

[00:00:00] <Music>

Annie: Hi friends, welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm really happy to be here with you today. We have got a great show in store. But before we jump into today's conversation, I want to take a moment to tell you about one of our amazing partners, BetterHelp. Listen, do you ever feel stretched too thin or in over your head? It's so helpful to have someone qualified and capable to process within moments like that.

I know I've found that to be true with my counselor. And here's why BetterHelp is such a valued partner of ours. BetterHelp will assess your needs and match you with your own licensed professional therapist. And you can send your therapist a message anytime they'll respond to you, and you can meet in a convenient private online environment.

You can start communicating within 24 hours and schedule weekly video or phone sessions. It's a priority to BetterHelp that they facilitate great therapeutic matches, so they make it easy and free to change if needed. BetterHelp offers services worldwide, in fact, they're recruiting therapists all over the United States because of the demand, and their licensed professional therapists have a wide variety of specialties.

They can counsel through self-esteem, or grief, stress, depression and anxiety, and more meaning that the right help is available for you no matter what you're facing. This is not self-help, and it's not a crisis hotline but it's convenient, professional, affordable counseling, and it's always confidential.

I want you to start living a healthier life today, as one of my friends you'll get 10% off your first month by visiting betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun. Join over 1 million people and so many of our friends, who've taken charge of their mental health. Again that's betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun.

Now I've got an important question for you, which city am I going to get to see you in the next leg of the That Sounds Fun Tour? Will it be Greenville or Seattle, maybe L.A. or Denver y'all these shows are the most fun. With comedy, and fun-coaching, and special guests, and if you go to my Instagram I think you can see who they are and a live podcast recording in each city. Grab your tickets at anniefdowns.com/events. I cannot wait to see you out there on the road in just a few weeks.

Today on the show is one of my dear friends Christy Wright. Christy is a number one national bestselling author, and inspiring personal development speaker. She's

the host of the Christy Wright Show which is available on YouTube and wherever you get your podcasts. And besides recognizing her from when she was on the show before on episodes 12 and 94, you may know Christy from speaking across the country at women's conferences at Fortune 500 companies, and her own sold-out live events. I have loved getting to be a part of her Business Boutique events over the years and seeing how many people her work has impacted.

Her new book *Take Back Your Time: The Guilt-Free Guide to Life Balance*, is going to be so helpful to so many people I can't wait for you to hear about it. So here's my conversation with Christy Wright.

[00:02:55] <Music>

Annie: Your lipstick perfectly matches your shirt.

Christy: Thank you.

Annie: Did you wear it on purpose?

Christy: No it's the only color I have in my purse, it just happens to match-

Annie: Ah! My dream in a world where I had unlimited time, and unlimited money, and unlimited ability to emotionally choose something that may not be good for the world.

Christy: Love this scenario, go on. Can I join you in this scenario?

Annie: Yes. Yes. Because you get to answer next. I would have lips and nails match whatever I'm wearing every day.

Christy: Oh. I don't see you having nails that match whatever you're wearing, I see you with glitter nails at all times.

Annie: No, I mean, I would like to have a glitter signature nails at all times.

Christy: Sure.

Annie: Of course. But I think in a dream where I wake up in the morning and I feel like this is a good use of everyone else's time, which is one of, besides the finances. I also would not hire this kind of friend to work for me. That did my makeup, and my nails, and my hair every day that'd be great. I just would love for the nails, and I'd like to pick a shirt or an outfit, and then someone go "Okay, here is the nails you need for that, here is the lipstick you need for that.

Christy: Mh-hmm.

Annie: But then you have to make time to get your nails done every day.

Christy: Don't have it.

Annie: Don't have it. Let's talk about *Take Back Your Time*, Christy Wright, your book that came out yesterday. No, but I mean okay so if money didn't matter if your moral compass of how other people use their time to help you achieve what you need to achieve in your life didn't matter-

Christy: Sure all these are out of the window.

Annie: Yeah, what kind of thing would you do?

Christy: I think just someone do my makeup every day. I hate doing my makeup.

Annie: Oh, do you?

Christy: I like the result, I don't like doing it. Yeah, that's such a simple thing. And I think really there are people that actually do that, which must be great. I am not one of them.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: But like just my brows alone, I'm super blonde, and so just filling in my brows to show that I actually have a face is effort. Otherwise, you're like, "She's blurry, there's something there but we don't have features"

Annie: She is blurry? Is that what happens?

Christy: She just got blurry-

Annie: Is that what happens when we can't see eyebrows, we think they're blurry?

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: That's the first thing.

Christy: Everyone feels like that, they don't have their contacts on or something like, my face might not be there.

Annie: Oh, my gosh, Christy, that makes me so... I've seen you with no makeup on and I've never thought you didn't have eyebrows, I've never thought you were blurry.

Christy: Mh-hmm, thank you. I think-

Annie: So, my voice to says you're a full person, head to foot.

Christy: Thank you. It's okay.

Annie: Happy book-launch week.

Christy: Oh my gosh, it's such an exciting time, when you're like, "This is my baby in here world, what do you think?" Here, it's out there.

Annie: Yeah. What do you feel, what does it really feel like this time? This is book number five?

Christy: Yeah. No, I don't know. I don't know.

Annie: Yeah. So this is more than one.

Christy: Totally. I think if we keep devotional and planners, it depends on if you count planners.

Annie: I do.

Christy: So, if you count planners, then yes, five.

Annie: Okay. And this one, *Take Back Your Time* has a planner that goes with it, right?

Christy: Well, the Go Planner just helps you do it.

Annie: So the Go Planner that goes with it.

Christy: And that other ideas in process, just trying to get people to just get on board my idea, which I'm not going to give up on.

Annie: That's right. No, I don't want you to.

Christy: Hey, January 2022, if you see something you know I've got that thing through, everyone, just send some prayers.

Annie: One of my favorite things-

Christy: I'm working on it.

Annie: ...your foreword by Dave Ramsey, he's like, "I tried to get her not to do this thing."

Christy: And you know that actually happened?

Annie: Oh, I'm sure.

Christy: But because you know us, you know that that's exactly how it was.

Annie: Yes, and he's like, "I'm going to put her on stage and let her fail, so she'll learn her lesson because she won't quit being a bulldog about this." And then this topic even in a room there was probably more men than women about life balance, was majorly impactful in that audience.

Christy: Yes. Well, I know, you're all about the enneagram you do this on the show all the time. I'm an eight.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Christy: So I can do something, challenge, accepted.

Annie: Right.

Christy: So I'm like, "You hate this topic? I will talk about nothing else except this topic until you love it." And real talk. So this is funny, so tomorrow night I have an event, and it's *Take Back Your Time* live, we're doing it here in the office, live streaming, and so on.

Well, a few weeks ago, when Dave and I were talking about it, and the event team and I are planning, because Dave is going to be speaking at it too. We're kind of talking about the content, and so we're like, "Okay, well, Dave is like... we're thinking Dave you can do kind of like a live version of the foreword. You tell your version of how this whole thing came to be." Which is real talk how it came to be, we argued for a decade, and then here's the book, finally.

