

EPISODE 2 SCRIPT:

REAL TALK ON FRIEND GROUPS WITH DR. JOY HARDEN BRADFORD OF “THERAPY FOR BLACK GIRLS”

[Theme music starts]

Evelyn: From PBS News Student Reporting Labs.

Eason: And WETA

Evelyn: This is On Our Minds

Eason: With Eason

Evelyn: And Evelyn

Eason: A podcast by teens, for teens

Evelyn: telling stories about who inspires us!

[Theme music fades]

Eason: What's up, Evelyn?

Evelyn: Hello, Eason.

Eason: So our first episode was about friendship. Today we'll have a special episode with an author and we'll be exploring a friend community or a friend circle.

Evelyn: Mm-hmm. And Eason and I were part of the same friend group since, what, freshman year?

Eason: Yeah, since geometry class. Yeah. I think our friend group does a lot of fun bonding activities together.

Evelyn: We're very spontaneous, I think, yeah.

Eason: But that keeps me sane, you know, on Fridays after a test, like a math test that I just bombed, I can just like...

Evelyn: Common trend-bombing matters, yeah.

Eason: You know, I can just be like, what are you guys doing? Or if I'm not even feeling that, I'm just like, we're going here today.

Evelyn: 6 p.m. Period. Show up to my house. Don't be late.

Eason: You know, no, that's fun. I think we have that like every Friday. It's like a little sanity check at the end of the week almost

Evelyn: Mm-hmm. Our last time was San Francisco.

Eason: Yeah, going to San Francisco like spontaneously.

Evelyn: Mm-hmm

Eason: It helps me with just like widening the week down, it's like the thing I'm most looking forward to every week, you know?

Evelyn: I agree. It's good to have like a community of friends that you know you can always rely on to have some fun and relax.

Evelyn: Okay Eason, let's get into the author conversation. So Dr. Joy Harden Bradford is a licensed psychologist, she is a host of the award-winning mental health podcast, Therapy for Black Girls, and she has written a book called *Sisterhood Heals*, which is about how a strong friend group can transform your life.

Eason: And Bree Campell, who was a host for season 4 of On Our Minds spoke with Dr. Bradford about her book:

[music]

Bree Campbell: Hi, Dr. Joy. Thank you so much for joining me and speaking with me today.

Dr Joy Harden Bradford: Absolutely. Thank you so much for having me, Bree.

Bree: Well, I recently read your book "Sisterhood Heals" and I found it super personal. I resonated with it deeply because I have a sister and I have a lot of women in my life that I consider my big sister circle. I just loved reading about it.

Dr Joy Harden Bradford: I love that. I thank you for sharing that Bree, you know, something I had been thinking about as I was writing the book is sisterhood kind of like dying, right? Like, do young people value relationships with other women in the same ways that maybe older generations do? So I love to hear that it resonated with you and that you feel like that is still very thriving and alive

Bree: Can you define for us what exactly a sisterhood is and what it means to you? And why do you think it is important for teenage girls?

Dr Joy Harden Bradford: So I like to think about sisterhood as our chosen family. Right? And I think that that is what is the difference between a sister and a friend to me is that a friend can be kind of casual, you know, we can do fun things together, but it could end there. Where somebody who you consider your sister is somebody who you are accountable to, who is accountable for you, who you feel responsible for, and they feel some responsibility to you. And so I think it very much feels like a familial kind of relationship, even though there may not be any blood. And I think it is really important for me because when I think about like some of the most difficult times in my life, like these were the women who I had to fall back on. Like people who have known me for years and know me at different stages of my life and really just know that history. I think it has been incredibly valuable to get through difficult times with people who really know you in that way. [59.7s]

Bree: [00:03:20] just to think about how it's important for teenage girls, you know, we're going through like speaking from experience, like as a teenage girl, especially like growing up, like in modern times with like, social media and stuff like that. We are in for it. There's definitely a lot of pressure.

