

Judge Not Lest You Be Judged

Week Seven
Amy's Story

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Mid week, Ed sits down in the school cafeteria with Joe, who discovered which vitamins Ed needs and those that might be considered unnecessary. After discussing Joe's progress on his workouts, Joe informs Ed, "there's about three hundred genes that control variations in the need for certain vitamins. I'm sure they'll find more in the future, but I checked all the ones that I know about. I think I got it figured out."

Ed asks Joe, "what did you find?" Joe explains, "it's pretty simple. The reason you take a hand full of vitamins a couple times a day to feel good is because you have a genetic defect in the metabolic pathway for folic acid. It's called methylenetetrahydrofolate reductase deficiency, or MTHFR for short. From what I can tell, you need between 800 to 1,200 micrograms of methylfolate every day. That's why you feel better when you take a lot of B vitamins. And, based upon a few other genes, you need to be taking a lot of the methyl form of vitamin B-12." Ed exclaims, "I knew it was something in the B vitamin group! But, I could never quite put my finger on it."

Giving Ed the good news, Joe explains, "in summary, from what I can tell, you need to take a multivitamin and mineral supplement with the active forms of the vitamins. They have that down at the vitamin store. On top of that, you need to take a total of 800 to 1,200 micrograms of methylfolate every day. And, keep taking the fish oil and magnesium that you've been taking. That should cover what I found on your genetic test. And, in addition, you can continue taking your amino acids and the other supplements that you take for building muscle."

Ed thinks for a moment, and tells Joe, "this is going to save me a lot of money." Joe tells Ed, "if you'd like, you can take some of the money you're going to save, and buy me a slice of pizza." Ed replies, "you got it, Joe." Joe then hands Ed a piece of paper, telling him, "I wrote down what you

should ideally be taking. You can get these down at the vitamin store.” Ed replies, “thanks!”

Joe asks Ed, “by the way, how’s Amy doing?” Ed replies, “I’ve never seen her this good. She has way more energy now. And, from what I hear, her sister is also doing much better.” Joe replies, “that’s really good to hear.” Joe shakes his head, and tells Ed, “I just wish we could have found Amy’s problem a long time ago.” Ed replies, “me too. Amy was very concerned that she’ll eventually go down the path that the rest of her family did.” Joe tells Ed, “it very well could have been. But, God had a different plan for her.”

Seeing a lot of students suddenly leaving the cafeteria, Joe looks at his watch, and tells Ed, “it looks like it’s time for me to give the freshmen their chemistry exam.” Ed tells Joe, “walk around the classroom during the test. I bet you can easily get in 1,000 steps, maybe more.” Joe smiles, and replies, “that’s a good idea! I never thought of that!” Ed and Joe head out to class together, adding another few hundred steps to their day.

Friday evening again brings the weekly meeting of the Interdenominational Campus Fellowship. Arriving slightly early for the meeting, Amy is lying on the sofa in the public area with her head on Ed’s lap as Ed reads something on the internet that Amy found earlier today. Quite relaxed considering she will be speaking in front of a group of nearly one hundred people, Amy contemplates exactly what she will say tonight.

The band begins to play. Ed tells Amy, “I guess it’s time to go in.” Slow to get up, Amy replies, “I suppose so.” Ed tells Amy, “I’ve never seen you this calm and relaxed before.” Amy replies, “I guess it’s because my life finally makes sense to me now. I know where I belong.” Ed and Amy walk in, standing with their friends at the back of the room.

After the band plays three numbers, Rodney takes the stage, and announces, “if I am not mistaken, Amy Amherst will be giving the talk today. Is Amy here with us tonight?” Disappointing to Rodney, Amy yells out, “I’m here.” Not seeing Amy among the members earlier this evening, Rodney was secretly hoping that she did not show up. Unfortunately, Rodney has no such luck. Amy is standing in the back of the room with Ed.

Amy walks up to the front of the room, and stands on the stage. Amy begins by saying to the group, “hi. I’m Amy Amherst. I transferred to this University this year. Some of you might already know that. When I think back to the beginning of the semester, the song that I consider the theme song of my life came to my mind when I first met Ed Becker. My song is *Creep*, as it is sung by Chrissy Hynde. Whenever Chrissy sings anything,

she puts so much energy and emotion into her performance that you can actually feel it. If you listen to my song sometime, you'll understand exactly how it is that I feel I don't fit into this world."

