to the Encouragement for Real Life podcast. I'm Julie, and I am so glad you're here today.

Alright. I need to ask you something right out of the gate, have you ever had one of those moments where you stopped and you realized, I am making [00:01:00] this so much harder than it needs to be?

Well, I have not because you or I are trying to be dramatic or because we want life to feel heavy. I mean, because who wants that? No one wants that. But maybe it's because you've been carrying so much for so long and that heavy has just started to feel normal. Can you relate?

I think that's where a lot of women are right now. We're doing our best. We're showing up. We keep doing everything. We try to keep things moving. We're we're taking care of people. We're taking care of our responsibilities. We're handling everything on our plate and in our schedules. And from the outside, you and I look fine. But on the inside, we're tired.

Now I'm not talking just the tired, like I need a nap [00:02:00] tired. But tired like I can't remember the last time I felt right. Or the last time I felt light. Tired like I don't even know why I'm overwhelmed, I just am. Can you relate? Or tired like I'm doing all the things and somehow I still feel behind.

Friend, if that's you, I want you to know right away, right now that you are far from alone. You are not failing, you are not a failure. You may just be doing life the hard way.

This month, we're doing something fun and practical here on the podcast. It's a top 10 series. Four episodes that are meant to feel lighthearted, helpful, and honestly, like a relief.

Last week we kicked it off with 10 things that are not actually [00:03:00] emergencies. And we talked about how so much of what we treat like a crisis is really just pressure. And today we're building on this. Because once we realize that everything isn't an emergency, the next step is just learning how to stop carrying everything like it is.

So today's episode is called 10 Things You Can Stop Doing the Hard Way. And just so you know, this is not one of those episodes that's going to make you feel like you need to try harder or that you need to do more, or that you need to find some secret thing to help you get farther ahead. No, this episode is the opposite of all of that.

This is the episode that gives you permission to just breathe. To simplify your life. To stop over functioning and overperforming and [00:04:00] overthinking. To stop proving. And to stop carrying what God never asked you to carry in the first place. Because friend life may still be hard sometimes. You know, we're not guaranteed an easy life, but it doesn't have to be heavy all the time, and it doesn't have to feel oppressive all the time.

So if you're driving or folding laundry or walking or cleaning or sitting in your car for just a minute of quiet wherever you are right now, I invite you to take a deep breath. Yeah, just a deep breath, and let's talk about 10 things that you and I can stop doing the hard way. You ready? Well, let's get into this episode.

[00:05:00]

Julie Lefebure: I like to start out my podcast episodes with, with some story, some personal story that you might relate to. But I don't have one big dramatic story for today's episode. But I do have a bunch of little moments. Little moments where I realized I was rushing for no apparent reason at all. I was just rushing because that was my normal pace. Or overthinking for no reason. Or carrying too much for no reason. Or trying to keep everyone happy. Or trying to stay ahead. Or trying to do everything "right". Or trying to hold it all together.

And it's not because I, I want life to feel heavy because yeah, we don't, right? We want life to feel light and [00:06:00] unburdened. But it's because when we've been carrying a lot for a long time, we stop noticing the weight and the hard just starts to feel normal. It does. And I do believe a lot of women are

living this way right now, and maybe you're one of them. You're doing the best you can. You're showing up, you're being faithful, you love God, you're being responsible. But somewhere along the way, life just started to feel heavier than, than it did before and that it needs to feel.

And as I was noticing all of these little moments, I realized something important - that most of the time we don't do life hard because we want to. We do it because we've learned to, we've been conditioned to, we've [00:07:00] adapted to. Maybe some of us were raised, maybe you were raised, in a way that to believe that, that being responsible means carrying everything yourself. Maybe some of us have learned that asking for help is weakness. Some women have learned that rest is something that you earn. Some of us have learned that being a good woman means being available, being needed, and being everything to everyone.

And if you've lived in survival mode for a very long time. Even just, I don't even know, it could even be a short time. But once we start living in, survival mode, hard starts to feel like normal. It's just the way life is. It's what we're expected to experience. Just life like this.

So if you're listening [00:08:00] today and you're thinking, yeah, this is me. I want you to hear this right away. This is not a character flaw. It is not you failing. It is not you falling behind. This is simply a pattern, and patterns can change. We can change patterns.

And I also think it's, it's really helpful to name something. There's a difference between hard and heavy. Some things are hard because life is real. But some things feel heavy because we're carrying them the wrong way. I'm gonna say that again. Some things are hard because life is real, but some things feel heavy because we're carrying them the wrong way.