Dr Joy Harden Bradford: People often ask me like, everybody's so busy. Like, how do you make sure that you kind of keep your friendships and your sisterhood thriving? And one of those ways is to be very intentional about putting things on the calendar for when you're going to spend time together. So when are you going to plan to see them or are there going to be times where y'all get on zoom or face time and talk with one another? So that's really important to actually put things on the calendar because we know if it isn't on the calendar, sometimes this doesn't happen. And so to be really protective about, you know, making sure you have that time and space with your sisters. [43.7s]

Bree: [00:07:54] So what would you say a sisterhood does heal and how does it do that? [9.5s]

Dr Joy Harden Bradford: [00:08:05] So I think about, you know, what...some of our earliest ideas about what relationships with other women are like come from like our moms, our aunts, our grandmother, right? And sometimes those aren't the healthiest displays of affection and intimacy. And so when I think about the

relationship you have with women who are outside of your family, it can be an opportunity for a do over. Almost. Right. So if you have developed this idea that you can't trust women, right, like I wrote about that in the book. Many of us have gotten that message from our mothers or grandmothers or other women in our family. And so I think in sisterhood, you can realize like, hey, that wasn't so true, right? Like, there are people that I can trust. There are people who are in my corner. There are people that do have my back. And so I think that that is one of the main ways that it heals is that it allows us to have an opportunity for a do over for what relationships with women look like.

Dr Joy Harden Bradford: The other thing I think that's super healing about sisterhood is that it really allows us to know that we are not alone with anything that we may be feeling or experiencing. And so I don't know if you've had this experience, but, you know, there are sometimes things that you do or things that happen to you and you feel like really embarrassed about it or like shameful and like, oh I can't say this to anybody else because nobody else has felt this or nobody else would get this. And then you finally say it, see somebody who is close to you and they say like, oh my gosh, I felt that, too, right?

Bree: [laughter] yeah!

Dr. Joy Harden Bradford: And so just being able to say the thing out loud is also incredibly healing because you realize like, oh I wasn't so alone with this. And even if it looks a little different for them, we all are connected by our experiences of feelings. And so that is healing to you to know that you're not alone and that people can support you even through things you feel really embarrassed about. [110.0s]

Bree: [00:14:04] Why do you believe sisterhoods are especially important for teenage girls of color? [4.5s]

Dr Joy Harden Bradford: [00:14:13] You know, like I think that there are just so many different experiences that young women of color have, you know, like struggling with like imposter syndrome or should I really be in this space. Am I good enough? You know, experiences of racism and discrimination. And so it's really important that you have people who know exactly what you're talking about and like won't question whether this thing happened. Right? So there's often this look that women of color will exchange when like a thing happens, right? So a professor saying something racist in class or, you know, something like that and you catch eyes with the other young woman of color

Bree: [laughter] yeah!

Dr Joy Harden Bradford: and you're like, did that just happen? That is really important. And I think that it is especially important for young women. Because it does impact your self-esteem, right? Like if you don't have anybody to reality check those kinds of experiences with, it can make you feel like you are not doing enough or there's something wrong with you as opposed to no. Sometimes people are just racist and discriminate and like they know ridiculous things. And so I think it's really important in the development of your self-esteem to have other people who really get your experiences and can support you through that. [66.2s]

Bree: [00:17:36] So what advice do you have for teenage girls who want to find their own sister circle and want to find their own sense of sisterhood? [6.1s]

Dr Joy Harden Bradford: [00:17:47] So if you think about it, there are usually people who are kind of in the background of our lives that with a little bit of effort, could move to the foreground. So somebody who maybe sits next to you in Spanish class or the person that you know kind of plays in the orchestra with you and ya'll, you know, smile at one another, but you haven't really taken the step to get to know each other beyond smiling. What would it be like for you to say like, Hey, do you want to grab lunch after we're done with Spanish class? Or, hey, you want to grab a smoothie after orchestra? Like just taking that step to open the door to a possible relationship. And I think this is very scary for people, so I love to hear, like, how likely that you would do something like this. But it feels very scary because you're setting yourself up for rejection, possibly, right? Like, they could be like, oh this is weird. Like, no, I'm not interested. And that could be true. But they could also say like, oh my gosh, I love to do that. And then it could be the start of something really cool, right? And so I think we have to get out of our comfort zones just a little bit and open ourselves up to new experiences, but also let people know like, hey, I'm really interested in making new friends. [63.1s] [00:19:00]

Dr. Joy Harden Bradford: And I think the key here Bree really is to keep your expectations realistic. So I think sometimes people will go into these things and think, oh my gosh, this is going to be my new BFF and we're going to take over the world together.