Dana rudely interrupts Amy, announcing, "that song has profanity in it!" Not missing a beat, Amy tells Dana, "now, how would you know that, Dana?" The audience laughs, perhaps suggesting that Dana should keep her mouth shut. Amy tells her audience, "if you don't want to listen to the song because of a few bad words, then pull up the lyrics sometime." Amy then specifically addresses Dana, telling her, "maybe there's a G-rated version out there just for you, Dana." The audience laughs again, ensuring that Dana will not interrupt the rest of Amy's presentation.

After being rudely interrupted, Amy continues, "so, as I was saying, I never fit into this world. But, that's okay. It doesn't bother me anymore. Just to let you know where I'm coming from, I'll try to explain it to you. In high school, when I went to a basketball game, everyone around me was cheering for our team. I felt absolutely no excitement at all. When I watched our high school football team, I really didn't care who won the game. I just wanted to go home. And, when we were out in a group, and everyone was having a good time, I was the quiet one. My brain just couldn't handle all the multiple conversations going on at once."

Describing her home life, Amy continues, "my home life wasn't any better. When my family went on vacation, to me it was something to be endured, not enjoyed. I tried to have fun. I really did. But, no matter how hard I tried, I didn't have any fun. When Christmas came, everyone else was full of joy. I had no joy. And, some people enjoy food. To me, eating was always more of an inconvenience. Everything I've ever done in my life was for survival. So, I never really fit in. The only time I ever felt anywhere near normal is when I'm outside in the sun. You know, like at the beach."

Amy then asks her audience, "so, how was I like this?" Taking a piece of paper out of her pocket so she can get her facts correct, Amy explains, "Joe Sugarman was kind enough to look at my DNA. Joe found that I have pretty much no serotonin in my brain, and very little dopamine. So, with next to no serotonin and very little dopamine, I was severely depressed. But, since I had no idea what normal was like, I had no idea that I was depressed. In other words, I was emotionally flatlined for years. In my case, Joe found out that it's caused by something called sepiapterin reductase deficiency. I inherited this rare problem from my parents who, now that I think back, were also very depressed. And, so is my sister, Lindsey. But, me and Lindsey didn't really know that we were depressed. For the longest time, we both thought how we are is normal. But, we both knew we weren't like everyone else."

Recalling Jenny's talk, Amy continues, "a few weeks ago, my friend Jenny told you that, when her parents died in an automobile accident, she came to live with my dad and I. What Jenny didn't tell you is that my mom died when I was fourteen. My mom got breast cancer. The doctors said it was caught very early and could easily be cured. But, hearing the news, I think my mom got scared and just gave up. She died a month later, and it wasn't from the cancer. They never did figure out exactly how she died. If you ask me, I think she died of a broken heart."

Amy then reveals, "what Jenny also didn't tell you is that, right after I graduated from high school, my dad committed suicide." Taking her phone out of her pocket where she has a copy of the note that her dad left, Amy continues, "my dad left a note that said, 'Amy and Lindsey, I'm sorry I brought you into this world and the pain that comes with it. It broke my heart to watch my precious daughters grow up and miss out on enjoying life. Now that you're both on your own, I've decided to leave. I hope that someday they can find a reason for whatever it is that is wrong with our family. I just couldn't go on. I hope you understand. I'm sorry. Love, Dad.' So, that was the future that I had to look forward to." Hearing Amy's story, tears come from a few members of the fellowship.

Amy then tells the story, "two nights ago, I was lying in bed at night, thinking about my dad. I was wondering if, just maybe, when he met Jesus face to face, he begged Jesus to send someone to help me and Lindsey so we didn't have to go through what he did. I don't know if that's how things work in Heaven or if that's even possible, but the thought did cross my mind."

Amy continues, "so, when I first came to this fellowship, I was really surprised to see how judgmental a few of you are. You took pictures of my friend, Jenny, drinking a glass of wine and posted it all over social media. You took pictures of me smoking, and posted it all over social media." Addressing one person in specific, Amy looks at Dana, telling her, "by the way, Dana, right after I started taking the supplements that Joe told me to, I quit smoking. So, you can stop taking pictures of me and posting them online now."

Looking right at Donna, Amy continues, "and, one person here even had the nerve to call the police on Jenny when she had a glass of wine. Just so you know, Jenny is twenty-one years old. So, don't bother calling the police the next time you see her with a glass of wine."

Quoting from the Bible, Amy tells the group what they all should already know, saying, "in the book of Matthew, chapter 7, verse 1, it states, 'Do not judge so that you will not be judged.' I'm sure you've all heard that verse at least once before. God's judgement is perfect and just. When we judge, we judge from appearances. God judges from our

hearts. Our judgement is so convoluted that God must be laughing at us when we do judge others.”