Annie: I just love, I mean, that's one of my favorite things about you and him, and how you create your resources that I use constantly and read. That you actually don't do anything you don't believe in.

Christy: Well, yeah.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: Totally. And that's a very, aside from being a Christian, that's a very A thing. It's like everything has to be something I believe in. And if I believe in it and others don't, well, I'm not going to give up.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: I will not stop talking. And so it's funny because this topic as much as we joke about it, life balance is a phrase, and Dave Ramsey is not the only person that hates this phrase. There's a lot of people, there's probably people listening right now, who is like, "Life balance is BS." And they roll their eyes at the word.

But what's fascinating, Annie, is despite everybody's many feelings about it, good, bad, everything in between, we can't stop talking about it.

Annie: Right.

Christy: I've been a business coach for 10 years. The number one question I'm asked is not a business question, it's this question, "How do I balance it all?" And that's what made me want to tackle it because I'm an entrepreneur spirit, I'm a problem solver. And I'm going "Man, I feel this strain in my own life with three kids and a lot going on." I see everybody else experiencing this, kids or no kids, men or women, business or career, stay-at-home mom, it doesn't matter. I've even been talking with some people in their early 20s out of college, and they're like, "I feel so stressed and stretched too thin." And so it made me go, "I want to do this."

Annie: Is that new? Did our grandparents feel this, Christy? I don't know that mine did.

Christy: No, I don't think they knew the word balance. They would have never said, "I feel out of balance."

Annie: Yeah, is it because our lives are busier? Surely.

Christy: So, yeah, if you look at the history of, "Work" like I mean, if you want to go way, way back to even like Henry Ford-

Annie: Listeners, she did quotes, "Work". Of course.

Christy: Well, the reason, I mean the history meaning like let's go back and look at the generations.

Annie: Uh-huh.

Christy: Henry Ford first really kind of came up with the 40-hour workweek. So they put some boundaries around that you should have a life versus this like 16-hour days, every day.

Annie: Uh-huh.

Christy: And then you start to look in, okay, fast forward a little bit, Baby Boomers, they had gone through hard times, so they were just thankful to have a job. So it's kind of like, "Go to work and shut up, I don't want you to complain. I walked to school uphill both ways in the snow." And so you have that, where there's real intolerance for the word. But then that generation's kids, okay, so the baby boomers kid's, they saw the effect that had on their family of working all the time, and that kind of hard, hard edge to them, and they wanted more balance.

That's when the phrase started coming in. When women were coming into the workforce in the '80s and trying to figure out, "Okay, what's this new dynamic?" Because women traditionally since the '50s did all the housework, all the kids, all the everything. But now they're entering the workforce but still maintaining that home, so it was just this weird in-between. Well, now, since 2007 when the iPhone came out, you have a completely different level of expectation of the merging of your worlds, quarantine, obviously, brought that last year in a whole new way.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: And so there's a ton of variables at play that lead to us being anxious and as I would say, "Out of balance." But I think the connectivity is probably the biggest culprit because we're on all the time, we're connected all the time, and we're always faced with all the opportunities. You know as enneagram Seven is like, "Oh, but that good thing, and that good thing, and that fun thing, and FOMO." And so all that combined creates this perfect storm. Where the way that I've been talking about it recently, and this is what my heart behind it, and I know you talk about fun and I think that this is actually a piece of it. I think people are missing their life. And they're not just missing it scrolling, they're missing it walking around feeling like they're failing.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: Like they're missing the very beautiful things are happening while they're happening, and they have this narrative beating them up, that they're failing. They're failing at work, they're feeling at home, they're failing in life. We don't

know what balance is, we're just sure we don't have it. We don't know what we're supposed to do with our time, we're just sure we're doing the wrong thing. No matter what we do, it's somehow the wrong thing.

And so the message of this book is not about how to do more. It's not about productivity, efficiency, multitasking, we've tried all that.

Annie: Right.

Christy: It's actually a message of freedom. That goes, "You're doing better than you think. And I want to show you how you can do very simple things to align your time with things that give you joy and fulfillment, that actually lead to that sense of balance." Because what I have found is we say we want balance, we can't stop talking about this word. Whether we hate it or not, we're like, "How do you balance? How do you balance it all?" And what I have found is that despite all of our analogies, okay, we've got the juggling balls, spinning plates, walking the tightropes.

Annie: Right.

Christy: I can do all that, Annie, and still feel out of balance.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: I've tried that. And I've tried, "Oh I just didn't wake up earlier." Yeah, "I need a better morning routine. I need a new app, I need to multitask, be efficient, be productive, stay a player." And we're exhausted.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: We don't feel any more in-balance. And so it led me to ask a different question, "What if balance isn't so much something you do, how you balance it all, like a verb?" What if balance is something you create in your life where you could be balanced and still be busy? Where you could be balanced in an out-of-balance world. Where balance looks more like peace, being confident in your choices, being proud of how you spend your time, and finally shaking the guilt. I think that's what we're really after. I think it's not about the calendar, it's about enjoying the life the calendar represents.

Annie: Yeah. The frustrating thing for me is when I feel out of balance when one area of my life is getting more attention or more of my time. I've heard you say this a lot on Business Boutique events, that being, let me think of how you said it, "You're never 50% here and 50% there."

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: You need to be 100% at work and then 100% at home, if I'm remembering that, is that how you teach it?

Christy: Yeah, you got it exactly right. We think of life balance as a 50/50 split between work and home, and that's not realistic.

Annie: Right.

Christy: It's really about being 100% present where you are.

Annie: Yes, yes.

Christy: And that helps you shake the guilt.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: That's a piece of it, for sure.

Annie: And the problem for me has been okay, if, so mine can be work gets more of my attention than it, I don't like shooting people, work gets a lot of my attention, and other places suffer. Well-

Christy: You neglect them.

Annie: Yeah. The problem is if something goes sideways at work, it feels eight degrees deeper than it actually is. Because, "I'm giving my everything here, nothing should go wrong."

Christy: Right.

Annie: Right?

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: Whereas like, if there's balance, you're going, "Hey, I'm doing my best in all these places." Of course, there's going to be mistakes. But when you're out of balance, so are your emotions, so are your feelings. And then when something goes sideways in the place that you thought, "I put everything there. I'm unbalanced. I decided to put everything there." And now something is messed up?

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: Well, now I'm spinning out.

Christy: Well, and you make a really good point because I think that we have this unspoken pressure that we're going to do everything all the time. So it's like we could be rocking it at work because that's the right thing to do. In this season, we're all in, we're working long days, we're traveling on the road, you know what that feels like, and that's actually the right thing for us. But then often what we do is instead of focus on that, and we're proud of that, we say, "Yeah, I'm doing what I set out to do." We focus on what we're not doing, those areas we're neglecting and then we just feel guilty, and it's that narrative that we're failing.

So you do, I use the example of the to-do list, but you could use it with the calendar or anything, you got 50 things on your to-do list, you get 47 done, and you go, "Ah the three." You just beat yourself up for the three.

Annie: Right.

