

SHARPENERS

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I'm a big believer in sharpeners. I'm not sure how we become who God made us to be without them. When I think of sharpeners, I think of *truth-tellers*. And these people are valuable, because sometimes our lives, just as a blade, can become dull. Not because we're boring, but because the wear and tear of life can take its toll on our impact or ability to discern and execute strategy. **Turns out, when a blade is dull, it might still work, it's just messier, and less safe for the individual wielding it.**

Enter sharpeners... I've never known anyone who can both ignite strength and perform surgery like sharpeners.

"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." — Proverbs 27:17

Sharpeners are to be treasured, because not everyone will linger long enough to see your life, observe the beauty and recognize the vulnerabilities and gaps, and ALSO be willing to show them to you. Because frankly, we all have blind spots. There's this phrase a few of the women I call sharpeners use, and I don't take it lightly... "I see _____ in you." They can be the greatest delight, fueling confidence in the truth about who you are and what you were made for; and they can uncover even

what is painful to see, in order to grip your arm and pull you up into next level life.

What does this even look like?

I have this one friend who sharpens in such a beautiful way, I often don't even realize at first they were addressing a wound. We can be having this conversation about either the glorious or the hard, and she can just say true things that my heart upholds, and suddenly I see something that my I needed to engage differently. It's so gentle. And not in a fluffy pillows kind of way. In a, "I trust you with the most vulnerable places in my heart if that's how you're going to handle it." And man, I think Jesus, in his self description of gentle and lowly, would demonstrate the same. We would run towards that kind of sharpening.

I am positive my parenting, marriage, schooling, writing or rhythms would be at a loss where it not for sharpeners.

One sharpener talks about parenting in ways my brain never considered.

One sharpener I know will take on the hard stuff head on. Her life screams faithfulness, and her loyalty *bar none*, so when she says stuff, I listen.

One sharpener gives me eyes to see beauty.

One sharpener delights in encountering God and invites everyone around her into it.

One sharpener helps me strategize my school days in ways that would have faltered otherwise.

I think we come to value sharpeners when we delight in our lives being yielded faithfully.

Maybe being a truth teller seems scary, but I think the more we love our people, the more eager we are to put their growth ahead of our comfort. And the more we actually exercise this gift of [friendship with fortitude](#), we get better at it, and our lives get a lot more impactful. I'd even suggest sharpening is a form of collaboration...

2 Ways to Foster Sharpening:

1. **Make the invitation.** An actual green light to speak truth will probably result in a few more honest conversations.

2. **Commit to stay.** Maybe you're not going to say traditional vows like when we get married. But maybe we should adopt something similar. What if we actually told our people we weren't leaving? Wouldn't you be more inclined to say what's true, even when it's hard, when you aren't worried about losing the friendship? Jennie Allen talks about this in [her book](#), and it sure does seem like a brilliant strategy.

If we want friendships with fortitude, maybe this is one way we can level up. Let's be brave enough to sharpen and be sharpened. Let's not settle for dull.

Rooting for you.