Addressing a few members of the fellowship, Amy informs a specific group, “for those of you who have judged me, I’m okay with that. I forgive you. God made me how I am for a reason, and I’m okay with that too. If you’re not okay with how God made me, well, that’s your problem, not mine. I’m not changing to accommodate you or your legalistic ways.” Hearing Amy’s convicting words, Rodney holds his head in his hands, and stares at the floor.

Addressing many members of the fellowship, Amy continues, “for those of you who have not judged me, thank you so, so much. You don’t know how much I appreciate you.” Amy then surprises her audience by concluding, “I’m really going to miss a lot of you. It’s been really nice knowing you guys. I wish you all the best and maybe, sometime in the future, our paths will cross again.”

One of Amy’s few close friends, Courtney, raises her hand, and asks, “wait! What are you saying?” Amy reveals, “I won’t be returning to the University next semester.” Quite shocked, Courtney asks, “wait a second! Why not? What happened?” Amy explains, “on the eddiethemechanic.com website, there is an outtake entitled, ‘Mr. Frazier’s Motivational Speech’. I’ll bring it up and read part of it to you. And, just to give you a brief background, Mr. Frazier, the track coach, is giving this speech to his University’s track team.”

Taking her phone out of her pocket, Amy brings up the website and reads to her audience, “moving on to the subject of success, Mr. Frazier continues, ‘now, when you graduate, society has programmed you that you measure success by how much money you earn. You don’t measure success by how much money you earn! You don’t measure success by what kind of car you drive! You don’t measure success by the size of your house! It is of no value to wake up in the morning and drive to a job you hate. It is of no value to drive a luxury car when you really want to drive a Jeep or British roadster. It is of no value to live in a mansion in the suburbs when you really want to live in a bungalow at the beach. The only measure of success is how well you follow your passion and do what you love!’”

Amy then tells the group, “you guys should read the rest of Mr. Frazier’s speech¹. When I read it, I cried. Mr. Frazier’s motivational speech changed the direction of my life. And, Dana, you don’t have to worry. There’s no foul language in Mr. Frazier’s speech, so you can relax.”

¹ See Appendix I to read Mr. Frazier’s Motivational Speech.

The group laughs at Amy's treatment of Dana this evening. This time, Dana, who wishes she can sneak out of the meeting, remains unusually quiet.

Not wanting to leave her audience hanging, Amy explains, "my passion is the beach and the water. Only five other people in this room know this, but I'm a lifeguard, and have my advanced open water certification. So, I've decided to move back to the beach town where I'm from, and get a job as an ocean lifeguard like I did over the last few Summers. If you've ever seen the reruns of *Baywatch*, that's what I'll be doing. And, I don't know how I'm going to do it, but I'm going to find a way to live in a bungalow a few blocks from the beach. I don't know how I'm going to make it work year round, but being a lifeguard is my passion. I'm going to trust God to work out the details. And, I will not come in second place. You'll have to read Mr. Frazier's speech to know what coming in second place really is. Thank you guys for everything."

Courtney again raises her voice, and asks, "wait, wait! What's all this about second place? Do tell!" Amy smiles and tells Courtney, "okay. Since Mr. Frazier makes a Biblical reference in his speech, I'll read it to you. But, your homework is to read the entire speech by next Friday." Seeing that Amy is acting a bit like some of the professors on campus, a few members of the fellowship laugh.

Amy scrolls through Mr. Frazier's speech, trying to find the reference. Finding what she was looking for, Amy reads, "Beginning his talk in a way quite familiar to the team, Mr. Frazier exclaims, 'let me remind you of something we all need not forget. In any race, there is only one winner! In the Bible, in the book of First Corinthians, in chapter 9, verse 24, the scripture reads, 'Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.' Make no mistake about it! There is only one winner! Whoever comes in second place is the first loser! If you come in second place, learn something! Work harder, learn from the situation, and figure out what you need to change to do better next time!'"

Amy tells her audience, "if coming in second place makes me the first loser, I'm changing what I am doing. I'm definitely not settling for second place. I'm going to follow my passion and win at what God has planned for me. I'm going to be the best I can at what my passion is, which is being a lifeguard. Thank you guys so much for listening and understanding."

Amy walks off the stage, receiving a standing ovation. On her way to the back of the room, Amy receives hugs and encouragement from those whom she passes. Amy can't miss the tears coming from the eyes of some of those in the fellowship. Many will be sad to see Amy go, but are

happy for her that she is following her passion. With so much attention placed on Amy, the band delays taking the stage.

In the back of the room, Pete tells Ed, “wow! This is a big surprise! Did you know that Amy was leaving?” Ed replies, “yeah. Believe it or not, she just decided this afternoon. I read Mr. Frazier’s motivational speech with her. She’s read it a few times already. I totally get where she’s coming from. I’m really going to miss Amy.” Pete tells Ed, “I’m really going to miss Amy too. But, I totally get it, bro.”