Christy: Well, if we live our whole lives focusing on where we're not. The thing we had to decline, the thing we didn't show up for, the thing we didn't get to on our to-do lists. Then, of course, you feel guilty because you're spending your entire life focusing on where you're not and what you're not doing.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: But here's the thing, in place of those couple of things you didn't get to or didn't spend time on, there's a long list of successes, there's a long list of things you did well. And so I want to help people shift their focus, not just spend their time on the right things, but then acknowledge that they're right and be proud of the fact that they're right.

We had the Olympics this summer, and an Olympian training for 60-hours a week, that's right for them, that's the right thing at the right time.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: A mom that just had a baby, and she is just trying to get a shower a week and trying to get some sleep, that's right for her right now. Someone get their business off the ground or fill in the blank, launching a book, in my case. To your point, there are going to be seasons where one area gets more of our attention, and that's not something to be ashamed of or feel bad about.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: It's actually the right thing at that right time. And so you give yourself grace to choose what's going to fall below the line. But then to your point, when you put a lot of your eggs in that basket or you're focusing on that, we do have this heightened emotion because that feels like it's the thing at the time-

Annie: It's the thing. Right. One of the tips you put in the book is you said, "Have a weekly calendar."

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: But then you said, "Have a blank weekly calendar."

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: Why do you need to have a blank one and the one you fill out?

Christy: So it's an exercise I walk you through, and how to create your ideal schedule.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: Because what people struggle with is they struggle by looking at their existing calendar, which is full. Okay, their plate is full, it's full of commitments, and they can't see the forest through the trees. And so it's like, "I don't know what's right and what's not right, I just try to move the puzzle pieces around." And it's hard to think clearly when you're in the weeds.

So the idea is get out of the weeds, and I want you to take a blank calendar, and then I walk you through step-by-step of how to create your ideal schedule. First, you add things you have to do, like work or take your kids to school or whatever. Then you add things that are on your current calendar that you want to do. So these are things in alignment with my priorities, things that give me life, things that are fun, things that are moving me towards the direction I want to go.

And then you add new things that maybe you've never had time for before, like a date night or a workout or a hobby or whatever starting that business. And what you'll find is what you're left with is your ideal schedule. And of course, we know we can't just flip a switch and work that overnight.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: But what we do is we look at our current schedule, and we begin to make incremental changes. So let's say my rule of thumb, it's super loose, but around 25% a week. So maybe this week, you're like, "Oh, wow, there's a volunteer commitment my heart's not in anymore, I'm going to find someone else to fill in." Okay, "I really need to go to bed earlier, I'm going to set an earlier bedtime." I can start that this week.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: And then next week, "Okay, I'm going to backfill on this..." And 25% per week you make these incremental changes, in a month, you should be working your ideal schedule.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: But that clarity comes from having a blank slate. It's really hard to think clearly when you're looking at the mess you've been living in for a long time.

Annie: In the beginning of the book, you tell a story of writing down, I would love for you to retell the story if you don't mind. But finally making a list of everything you had to do.

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: And then counting up the hours, will you tell that story?

Christy: Yes. So this is May of 2016 and I would love to say that was the last time I felt overwhelmed. Just like no, this is just one of the many examples.

Annie: As I was reading it, we were on the road with Business Boutique.

Christy: Yes. Yes.

Annie: And I remember thinking we were both doing the event and when we weren't on stage we were working on something else.

Christy: Yes.

Annie: We were not just sitting around in between-

Christy: Hanging out.

Annie: No. We were, and I remember as I was reading it, I was like, "Me and Christy were on the road a ton then together, right?"

Christy: Mh-hmm.

Annie: Because Business Boutique started in '14?

Christy: '15.

Annie: '15. Yeah, so we're on the road '16 and '17 right?

Christy: Yeah. Yeah.

Annie: And, so I thought it was very interesting, so tell the story about writing all this down.

Christy: Well, it was one of those things where I kept saying, "Yes" to things in a vacuum. They were all good things, they were all things I wanted to do, they were all great opportunities, all separate. And then because I said all these separate yeses, I started to feel the weight of having to deliver on some of those things, and I started to feel like I was literally in quicksand.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: I was just like, "I can't keep up, I can't keep up." By the way, I was pregnant, I was five months pregnant. So I'm exhausted-

Annie: With your second?

Christy: Yes. Trying to prepare for maternity leave coming up and all that. But we're launching a podcast, we're launching my coaching group, the Business Boutique Academy, we were still doing events like it was a lot of new things that we were launching. And I was creating every word of every content for all of them. So one day, after I had said all these yeses, and I was feeling the weight of them, I mean, I felt like "I feel like I'm in quicksand, and I can't keep my head up."

I sat down and tallied it all up, I looked at the hours needed between that day, and when all that stuff was due. And it was around a month or so I feel like, sorry the hours I had available in that next month. And then the hours needed for all of those things I had committed to, and I literally did not, it was like something like 400 something is what I had, and I had less than that or more than that I needed for the work. And that was if I never ate or went to the bathroom.

Annie: Right. Right.

Christy: It was the most unrealistic.

Annie: Right.

Christy: And I was like, "oh, something has to change."

Annie: "I literally don't have the hours to do all the things."

Christy: Yes.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: So no one probably remembers this, but at that time, we were going to launch the Business Boutique Podcast in May, and we bumped it to like August or October and it was a result of that.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: Come to Jesus moment of I literally no matter how fast or hard or smart I worked it's too much.

Annie: When I read that I thought, "I actually need to sit down..." I think it would actually be a very good reality check.

Christy: Yes.

Annie: Because a thing that I don't like is when other people say, "You are so busy." I'm like, "You don't actually know, that's not fair, you don't know about my life."

Christy: "You don't know me."

Annie: "You don't know my schedule." But even in my own head, I want to make sure I'm telling myself the truth.

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: Of like, "Oh, you are too busy." Or, B, "You keep feeling busy but you're doing 32-hours of work a week."

Christy: Right.

Annie: So why aren't you telling yourself the truth?

Annie: Yeah. I think that's so much of what you're saying in Take Back Your Time is maybe tell yourself the truth about how you're spending your life?

Christy: There's such an element of personal responsibility and self-awareness. So a lot of the questions I ask you in this book are not surface level, let's-rearrange-the-calendar question. It's like, "Why did you say yes to that thing?"

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: Was it because your two-year-old actually cares about wearing a monogrammed smoked outfit to church? Or is it because you want people to think you're a good mom? "Why are you stressing yourself out about making homemade cookies for everyone in the neighborhood?" Is it because they actually need them and it matters or because you just want to prove yourself in some way.

So we really peel away the layers, and I am the first to admit I'm guilty of so many of these things of trying to earn love, of trying to prove myself, of trying to overdo it to show I'm a good mom. But what's interesting, Annie, is if we don't stop to ask ourselves some of these questions about our motivations, to be honest with ourselves, as you said. Then we're going to work really hard for a life that we don't even want to live.

Annie: Right.