And the, the big truth is, is that God never asked us to carry everything alone. [00:09:00] That's not our responsibility. He never asked us to be the ones to handle everything. He never asked us to prove our worth through exhaustion. And He certainly never asked us to, to live our lives with our shoulders up around our ears because we're so stressed and we're so anxious and we're, we're just filled with, with the, the weight of the world that just all of a sudden our shoulders starts to rise to our ears. That's not, that's not what God is asking us to live like. He hasn't invited us to do those things.

So today we're going to name the top 10 things we can stop doing the hard way. And I wanna invite you right now to listen with gentleness and grace. Not with

shame. Not with guilt. Just with awareness. Because awareness is where freedom starts. It's [00:10:00] where it begins. So let's get into this. This , top 10 things you could stop doing the hard way.

The first one is trying to do everything alone. Why do we do this? Well, I think it can be kind of a secret pride thing where we kind of feel prideful when we try to do everything on our own. Or it's a fear thing. 'cause if we don't do everything on our own, then everything's gonna collapse. Or it could be a control thing. That yeah, I'm, I'm responsible enough. I can handle this. I'm in control.

But you know what it costs, it costs burnout and resentment and exhaustion. The better way instead is to ask for help. Ask God for help. Ask someone else for help. To delegate and to have someone else come along and share the load. It's okay to ask for help. [00:11:00] We do not get a trophy for doing life alone. And doing life alone is very lonely and it's very, empty. So yeah, invite someone else to come along and help share the load.

The second is overexplaining yourself. Now, this is something that is, um, something that I, I think, that some of us do and we don't realize. And why do we do it? Because we don't wanna be misunderstood. There's a fear of being misunderstood when we overexplain what, um, what we're feeling or what we're doing or, or why we handled something a certain way. And we want approval. It can also be a pride thing. But the cost is huge. The cost is emotional exhaustion. If we constantly have to overexplain. We get exhausted. But the better way is just to say what's [00:12:00] true. Just to say what's true and release the need to convince someone else that it is. It's so freeing. We don't have to keep talking to find and live in God's peace. Just stating the truth and moving on.

The third one is carrying guilt over everything. And friend, I have been there. Guilt is something that I think the enemy uses to just tear us down and keep us inefficient and ineffective. Why do we do this? Well, it's maybe unrealistic expectations on ourselves and others. We have mom guilt. We have Christian guilt. Mom guilt that we're not doing enough or that we're raising our kids the wrong way. Christian guilt could be that we aren't doing enough for God. That we aren't, aren't as faithful as we should be. [00:13:00] That we're not doing this Christian life the right way. And it can be comparison. Once we start comparing ourselves to others, guilt can come in the picture. And this cost is huge. It's constant heaviness. It's always just heavy and feeling that you just are never gonna be able to measure up.

But there is a better way to replace guilt with conviction and grace. I have a t-shirt that says, um, grace instead of guilt. That's it. It just says grace instead of guilt. Living with that grace instead of the guilt. You know, conviction leads to growth. Conviction is good. If we find like, oh yeah, you know, I thank you, God for pointing this out to me, that I'm doing whatever it might be. That's conviction. But guilt, it leads to shame. And God never wants us to be [00:14:00] shamed. He wants us to be free from guilt and shame. So that one's a big one.

All right, let's move on to the next one. Number four, trying to be everything to everyone. This is a hard one for many. Why do we do this? Well, it's people pleasing. We just wanna be, we wanna be helpful, but yet we go overboard. Because then we start to, instead of being helpful in a God-honoring way, we want to, uh, be helpful in a people pleasing way. And that's not good. The cost is losing ourselves. When we just are focusing on others all the time, oh my gosh, I wanna make sure she's happy, he's happy. Is everything okay with him? Is everything okay with her? Um, it, it can just, it can just wear at you. And all of a sudden we're realizing, wait a minute here. Why am I [00:15:00] feeling so lost?

A better way is to choose your assignment. Not everybody's expectations is on your shoulders. And I think all of these, before I even get any farther, all of these, we take these to God and say, Lord, help me with these because I can't do this. Help me with my assignment for today so I don't have to be pleasing people. I can please You instead. Being needed is not the same as being called. Following God's calling is always the most important. And sometimes that feeling of gosh, I feel needed, feels pretty good. But being called is much more important.

Number five is fighting your emotions instead of listening to them. Now we have been taught, I have been taught that I should not follow my emotions. But to follow what's true instead. [00:16:00] But sometimes our emotions, we fight them and sometimes they're just trying to tell us something. Why we do this, that we, we think that feelings are weakness and sometimes we just hide them. We bury them. We've been, we've talked about that last month in, um, in our series about the stuff we keep inside. The cost is emotional shutdown and stress.