After ten minutes, Amy finally makes her way to the back of the room. Walking up to Joe, Amy tells him, “thank you so much for finding my genetic problem, and also for telling me about *Eddie, The Mechanic*. Mr. Frazier’s speech to his team really changed my direction. And, I’m going to read the whole series.” Joe tells Amy, “I am really going to miss you. You’ll have to send me your address once you get settled. I’ll come visit and buy you a slice of pizza.” Amy replies, “you’re so sweet, Joe. I’m going to really miss you.”

Rodney takes the stage and announces, “I guess some of us will be sad to see Amy go.” As Rodney speaks, in the back of the room, Jenny comments, “did you hear that? Rodney is as cold as ice.” Joe, the biochemist, corrects Jenny, telling her, “you probably meant to say dry ice. It’s a lot colder than frozen water.” Jenny informs Joe, “Rodney defies chemistry, Joe. He’s colder than absolute zero.” Joe laughs, and tells Jenny, “I’m telling you! I’ll make a biochemist out of you yet!” Joe’s passion is biochemistry. Joe is one who is clearly following his passion.

The band finally takes the stage, having time to play only one number. Dana, quite happy to hear that Amy is leaving the University, energetically leads the singing as the band plays. Very few students, however, sing along. Some are in the back of the room talking with Amy. Others have googled the song *Creep* to which Amy referred earlier, and are listening to the song with their earbuds or reading the lyrics. Many students have looked up the eddiethemehanic.com website and are reading Mr. Frazier’s motivational speech. And, the offering plate gets passed around, taking quite a convoluted path this evening.

After Rodney closes the meeting with prayer, acting a bit on the nice side, Dana whispers to Amy, “is there any chance that I can get you to delete that pic of me on your phone?” Amy asks Dana, “what’s the big deal about a pic of you vaping?” Dana insists, “I just want it deleted. Is that asking too much?” Amy replies, “I already told you. Someday, I’ll get around to it.” Amy walks away, leaving Dana hanging yet once again.

After the meeting, Amy heads out to get pizza with her friends. Knowing that Amy will be gone in a few weeks, a few more people join the

group today. Also heading out to get pizza is Dana along with her group of friends. Now that Amy will not be around next semester, Dana will be on her best behavior in an attempt to land a date with Ed once Amy is gone. If that were to happen, it will make Dana second string. Ed, who has made it clear that he is not the least bit interested in Dana, is not likely to settle for second string.

Amy answers the proverbial twenty questions about her plans during dinner. Sitting a few tables over, Dana, not paying attention to the conversation at her table, eavesdrops on the conversations at Amy's table. Specifically, Dana desperately wants to know whether Amy will finish out the semester or leave sometime very soon.

Jenny asks Amy, "are you like really going to get a bungalow near the beach?" Amy replies, "that's my plan. I want to buy a bungalow near the beach and get a Jeep, kind of like Ed's, so I can drive around with the top down." Jenny asks, "where are you going to get the money to buy a bungalow, girl?" Amy replies, "when my dad died, he left everything to me and Lindsey. So, I can survive for a while." Jenny takes a sip of wine, noticing that no one at Dana's table is exercising their photography skills today.

Pete, who has a tendency to worry a lot, asks Amy, "are you sure you can get a job as a lifeguard at the beach?" Amy explains, "they already want me back for next Summer. I'm going to call my former division chief next week and see if I can start in the Spring." Ed suggests to Amy, "we can take a ride down to the beach one weekend. Maybe you can meet up with him." With a sudden burst of excitement, Amy replies, "that's a great idea! I didn't even think about that!" Ed tells Amy, "let's put it on the calender."

Courtney asks Amy, "are you going to do something else, other than be a lifeguard?" Amy explains, "I'm also a certified lifeguard instructor and CPR instructor, so I can teach classes to the high school kids who want to get Summer jobs as a lifeguard at a community pool. Those classes are usually packed in the Spring. And, I can always put my camera to use somehow."

Listening in as best as she can to Amy's conversations, Dana never finds out whether Amy will leave at the end of the semester, or just throw in the towel and leave now. This time, no one at Dana's table called the police because Jenny is drinking a glass of wine. And, a few of those at Dana's table, now realizing that Amy is a kindhearted person, wish they were sitting at Amy's table instead.

After dinner, Amy and her friends head back to campus, where Amy tells them more of her plans. Now setting a different course for her life, Amy surely has a few more challenges ahead of her.