Bree: so true

Dr Joy Harden Bradford: And that might be true. But it could also just be a fun lunch, right? And so to keep your expectations realistic so that you're not kind of setting yourself up for failure and disappointment. [20.1s]

Bree: [00:22:03] How does a sisterhood not become click-ish or exclusionary, but also not too big that it loses its power and connection? [7.7s]

Dr Joy Harden Bradford: [00:22:19] This is a great question, and I think that there can be different iterations of the circle, right? And I think we see this in our own lives, right? Like there may be two people that you are super close with in like y'all have your own little text thread. But then there may be two other people who are close to maybe one person, and then sometimes, like, y'all will go to the movies with them. And, you know, so I think the circle can look lots of different ways. And I think you have to be careful for it not to be click-ish, right? So even though you and I have a close relationship, that doesn't mean that we're not open to being other friends. And I actually think that that's like a friendship red flag. So be on the lookout for...is a friend who like is not cool with you having other friends because why can't you have multiple friends, right? Like there's enough of us and enough love to go around.

Bree: Exactly.

Dr Joy Harden Bradford: And so I think making sure that you spend time with each other but also are open to other people kind of coming into the group is really, really important.

Bree [00:28:11] So what about boys? Do you think they need a sense of brotherhood or they need a brotherhood? And if so, how do you see that as similar or different to a sisterhood? [8.9s]

Dr Joy Harden Bradford [1.4s] [00:28:42] all of us need people who know us, who can be there to pick us up when we fall down, who can kind of check us when we're going off cause. And so I think boys absolutely do need that. And I think a lot of times, like boys will do things like sports or music or whatever in it and it feels like there is a familiarity there. But I don't know that it goes deeper. And that would be my encouragement, just like I talked about with you. And in terms of sisterhood issue, you know, like, yes, basketball may be kind of your way into these relationships, but then taking it beyond the court, like, how much time are you all spending together talking about other things and really getting to

know one another? So brotherhood is absolutely important, and I definitely want that for boys to kind of find people who are in their corner. [43.3s]

Bree Campbell: [00:31:46] Thank you so much for speaking with me today. I really appreciated it and I loved this conversation.

Dr Joy Harden Bradford: [00:31:54] Thank you for taking the time to read the book and for asking such thoughtful questions. I really enjoyed our conversation. [4.7s]

[music]

Evelyn: I felt that was super empowering, they had great chemistry, and it almost felt like they were sisterhood themselves. And one particular quote that really stood out to me was, she said, somebody who is at the background of your life could potentially be at the forefront if we just put in the effort to reach out more. And I felt that really applies because a lot of the times we kind of look over of the people who sit next to us in class. Us right when we were first best mates and now we're friends right yeah and so what did you learn

Eason: Yeah, I guess two things I think adding on to what your takeaway was. A lot of people in my class like earlier this year I didn't think I'd be friends with them but then talking to them I've made some of my best friends that way. I think you just really got to give everyone a chance. You never know who's going to be your next like best friend. And another takeaway I had was what Dr. Joy talked about for male friend groups even though she kind of. Didn't go into it that deeply. I feel like everything she talked about for sisterhoods really apply to male friend groups too.

I think in male friendships, sometimes we tend to hide a lot of emotions from each other and it's usually less emotional and more just joking around. I think one thing is each other's like, keep each other in check and make sure to check in regularly to see if your friends need support. I think that's really important.

Evelyn: I agree, I think that's great advice. I think it can apply to women as well because sometimes people just need a little bit extra, you know, support.

[P.S. Weekly theme song]

Eason: Before we go, we want to let you know about another podcast.

Evelyn: If you want to know what's *really* happening in schools, then you need to check out **P.S. Weekly**. This must-listen podcast puts the voices of students front and center — bringing you stories you won't hear anywhere else.

Eason: P.S. Weekly is made by 10 New York City high school student producers working alongside reporters from Chalk-beat New York. Together, they're digging into some of the biggest issues impacting young people right now — from AI in classrooms, to inadequate sex education standards, to the impact of immigration crackdowns on college applications...and more.

Evelyn: New episodes drop every Thursday morning. Find P.S. Weekly wherever you get your podcasts — and don't forget to hit *subscribe*!

[Theme song fades out]

Eason: Up next: an episode about family.

Evleyn: Yes, students share stories about who in their families inspires them!

[theme song begins]

Eason: Today's interview was produced by Bree Campbell.

Evelyn: Lead Podcast Producer Briget Ganske produced this episode with editing and mixing by Genesis Magpayo.

Eason: Ryan Janes is our camera and audio operator. Our technical wizard!

Evelyn: Approval and oversight by Editorial Director Marie Cue-sick and Executive Producer Leah Clapman.

Eason: Theme music by Isaiah Brown. Additional music from Blue Dot Sessions.

Evelyn: One last thing - if you are enjoying On Our Minds, please give us a review!

[end of theme song]