But you know what? There's a better way. A better way is to name what you feel, okay, i'm feeling this. Bring it to God and then choose truth. There might be a reason that you're feeling the way that you're feeling, and God might reveal it to you, what that reason is, when you take it to Him. Bring it to Him, and then choose truth. What is the truth? Our feelings are not the boss. But they can be a

messenger. They can be trying to tell us something. So [00:17:00] take it to God and He will show you. He's good at that.

Number six is making simple life decisions like they're life or death. Now, um sometimes we get decision fatigue. Sometimes we're just tired of making one more decision. I get it. But why do we do this? We, we fear that we're gonna mess up. We're gonna make the wrong decision, which is also a part of perfectionism. So when we start to treat our decisions like they're life or death, that's a lot of weight. And the cost is we can get caught in this analysis paralysis where we just analyze everything. We, we do the pros list. We do the con list. We do the what if this happens? What if this happens? We look at the worst case scenarios. We look at the best case scenarios. And oh my goodness, that is exhausting.

The better way is to [00:18:00] decide. Pray about it, decide, adjust if needed, and move forward. The key is praying about it first. Pray about it, decide, adjust if needed, and then move forward. You know, most decisions aren't permanent, but they do help us go in the right direction. And if we find we're going in the wrong direction, we can make an adjustment and go in that direction. But God will guide us when, when we ask Him, when we ask for His help.

Number seven is keeping your schedule packed. And oh my goodness, for , so many years of my life, my schedule was so packed. Why do we do this? Well, I think I was addicted to productivity and that adrenaline rush that I got with, oh, the next thing, the next thing on my calendar. Or some of us have a fear of slowing down. What's gonna happen if I slow down? I like my schedule to be full. I [00:19:00] like to feel needed. I like to feel productive. But the cost is exhaustion. And not only just exhausted like at the end of the day, but this constant exhaustion of living exhausted. And that's no way to live.

A better way is to add space to breathe in your schedule. Gosh, what if you took a half a day off? What if you took a Saturday morning off just to breathe and do nothing? Maybe to spend time with God in a special way. Maybe just to do something for yourself. But adding space to breathe is spiritual. It's spiritual wisdom, and it's, and it's biblical. And we're gonna talk about that shortly. But, um, you know, what, if you just added some white space into your schedule each week. That might feel like a huge relief and will alleviate [00:20:00] some of that exhaustion.

Number eight is thinking that rest has to be earned. Now, uh, why do we do this one? Because if we're caught in this performance kind of mindset, it's really hard to break out of. Rest needs to be earned. It's not something that we, we, we

get to do. We think in that mindset and that's, that's not right. God never said that we are to earn rest, but He gave us a Sabbath. His word talks about the Sabbath one day a week where we just stop and we rest. We spend time with Him.

Are we doing that? Are we allowing this time of rest to be refreshed and renewed? If we don't, the cost is always striving, never resting, never feeling refreshed, and we are exhausted again.[00:21:00]

A better way is believing that rest is part of obedience. That I'm gonna rest because God is asking me to. It's not a reward. Rest is not what we do after life. Rest is a part of life. I pray that you will find some spaces to rest this week. And I'm talking to myself too.

Number nine is trying to fix yourself before coming to God. Now, why do we do this? Well, we might have things in our, in our skeletons in our closet, you might say that cause us to feel shame or to fear. I wanna clean myself up before I come to God. I should be better by now. I should be stronger by now. God wants me to be more, more like Jesus by now. The cost of this though is distance from Jesus and He doesn't want that. And our souls don't either.

But a better [00:22:00] way is to come as you are. To come to Him. Let Him transform you from the inside out. Jesus doesn't ask us to clean up before coming to Him. We come to Jesus to be made new. We are made new when we come to Him. We don't need to be new before we come to Him. But He makes us new in His presence and in His transforming power in our lives. So you don't need to come clean up before you come to Jesus. Just come as you are.

And the 10th is speaking to yourself like an enemy. Now, many women do this. Many of us think that we are just, we are the worst of the worst. We may not consciously think that, but our words to ourselves indicate that. And why do we do this? [00:23:00] Well, we have this negative inner critic within us. Or old patterns that we just don't, we can't get away from. Or that we just, we don't believe that we are who God says we are. The cost is discouragement and insecurity. It's really a heavy weight that we don't need to carry.

A better way is to speak life, to speak truth, to speak grace. To really look at what God says about you in scripture. That you are His beloved daughter. That you are His chosen one. That He created you magnificently and wonderfully, marvelously and He came to give you an abundant life. To save you, to redeem you, to rescue you. He loves you so incredibly much. The [00:24:00] thing is,

we need to remember, if we wouldn't say it to a friend, why would we speak it to our own souls?