Christy: And we're going to work really hard, but end up becoming a person we don't like, in a life that we don't like. And I have been down this path where I am obsessing over the wrong things. I'm exhausted trying to control them with my kids or with my work or whatever. And I actually become an angry, anxious, controlling person. And I'm like, "This is not who I want to be." So one of the thesis of the whole book is life balance is not doing everything for an equal amount of time. It's about doing the right things at the right time. And when you do that you feel the sense of balance you've been looking for.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: And so I walk you through five tactical steps. I love tactical because it's like, "Show me what to do and I'll do it."

Annie: I love that you teach us like that.

Christy: And so step one is decide what matters. Well, that can be hard, so your point earlier about the calendar, I don't know, gosh, everything feels important. Women, in particular, were bad at prioritizing, everything's created equal, we're just going to multitask and run faster to get it all in. But because that can be hard to answer, I ask you a different question. I say, "Okay, let's look at this differently. Instead of asking yourself, 'What do I need to do? Or what do I want to do? Or what matters?' Ask yourself this, 'Who do I want to be?'"

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Christy: "Who do I want to be to my family? Who do I want to be in my work? Who do I want to be in life? What I want to be known for? And when we ask ourselves that question, and we write down even just three to five adjectives. And it can be specific to your season, like, "Hey, in the summer, I want to be fun mom, I'm at the lake hanging out. In the fall, I'm hard-working Christy and we are on the road."

Annie: Yeah. Yeah.

Christy: It can change based on your season. But it gives you clarity, about what to do when you know who you want to be. Because then you begin to put things in your calendar that allows you to be the person you want to be. And so there's something powerful in that reflection and taking it to a deeper level, and it makes decision making easier.

[00:21:49] <Music>

Annie: Hey, friends, just interrupting this conversation real quick, to share about one of our incredible partners, Indeed. When you pay for a job site, you should know what you're getting. Get Indeed and only pay for quality candidates that match your must-haves requirements. When hiring is challenging and is usually is, you need Indeed, the job site that makes hiring incredibly simple. Just attract, interview, and hire.

In fact, with Indeed you can do all of your hiring in one place, even the interviewing. Now, you know, I'm about hope, but you can't just hope your perfect candidate will find you. Indeed's hiring tools help you cut through the noise to hire faster and smarter. In fact, Indeed, Instant Match provides a list of quality candidates, whose resumes are on Indeed, and you get them the moment you post or a sponsor job.

Indeed knows how important it is to make the most of both your recruiting hours and dollars. With Indeed, you can save time and money by setting your

must-have qualifications and only paying for the quality candidates that meet them. According to TalentNest, Indeed delivers four times more hires than all the other job sites combined, y'all.

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[00:23:21] <Music>

Annie: We were hiring for the That Sound Fun Network, and we gave our job description to the business, our business coach. And he said, "Well, who is doing all of this now?" And we're like, "We are." Like-

Christy: That's why we're hiring.

Annie: ...women in the workforce, we just show up and do the whole job.

Christy: All of it.

Annie: Like we just do the whole job. And so like, someone had to do it so we did it. So everyone we know that are working in their homes or out of their homes. Whether they've started small businesses or they're running their home as their job, women just, everything needs-

Christy: Lets' just do it.

Annie: We just do, we have to do the whole job.

Christy: Right?

Annie: It just, what other choice do we have? Is what I often say.

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: And so for our friends listening who feel that everything's equal. I feel that, Christy, everything's equal. How do we start sorting that out? Is it making the list of how we're spending our hours?

Christy: Well, it comes down to prioritizing and as tactical as that sounds, and as like, not fun as that sounds.

Annie: I don't know how?

Christy: Here's the thing when you say it all feels important, it does feel that but it's not.

Annie: Right, if that's what you are saying. Yes.

Christy: It's just not.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: It's just not. So here, let's talk about priorities, and I dive into this in the book. But I love teaching this because I like calling out my Christian friends on this. Because Christians can be pretty bad about this, so I'll talk about priorities every now and then. And here's one of my Christian friends might say, "Well, I know my priorities. My priorities are-"

Annie: Are all your Christian friends Southern?

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: Okay.

Christy: You know I love a good dramatic effect.

Annie: That's right, let's do it.

Christy: My priorities are God, others, self, in that order." And Amen." I'm like that is a beautiful Sunday school answer, that didn't help me manage my Tuesday.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: So I'm going to need you to look at this from a more practical standpoint. So here's how I break it down in the book. Yes, we all have a set of fixed priorities, these are concrete, they are basically in stone. When push comes to shove, and all hell breaks loose, this is what matters most, of course, my kids fall above my work on that list.

Annie: Right.

Christy: Now, thankfully, we don't live in a world where all hell is breaking loose most of the time.

Annie: Right.

Christy: So what we need is we need a separate set of priorities that are what I call flexible priorities.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Christy: And these are most current, specific, and relevant to the season you're in. So you look at your season, and even within that your week, and even within that your day, and go "Okay, I'm going to put things, my top three to five things in order of importance. So everything is not created equal, my time is finite." And instead of trying to shove it all above the line, like we do, if there's a line of cut-off or something's not going to make it. We just try to shove it all above the line, and say "I can multitask, I can run faster, I can wake up earlier." Things will drop, they always do.

But the problem is unless you intentionally decide what makes the cut and what doesn't, then you don't get to say what drops.

Annie: You don't get to decide, yeah.

Christy: And the wrong things drop, and the wrong things fall, and that's where your guilt comes from.

Annie: Oh that's interesting.

Christy: So I'm just going to say design this and say, "First, second, third, fourth, fifth most important, I'm going to decide what makes the cut and what doesn't." So when you do that, here's what's so powerful, Annie, you're choosing your yesses and you're choosing your nos so you don't feel a victim to your nos. Now, let's go ahead and acknowledge there are some seasons, and I'll use my last two seasons as a teaching example here.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: There are some seasons that are just easier in life. And so more things make it above the line. "This summer I was fun mom, I had a clean house, I was working out, seeing my friends." All kinds of stuff made it about the line because it was just a little bit easier season in general. Right now, three things, three things make the cut.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: That is launching this book, and that is first, and yes, it's above my kids. You know what that means? That means if I get an opportunity to go to New York or go on a speaking event, instead of having dinner with my kids, I'm going to go.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: Because I'm staying in this season, my practical, flexible priority is that work comes first, so I'm launching the book. Second is family, anytime I can see my kids outside of that. And third-

Annie: And your husband, Matt. Hi Matt.

Christy: Sure, sure family. Yeah, family all together. Third is seminary, I'm in seminary, which is ridiculous.

Annie: I didn't know that, wait you didn't tell me you're in seminary?

Christy: I know it's really-

Annie: Christy, oh I do know this in the back of my head, as soon as you started talking about it. Yes, I remember. Okay, I remember sorry, sorry.

Christy: Okay, so only those three, because all three of those are super consuming.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: Make it above the line. So you know what is not making the cut? My house is not clean, I'm not seeing my friends, and I'm not working out.

Annie: I suppose that's to say we're not going to Vegas right now?

Christy: We're sure not.

Annie: No.

Christy: We're sure not. So I could walk through my house, and I can step over toys, and not feel like a failure.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: Because I look at that and I go, "Girl, you're reading 300 pages a week on Revelation. Okay, you're doing great, you're doing great. This is not the season, I have a perfectly kept house."

