



Episode 008—Who Does Allyship Benefit?

Welcome to Adopted into Allyship, a podcast about loving others well and fighting for connection. I'm Jamie K Corbin and this is episode eight, who does allyship benefit?

Hey, friendly reminder—this is intended to be a safe place to learn, but I do talk about hard things here because when you've been adopted into allyship, you don't shy away from conflict or pain. Healing and growth aren't compatible with avoidance or apathy. You can expect both an uncomfortable amount of honesty and vulnerability, as well as an abundance of grace as we work toward becoming better allies together.

In this episode we're going to examine a common belief that allyship benefits a specific group of people. Is it true? If not, who does allyship really benefit? And, why does it matter to us as allies? We're going to dive into all of those questions in today's episode—let's go!

Listen, here at Casa Corbin we are all about the celebrations. I love nothing more than a reason to gather my people, feed them, and spend quality time together—and it doesn't even have to be a holiday. Our enthusiasm for celebrating got us into a bit of a parenting challenge last year when we discovered our kids had Christmas level expectations for St. Patrick's day...the night before St. Patrick's day. Parenting is always such an adventure, isn't it? We did our best to let them down gently, and found ourselves explaining the difference between what we now call "major and minor holidays".

So this year, when we told our 8, 6, and 3 year olds that our family would have an extra day together because their dad didn't have to work for Martin Luther King, Jr. day, they had these questions for us.

Was Martin Luther King Jr. Day a major or minor holiday? That one came from the middle child, whose love language is gifts.

How do we celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day? That was from our oldest, who's always looking for a reason to bake and decorate a cake.

And, who was Martin Luther King, Jr. anyway? This from our youngest, bless her sweet, little heart.

First, we gave the older two girls the answers they were looking for. No, there wouldn't be any presents exchanged on this holiday, but that didn't make it a minor holiday. And, while we typically march or serve our community to honor the legacy of Dr. King, that didn't mean baking a treat to share with the family was off the table.

Then, we moved on to the important question of our youngest daughter—who was Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and why did dad get an entire day off work to celebrate him?

I did what any professional educator would do and checked for understanding before launching into a lecture. I asked our other two girls if they remembered who Martin Luther King Jr. was. Of course, we have told them many times, but they're young, right? On any given day, at least half of their lives take place in a make believe world, so there is no gauging the depth of their knowledge when it comes to real-life historical figures.

And this is how I found out a well-intending grown up had talked to my girls about Martin Luther King Jr. and their takeaway from that conversation was that he did great things for Black people.

Sounds harmless, right? I mean, it's not wrong—the reverend doctor Martin Luther King Jr. sure did do great things for Black people. The man was a fierce and brilliant leader of the civil rights movement in the 1960's. He was able to use his God-given gift of words to lead others into non-violent protests, pushing for social progress in a way that rivaled the founding fathers' pursuits for their own freedom, and in a way that we haven't seen since. It's why he was assassinated.

But, as I took the time to explain to my girls, that is only a partial truth. And, its narrow narrative can be a common, and dangerous, misstep in the thinking of allies, especially white allies.

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Allyship is love in action. Much like the Civil Rights Movement gave our country an opportunity to live more fully into democracy, our allyship gives us the opportunity to fight for a better version of our witness and our world.

We can live into the legacy of freedom and justice for all if we can embrace the idea that our liberty and justice are connected to that of others, and that none of us will be free as long as one of us is oppressed. How do we do this when we live in a time and place designed to make us focus on ourselves and our own family's freedoms? I'm so glad you asked.

We do it by following the lead of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. himself and live into the power of community. We expand our definition of family.

Here's why: We are closer to our family, and those we consider our family than we are to the rest of the world. And, this proximity brings a sense of connection, compassion and ups the amount of care we give to certain situations.

Consider your family for a moment. And remember, this is a judgment free zone, so be totally honest, and also have grace for yourself and others here. Do you have someone that might drive you up the wall when it comes to inter-family dynamics, but who you would become fiercely protective of should someone outside your family throw some shade their way? Yeah, me too. We care about these people, even the ones we disagree with or struggle to understand or even get along with, because they are family. We love them and want to protect them.

For those of us who are Christians, this practice should be relatively easy—since we've all been adopted into the family of God, and we are already siblings. We just have to ask ourselves, are we acting like it? If we're not, why?

In case any of us could use some inspirational ideas for this spiritual practice, here are three ways to expand our definition of family:

- Embrace the wisdom of adoptees who know that family is a flexible concept and then choose to do your best to include everyone, or at the very least apply a family lens when you're considering a situation and ask how you might feel differently about things if they directly impacted someone in your family.
- Do a quick family pride check—contrary to everyone's social media highlight reels, there is no such thing as a perfect family. There is no such thing as a pureblood family that is more deserving of power, freedom, or justice than others. Research

the bloodline of Jesus if you need further proof of this. Don't let a sense of family pride create an "us" and "them" dynamic.

- Pay close attention to when you witness yourself, or those around you, practicing othering...and then point it out and put an end to it. Again, othering is the practice of viewing and treating a person or group of people as intrinsically different from yourself, usually in a way that establishes a hierarchy of value. Othering has no place in allyship.

One last thing before we wrap up—it's important to acknowledge that before expanding our definition of family, some of us might need to let go of the hurt we have experienced from people in our earthly families. But please, don't try to do this alone, find someone who can help you process in a healthy way—I'll include a couple of resources in the show notes.

Father God,

Your love always wins. And, you love all of us, equally.

Jesus, thank you for paying the cost of that kind of love, thank you for your work on the cross, which enables us to be adopted into this holy family.

Lord, let me confess. It's amazing how little we care about something until it directly impacts us or someone we love. It's so easy to be dismissive of others' pain, we don't even really have to try, but we are products of a broken world and even the best of us are self-centered, sinful creatures who need the right motivation to move toward holier life choices.

We need you to work on humbling and softening our hearts, we need you to move us to be more sensitive and care more deeply.

Would you help us to see one another as siblings? Would you help us to see you not only in the reflections of our own words and actions, but also in the faces of others? Would you lead us to recognize that your love for us is what connects us to one another?

Oh, God, would you help us relinquish the pursuit of our own power and comfort and freedom, and pick up the mantle self-sacrificial love for the good of the communal whole and for your Glory, God.

Help us to remember that you work through imperfect humans, and that our imperfections do not exempt us from getting our hands dirty when it comes to the work of rooting out evil and injustice from our communities.

In our brother Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Thank you for joining me for another episode of Adopted into Allyship, produced by Day Three Studios. It's an honor to be your ally as you push yourself to listen, learn, and love in a way that helps you become an equipped, reliable, and action-oriented ally.

If you found this episode helpful or encouraging, I would be so grateful if you would take a minute and rate the podcast, leave a review, and share it with other allies who could benefit from joining us as we work toward loving one another well and fighting for connection. I will be back with more next Thursday, but until then, I would love to connect with you on social media. I usually hangout on Instagram, but you can find me on most platforms at [jamie k corbin](#) and of course, I share more thoughts on the topic of allyship, including a free guide to listening and a monthly newsletter about helping your kids become allies, on the website, [jamielcorbin.com](#).