So there are the 10 things you can stop doing the hard way. So friend, which one stands out to you the most? Well, for me right now is that I think I'm struggling with number four the most, and that's trying to be everything to everyone. And I think I've probably battled this probably most of my life. I am a natural people pleaser. But you know what, I'm gonna say that differently. In the past I was a natural people pleaser. But, uh, . I've changed my ways and I'm still working at that. I'm still a work in progress.

You know, you and I don't need to feel the shame with whatever one [00:25:00] is getting our attention. Whichever one stands out to us, whichever one we believe. Oh, I struggle with this one the most. This is about finding freedom from the heaviness and the burden that we've been living under. Freedom always begins with awareness.

So this, this, number four, I think I've been trying to be everything to everyone because I love, I love people so much. I want God's best for them, and sometimes I can take that to an extreme and I can uh, be the one to, to feel like I'm responsible for areas of their life where really I'm not responsible for. I'm not responsible to make anyone happy or , for someone to feel joy or for anyone else to, to experience a certain emotion. That's not my responsibility. And so I continue to be a work in progress in this area. [00:26:00] So be encouraged. Whatever one feels heavy to you right now, we can give it over to God. We can ask Him to handle it and help us to choose to live lighter.

So I invite us to do a practical reset tool this week. It's what, I guess I could call the, the easier way question. There's actually four of 'em. Some questions that, that we can ask ourselves. There's four.

Is what am I making harder than it needs to be?

What would this look like with help?

What would this look like with grace?

What would this look like if I didn't need to prove anything?

Friend, you're allowed to choose the easier way when the easier way is the wise way. And sometimes we just have to step back and look and see , what is it that

I am [00:27:00] choosing to live a hard way when it's actually could be an easier way.

I continue to think about this verse. We've talked about it in the last few weeks, but um, it's a scripture passage. I guess it's just not a verse, but it's Matthew chapter 11 verses 28 through 30 in the New Living Translation, and this is what it says. "Then Jesus said, come to me all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light." It is beautiful, isn't it? Jesus literally says, "come to me". Then He says, "I will give you rest." And then He says, "my yoke is easy and my burden is light." [00:28:00]

If your burden feels crushing, it might be a good time to just pause and take a look. You might be carrying something that Jesus didn't give you. It's just a good moment to just pause and take a look. God's way may still be hard, but it won't be heavy for your soul. When life gets hard, our souls can still be light because we're sharing this burden with Jesus. We're yoked with Him. We're, we're, we're walking with him. We're, we're trusting Him. We're giving Him these things that we're, we're, we're living through that we're, we're walking through, that we are experiencing in life. Yeah. Come to me. Just remember that. That's what Jesus says. Come to me and I will give you rest. [00:29:00]

So this week I encourage you to pick one thing from the list and do it differently. Whatever that thing is, maybe the one that stood out to you the most, do it differently. For example, maybe it's asking for help with one task. Maybe it's saying no without overexplaining. Maybe it's resting for 10 minutes without feeling like you have to earn it first. Maybe it's making one decision without spiraling down, thinking of all the what ifs. Maybe it's speaking one kind sentence to yourself every single morning. Whatever it may be. Find something for you, whatever that thing is, and do it differently this week.

You are not weak because you're tired. You've just been caring [00:30:00] too much. You can live a lighter life without abandoning your responsibility. And I want you to know for sure that God is not disappointed in you. He wants to help you. You don't have to live exhausted to be faithful you. You know, we never saw Jesus be exhausted. Yeah. There was times He was tired, but He would always go away to be with His Father. He would always spend time with His Father to be refreshed and to be renewed. But Jesus was always faithful.

And I wanna say this, if this episode felt like someone finally put words to what you've, you've been living how you've been feeling, I want you to know that

you don't have to figure all this out alone and by yourself. Abundant life mentoring that I offer is, is where I help women untangle what's what's been weighing them down, to simplify [00:31:00] what's become too heavy and to build rhythms that actually support the life that God is calling you to live. So if you're ready to stop doing life the hard way and start living with more peace, then I would love to support you. You can find the link in the show notes for more.

And I invite you back next week. We are on to our third week in this series. Next week our top 10 series continues with 10 Things That You Are Allowed to be Bad At. And I promise that it will be a fun, freeing and enlightening episode.

So thank you for being here today, and until next week, God bless you.

Thank you so much for joining me here today. You can find more at julielefbure.com. And until next time, stay encouraged.