Annie: Right.

Christy: That was that season, it will come again. Just because something's not right, right now, it doesn't mean it'll never be right again. But I need to focus on what's right, right now that gives me permission to be proud of that and shake the guilt of things that are not going to make it above the line. So I'm just going to choose, "Hey, I'm going to let those toys go, and then I'm going to be proud of the things that do make the cut."

Annie: I really need to be better at this Christy. As you're saying that I'm going, I'm like, "Yeah, the things that are falling stress me out because I haven't decided what purposely gets to stay above the line."

Christy: Right. Right.

Annie: Except outside work. Well, that doesn't actually work in our jobs, because there is 15 things in our work.

Christy: Right.

Annie: And so just to say work is above the line is going to make something fall at work because I can't be that nondescript.

Christy: Well, when we don't do, this goes back to the calendar which is the tactical, that's step three in the path where you put everything on the calendar. But this goes back to the calendar where sometimes we don't feel like we ever are successful because we never define success.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: So what is success in work? How many hours is success?

Annie: Yes.

Christy: If you don't define it, then, of course, there's always work left to be done, and that's some of the problem, Annie. With your kids it's never enough, with your house it's never enough, with your work it's never enough. So you always feel like, "Gosh, if I can just get it done, then I'll rest, then I'll have fun, then I'll be

proud of myself." And it never gets done, and so you never get there. And I'm trying to show you how to in a tactical way define success.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: So that you can work toward it, achieve it, be proud of it, and be happy with how you're spending your time.

Annie: It's interesting because I think there's a couple of pillars that don't move in my life.

Christy: Mh-hmm.

Annie: But you very kindly write about in the book how much I care about Sabbath.

Christy: That's right.

Annie: And my like 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. is pretty like non-negotiable for me.

Christy: Leave me alone.

Annie: Yeah. Which is a benefit of my life place. I do not have small kids, I do not have other people in my house. There will come a time where this, hopefully, is an uneasy couple of hours of my life, and then it'll be easy again.

Christy: Right.

Annie: You know, I have two friends that are empty nesters right now, they can do whatever they want in the mornings.

Christy: That's right.

Annie: So I have a couple of those. But this feels like what you're asking us and teaching us, in *Take Back Your Time* is, okay, so here is A level, here is B level, here is C level, of some different ways to prioritize, to make sure you're getting to live the life you want to live?

Christy: Well it puts you back in the driver's seat. You're already in it, you just have forgotten it. You already have this control, anything on your calendar is something you put there or you allowed to be there, we're not victims.

Annie: That's it. You allowed it to be there. I know.

Christy: Yeah, we're not victims. Someone called, I took a call on the show the other day and she goes, "Well, I just need help with all these things that sneak on my calendar?" I go, "Girl, they don't sneak on there, you put them there, you allowed them there."

Annie: Right.

Christy: So let me use an analogy because I think this prioritizing piece is really powerful, and I love visuals for teaching. I use an analogy in the book of my house.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: So, Annie, real talk, I cannot keep my whole house clean at one time. It's not because it's that big, it's because my kids are faster and messy-

Annie: They are everywhere.

Christy: That's right. Than I can clean.

Annie: Two boys and a girl?

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: And they all move on their own at this point?

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: None are babies that can be contained.

Christy: Yeah, yeah. So this is what we're working with, so I've gotten realistic with this. It's like, "Could I spend every minute cleaning? Yeah, but then I wouldn't enjoy my kids." So I want to enjoy my kids. So then I've narrowed it down, "Okay, if everything," in this example, "If everything's not going to make the cut, what makes the cut?"

So I've chosen three rooms, my kitchen, my living room, and my bedroom. I spend the most of my time in those rooms, I want them to be clean. So I work hard and they're clean most of the time. The bonus room, the kids' rooms, the deck where toys all live and they're going to be messed up two seconds later, I'll let those go.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: So that means I choose that. Now, this sounds really simple, but that means that when I walk in the playroom, and it's a disaster, I no longer think "Oh, you're failing, you need to clean this up. You need to get up here, you need to pick up these toys." That narrative, that tape is no longer there.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: Because I look at that I go, "Oh, I chose this. I chose this mess because this "No" that I'm letting go represents a better "Yes" somewhere else. Time better spent somewhere else because let me tell you 5:30 to seven, I want to be playing with my kids not cleaning up after my kids. And so the undercurrent of everything I'm teaching in this book is a message of empowerment and freedom. To set you free in your life where we can get rid of that, that's why I love the tagline, "The Guilt-Free Guide to Life Balance."

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: I'm like what we're really fixing here isn't so much a calendar problem, it's a guilt problem. And then oh, by the way, we'll fix the calendar too.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. You know, we get questions from our friends on the AFD, Week in Review email on Fridays. We say, "Hey, Christy is coming next week."

Christy: I love it.

Annie: And then they ask questions, it's awesome. Merrily, sweet name, asked this, I think this is a great question right along with lines of this. She's asking how do you transition well? How do you let go of an old season and go into a new season? And what are some guardrails to hold on to, so when you're thinking about what you prioritize, and what you let go, how do you transition seasons? So you're single, you're getting married. You're pregnant, you're having a baby. You're going to a new job, you're moving to a new city, how do you do that well?

Christy: I love this question. The fact that she-

Annie: There you go Merrily.

Christy: Merrily, I love Merrily. I love this question, because she's realizing that it's happening, and most people don't.

Annie: Right. Right.

Christy: So here is one of the things we do, we have a baby, and then we keep all the pressure on ourselves that we had before kids and wonder why we can't do it all.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: I tell people all the time when things change, things need to change.

Annie: Oh, that's great.

Christy: So real quickly, I'll do the layout of the path of the book so it makes sense in this answer. So life balance is doing the right thing at the right time. How do you do that? It's five very easy steps. Number one, decide what matters. Number two, stop doing what doesn't matter, I won't even get on my soapbox next, we all do that. Step three, create a calendar that reflects what matters. Step four, protect what matters with boundaries and saying no. And Step five, be present for what matters, because even if you create the most perfect schedule in the world, if you're not present for it, you miss it. Now, here's the thing this path is designed like a cycle where you follow it in any new season.

Annie: Ah, smart.

Christy: So where we tend to think of priorities as this set it and forget it, our season changes, and we hold ourselves to the pressures and expectations of the last season.

Annie: Right.

Christy: So the very, and I actually talked about this in the chapter on Seasons, but the very first step is to acknowledge that you're in a new season.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: Acknowledge, "Oh, wow, this used to be really important, but now you don't have this health diagnosis I've got to take care of my body. I've got these doctor's appointments." Okay, things have changed.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: So what needs to change? In this new season or, "Man, one of my kids is really struggling in school, they need a lot of help." Or "I'm getting my business off the ground this is taking a ton of time." So what I want you to do is first acknowledge, "I'm in a new season." The second thing I want you to do is look at what needs to happen to adapt to it. How do you need to adapt to the season?

What do you need to let go of that no longer serves you, that's no longer makes the cut in this new season?

Annie: Yes.

Christy: And what do you need to add? Maybe you need to add, I'll be honest right now, I realized this about a week and a half ago, almost all day every day I'm on camera. And just using my face at that level of enthusiasm, my face muscles, I think I actually need more sleep at night than I normally do.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Christy: Because I'm so tired by the time I get home because it's not meetings in writing, it's my face, and performing and talking. So I've started to adapt and go to bed earlier so that I can adapt to the season. So the first step is to acknowledge it, the second is to adapt to it. So I encourage people in any new season go back to step one.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: Decide what matters in this new season.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: Stop doing what doesn't matter in this new season. Put it on the calendar of this new season and settle in it.

Annie: And you've got to get yourself out of the guilt of... So if you think about working out and you go, "I had so much time."

Christy: Mh-hmm.

Annie: And then you're like, "In this season that's not above the line."

Christy: Right.

Annie: And if you don't acknowledge like that is okay. That, that... I'm not failing

Christy: No.

Annie: Because it's below the line-

Christy: You decide this.

Annie: This is my choice for this season, it will come back above the line.

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: And not on January 1st because it's New Year's new you, but because when the right time comes.

Christy: Well, and I think it comes back to what we're talking about. Because I give you several questions to ask yourself to help you make decisions when you feel stuck, you don't have to go through these every time. But sometimes when we feel stuck in a decision, we're not sure how to move forward. And we ask ourselves all these other questions like, "Well, is it a good opportunity? Well, I guess I should say yes." A good thing at the wrong time is the wrong thing.

Annie: Listen, talk about dating relationships. The right guy at the wrong time is the wrong guy.

Christy: That's right.

Annie: Right.

Christy: And so the most basic question I would share with someone to help you constantly assess your season, even your week, even your day as things change, is what's right, right now? What's right, right now? What's right, right now is working a 16-hour day. What's right, right now is taking a vacation. What's right, right now is a Sabbath. What's right, right now? And then it just frees you of that guilt. Because, again, I want to focus on people, I want to not just help them align their time with what's right, I want to focus their attention toward it.

Where they say, "Hey, I'm not going to focus on the fact that I'm not working out, I'm going to focus on what I am doing." I'm, fill in the blank, "Launching a book, taking care of a parent, taking care of a newborn." You look for the good and the success in what you are doing and watch how that transforms your appreciation of it, and even your enjoyment of it. You enjoy your life more when you focus on what you're doing right, instead of feeling guilty for what you're doing wrong or what you think you're doing wrong.

Annie: One of the questions that came in was about the level of anxiety one of our friends feels over being a small business owner.

Christy: Yeah.

- Annie:** And you deal with small business owners all the time, through Business Boutique, and through your coaching and all this stuff, and through Business Boutique Academy, which I love. I mean, you know me, I'm such a Business Boutique fangirl, because I've been at almost every conference.
- Christy:** You're basically part of the family.
- Annie:** I know, I hope so I feel like I am. But it feels like what you're saying is that some of the anxiety that some of us as business owners feel, maybe an opportunity to re-prioritize.
- Christy:** It is that. And I will just call out my business owners for a second. There's a lack of prioritizing because a lot of us are creative, a lot of us have 100 ideas a second, they're all brilliant ideas. And we get distracted by a squirrel every two seconds, and so we feel scattered because we are scattered.
- Annie:** Mh-hmm.
- Christy:** So there is something to prioritizing, but there's also something very simple to just writing it down.
- Annie:** Wow, yeah.
- Christy:** Like have a plan because our minds are so creative, I think it was David Allen that said, "Our mind is for having ideas not holding them." And we try to hold them.
- Annie:** Yes.
- Christy:** And so your brain is burning so many calories, working so hard to hold all these ideas, and organize them, and store them, and prioritize them. Put it on paper at the beginning of the day, seriously write down, "If I get nothing else done today, I want to get these top three things done."
- Annie:** Wow.
- Christy:** It will force an unfocused person, a creative, to focus. It gives you a system in order to do what you say you want to do, and even do what's most important. Because a lot of entrepreneurs do a lot of crap that doesn't ROI in their business.
- Annie:** Right.

Christy: This is going to focus you on what's going to have an actual result in your business. I think Craig Groeschel, I love how he talked about this at Entree Leadership two years ago, and he said, "Our ability to succeed is not about goals, it's about our systems."

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Christy: We have systems by intent or by default.

Annie: Oh, you're living in a system whether you plan to or not.

Christy: Yes.

Annie: Okay.

Christy: So my system of hitting snooze 400 times in the morning sucks, but it's a system.

Annie: Right.

Christy: You can fix your system. And so-

Annie: Right. Me dumping two loads of laundry on my bed.

Christy: Sure.

Annie: That's a system.

Christy: Sure.

Annie: It's not the best system, but it's the system I've created.

Christy: And the one we all use. He also has a great quote, he said something like, "Weak systems make great leaders look bad." Because even if the leader is awesome, if the system sucks then you're going to have pitiful results.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: And so there's something to entrepreneurs to having the discipline to put on paper a plan, your priorities, it could be so simple, y'all. I'm talking a sticky note or a napkin with your top three things you're doing today.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: Just so when that new idea pops in your head around one o'clock after lunch, and you're really excited about it. You're not going to act on it because you freaking have your top three things you need to do today. Focus on those things to follow through.

Annie: Turn the page and put it on tomorrow.

Christy: That's right.

Annie: That's right. I mean, you don't need-

Christy: You can capture them, for sure.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: But we just, man, and there's something to that is just part of the magic of entrepreneurship is the scrappiness. And like fly by the seat of our pants, we're addicted to the adrenaline, "Oh, I'll figure it out as I go." Which is so awesome, and also like at some point, get it together, get sophisticated, and have a system.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: If you've done this thing 400 times, stop reinventing the wheel, like put together a system for the thing.

[00:39:17] <Music>

Annie: Hey friends, just taking a short break from this conversation to give a shout out to one of our amazing partners, Thrive Market. I absolutely love being a member of Thrive Market. Thrive is an online membership-based market on a mission to make healthy living easy and affordable for everyone. As the weather cools down, I get geared up for my soup making, I love it, and Thrive keeps me stuck on the canned goods and bone broth I need for all my favorite soup recipes.

The fact that they deliver them right to my door makes it that much better, so convenient. ordering from Thrive makes my very busy life a little bit easier. And I love sharing that kind of thing with, y'all, because I know you're busy too, we all are. With Thrive you get the chance to give back through their Thrive Gives one-for-one matching program, which I love.

Every paid membership sponsors a free one for a low-income family. And that's in addition to getting affordable, healthy foods and beauty products. Thrive has an amazing selection of high-quality health foods and you can shop their site

according to over 70 eating plans like keto or vegan or gluten-free. It's a one-stop shop for everything you need organic groceries, clean beauty supplies, safe supplements, and non-toxic home goods.

Thrive Market works directly with all of our favorite organic brands so that you get the highest quality products without the retail markups. So go to thrivemarket.com/thatoundsfun and join today to get \$20 off your first order. And a free gift. That's thrivemarket.com/thatoundsfun to get \$20 off your first order and a free gift. [Thrivemarket.com/thatoundsfun](https://thrivemarket.com/thatoundsfun). And now back to finish our conversation with Christy.

[00:40:54] <Music>

Annie: When I started my company and started doing this, and it was me and an intern or me and a part-time assistant or whoever was I lived and died by lists.

Christy: Mh-hmm.

Annie: Because I knew that I would never get my job done, if I didn't, and I was trying to build the thing, right?

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: And the list matter, the list matter so much. I didn't need a fancy app.

Christy: Yap.

Annie: Let me just tell you about Annie.

Christy: Okay.

Annie: If Annie in 2021 was starting a new company was listening to this, starting a new business starting something. I'd go "Okay, well, all I'm going to do tomorrow is find all the right supplies. I'm going to go get the new pens, I'm going to find the right app." And real Annie would say to you, "Do not do that."

Christy: Mh-hmm.

Annie: "Pull out the calendar you've already been using and make a list for tomorrow."

Christy: That's right.

Annie: Do not spend four days of this work-week, there's only three more days left, don't spend three more days of this work-week figuring out how to have systems just start your system, right?

Christy: Yeah. Start doing something. And I think you make such a good point, because so many of us are so creative, and we have so much fun. But then we get poor results, then we feel like "Oh well, see, I knew I was never cut out for business." Or "Oh, the business is just overwhelming."

Annie: Right, Christy.

Christy: No, you can be a better steward and focus on this thing.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: And I think it's one of those that if you will simply have the discipline to write it down, and have a plan, you will get the results that you want to get.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: And it's just having the discipline to do it.

Annie: When I used to get to run the Business Boutique's Q&As people asked this every time, it was one of my favorite things, Christy, because you would always say, "Don't let them have the microphone. You hold the microphone and let them talk into it." And they would pull, and they would want, and I was like, "No."

Christy: Every time.

Annie: "I am stronger than you, I do this every weekend." Every time people say, "When do I hire an assistant? When do I hire somebody?" So will you talk to our friends who are starting businesses, when do you have someone start cleaning your house? If that goes below the line for you? When do you hire an assistant? When do you hire a business coach?

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: When do you hire a CPA? When do we bring other people into the business to help us take back our time?

Christy: Yeah, well, you can look at it one of two ways. You can look at it in the mathematical way, which is where you literally give yourself \$1 per-hour rate.

And when you would be paying yourself more than you would be paying someone else you hire someone else to do that.

Annie: Oh, smart.

Christy: Because you would then, I'm going to go, say I make \$75 an hour in my business. I'm going to work in my business for \$75 an hour I'm going to pay someone \$25 an hour to do this versus me doing it because that's too expensive for what I'm paying-

Annie: Or does it take you six hours to clean your house, and it will take a cleaning team one hour to clean your house.

Christy: Right. I tend to lean more towards the more kind of, ambiguous way to look at it, which is when you want to.

Annie: Right, do you want an assistant?

Christy: When you freaking-

Annie: Hire one.

Christy: ...I don't care what you think your hourly rate is. If you need help around your house, and you can afford it, get it.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: If you need help in your business, get it.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Christy: And so I think sometimes we can get so caught up in the math, and the percentages, and justifying. And man, I'm just going to call out women for a second, women are freaking the worst at investing in themselves, paying for things they will not... All the women that come to our Business Boutique Conference, which is happening in a few weeks, I guess, it's October 14th, 15th, their husbands sent them, Annie. Their husbands bought them tickets because they will not buy themselves tickets.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: And it kills me because there's something in us going on there with worth which I won't get into. But I think the best rule of thumb is if you can afford it, whenever

you freaking want to, you just get it. But something you said a minute ago with entrepreneurs that I want to make sure I hit on because we said this a second ago. In life or in business you have to define success.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: So when I became a certified business coach a decade ago and life coach. We learned one of the most basic things at the beginning of the coaching session, and we were sitting down during a coaching session, I'd say, "Annie, what do you want to get out of today?" And you'd talk for a minute and I'd say, "Okay, so what do you want to get out of today?" I would ask about, okay, "So how would you define success?" So when we get to the end of our session, if we done this, we figured out a job description for your new hire.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: That will be a success. I going to say it about four or five times, because it's going to force my client to identify what they want so that I, as the coach, can drive toward it.

Annie: It's during some counseling and coaching?

Christy: Yes, yes.

Annie: Yes, that's interesting.

Christy: And so if you don't define success in your business, in your life, in your day, then that's why you feel like you never hit it.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: It's not because it's not possible, but it's because you can't achieve something you never define.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: So define: what does success look like today?

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: If success is, "I'm going to play with my kids all day." Cool, name it and then don't you dare feel guilty that you didn't get work done.

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Christy: Because you named success is this.

Annie: That's right.

Christy: Do it in your work, do it in your business, "Success is-." And then if you have margin-left over afterward, and you want to tackle some of those creative ideas that you captured on your napkin, cool. But define success so you know what you're aiming toward, it's going to help you actually feel that fulfillment you want.

Annie: Yes, I mean, that is why taking a day to rest.

Christy: Mh-hmm.

Annie: You go, "My goal today is to not work. My goal today is to not open Instagram."

Christy: Mh-hmm.

Annie: And then you get the end of the day you go, "Hey, look at that I actually did the thing."

Annie: Right.

Christy: I said, "From this time to this time, I was not going to open any work things."

Christy: Yes.

Annie: And I didn't.

Christy: So one of the things that's a practice I've started doing because as we were talking about priorities, you can set them for your season, and they're a little more high level.

Annie: Yap.

Christy: Then you said-

Annie: I did love that though, I loved that section on how to set your seasonal goals, I love that.

Christy: Yes. Your season will determine what is important to you.

Annie: And this is why people need to go ahead and get the book today. Because this is, I mean, we're entering Quarter 4, October, November, December.

Christy: Yes.

Annie: So set a season to your seasonal goals.

Christy: Yes. What's a priority? But then within that season, there's going to be a week that may be a little different. It's like, "Hey, this season, this is what the priorities look like." Even within that, so Sunday night is our time, my husband and I have time that we connect. "Hey, what have you got going on this week?"

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: "I'm working late, you're taking them to soccer." It's just a good connection point for families or your team or whoever. But then let's say that I set some goals on Sunday. And I'm like, "I'm going to do this, this, and this, this week." Well, Thursday comes around and I'm freaking tired, and I don't feel like accomplishing all these things that I set on Sunday when I was bright-eyed and bushy-tailed had all this energy.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: That's the reason that even within the season, I still encourage people to each day, start your day, and I mean, this is a two-minute exercise, Annie, two minutes, it takes no time. You just start your day and go, "Okay, let me check in with myself, how am I doing? How am I feeling?"

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: So with that in mind, what do I want to do today? Because here's what we do, and I think everybody does it. But entrepreneurs definitely do it and women definitely do it, I know that much. Because I am both and I work with both, and so I see this. We wake up, we pour our coffee, and we run, and we never check in to see how we're doing. We never even consider ourselves in our life, in our days.

And so there have been days that truly a Thursday, I'll wake up and I will sit down for two minutes and go, "How am I doing? And what do I want today to look like?" And once I check in with myself, I go "I'm putting zero things on my to-do list today."

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: "I just need to get through the meetings. I just need to get through the kids' dinner and bath time that's all I've got in me today."

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: And when you stop being this cruel taskmaster in your own life, you actually enjoy your life more.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: And you enjoy yourself more and you wait for it, consider yourself before you pile that work on each season, each week. But even each day, just check in with yourself and go "What does success look like today? But how am I doing? Before I pile on the work."

Annie: Right. We call it being a good friend to yourself around here. A lot of like how would you speak to a friend-

Christy: That's right, that's good.

Annie: ...when you woke up and said, "How are you? How are you today?" Is the first thing you say when you wake up next to somebody is, "How are you? You all right?"

Christy: Right.

Annie: Man that is really good, Christy. What did we not say you want to make sure we say? Is there anything else we didn't cover?

Christy: So one of the things I see and I'm guilty of this, Annie, is kind of in light of all these ideas that pop in our head. I know Creatives do this, entrepreneurs do this, women do this, our minds are running 100 miles an hour. Here is what happens, here is a scenario, I want you to tell me and tell me if you've ever done this, okay?

Annie: Yes. You know me so well but I'm sure I do-

Christy: I'm sure you do. So an idea pops in your head, this happens 100 times a day.

Annie: Yes.

Christy: And it looks something like this like, "You know what I could do? I could hand-write thank you notes to everyone that has ever bought one of my books in Nashville. All of my Nashville friends, gosh, I love those people, they have supported me."

Annie: Right.

Christy: "That's what... Yes, I could do that."

Annie: Yes.

Christy: Okay, starts as that, starts as a could.

Annie: Uh-huh.

Christy: Somehow, mysteriously, over throughout the day it turns into, "I should."

Annie: It turns into, "I should" and we don't should around here.

Christy: "I've got to write these thank yous. I've got to go write thank yous. Thank you notes. I'm going to sit down, no, I don't, I got to write at least five lines to the note. I'm going to get envelopes. Stamps, where are the stamps? I got to go to the post office." And you are stressing about something that started as a "could". Check your coulds, when they turn into shoulds go, "Who, decided it's a should, who decided? Because it probably was a stupid could that popped in your head, that you turned into a burden and you let it be a should."

Annie: That's right.

Christy: My best friend Jenny, she just sent me a Marco Polo, you know we love Marco Polo.

Annie: Oh we love Marco Polo.

Christy: Everyone in their 30s and 40s loves a Marco Polo.

Annie: Right.

Christy: My sister is like, "You're so old, we don't use that."

Annie: Oh, I love it so much.

Christy: She is like 17, and so she sent me a Marco Polo a couple of weeks ago, and she's like, "Yeah." I mean, you could hear the anxiety in her voice. She's like, "Yeah, I just decided when my kids went back to school, that I was going to go back to work part-time. And I'm getting my job and my resume in CareerBuilder and LinkedIn, and I just don't understand. No, I haven't been able..." Like you can hear she is frantic, stressing. Her kids have been in school for four and a half minutes, they've been in school like in no time.

Annie: Right.

Christy: So I sent her a Marco back, you know me, here we go.

Annie: Yeah,

Christy: "Yes, you're my best friend, but you're about to get coached, here we go.

Annie: Yeah, yeah.

Christy: And I said, "You know what's so crazy, Jenny, you decided that you were going to go back to work when your kids went back to school, so you can just decide not to."

Annie: Right.

Christy: "You can just decide not to. You can decide to do it in October or January or never."

Annie: Right.

Christy: So, so often we get an idea that pops in our head. Whether it's a could or I'm going to go back to work and it sounds like a good idea. And then it turns into this burden and this pressure. And man, Annie, people are walking around with tight chests, their shoulders are up by their ears, and they are tense, and you're going, "Hey, you've got the key."

Annie: Yes.

Christy: "You can let the pressure off and decide not to do that thing." And I just think-

Annie: Yes. When your coulds become shoulds.

Christy: Yeah, I think that's a powerful reminder that "Yes, there's some things we all have to do." Listen, I don't enjoy changing diapers, okay, it just has to happen.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: But we are more in control of our schedules and our to-do lists than we're willing to admit. And I want to remind people, "Hey, you got the key. You can get yourself out of that prison."

Annie: Right. Can we be evangelists for just a minute about Marco Polo? People younger than us are not using it?

Christy: Listen my friends-

Annie: Craig, are your friends using it? Oh, good. Say out loud.

Craig: My family is using it, my friends are using it. They are like guys are just like-

Christy: How old are you, Craig?

Craig: 27.

Annie: Oh boy!

Christy: Okay. Here is the thing I send-

Annie: Does your girlfriend use Marco Polo?

Craig: Yeah.

Annie: Yeah, of course, she is perfect.

Christy: My sister is like, I said 17 she's actually not, she is like, 21. I don't even know she is somewhere young.

Annie: And none of them use it?

Christy: And she always wants to FaceTime. And every time she's FaceTime, I'm like, "I'm changing a diaper." I'm like, "Now it's not the time to FaceTime, Whitney." And so I sent her this very nice text message back, it's like, "Hey," feeling so cool.

Annie: Yeah.

Christy: Because know the latest technology, Craig, it's called Marco Polo, Whitney, let me help you learn about the iPhone. I was like, "Whitney, have you heard of Marco Polo? It's this great app where you can send a video and get back to me later."

Annie: Right.

Christy: Because I'm thinking, "I'll never have the time to FaceTime you when you want it" And she wrote back, true story, "Lol, everyone in their 30s and 40s loves that app."

Annie: Oops.

Christy: Rude, rude. It's because we're busy, Whitney.

Annie: And we're so busy, it's so convenient. Every morning while I'm doing my hair or my makeup, I am listening to Marco Polos and responding. Unless I forget, and then you text me, and you say, "Annie, check your Marco Polo."

Christy: And I'm glad you want to go there because I was about to. I was like, "I sent you 47 congratulations on the New York Times." And she literally did not respond to any of them, Craig. I was like, "Oh, well, she got on The Times and also got on a high horse, and decided we're not friends."

Annie: I'm better. Now I have a rhythm in the mornings when I'm getting ready. So I'll Marco Polo you in the morning. We just need everyone to love Marco Polo, it's so much, it's great because you can tell a whole story to someone's face. And they can tell you a whole story back.

Christy: And you just get back to each other later.

Annie: Yes, when you want to.

Christy: You don't have to talk in real-time.

Annie: Yes, it's great.

Christy: Yeah, but it's so much faster than texting. Nobody has thumbs that fast for as much as stories we got to tell.

Annie: No, the way you and I tell stories, there's not a world where I can text that. I'm like, "I just need to see." I Marco Polo'd a friend that we are new as friends, and

I was like "Hey, I know we just met, I just have to tell you the whole story and I can't text that to you."

Christy: I'm just going to invite you to Marco Polo, accept this invitation. So don't freak out when all your contacts appear, just it's a part of the process just go with it.

Annie: Right. Ignore them until they talk to you. I hate to tell you they saw you join today. Well, I love *Take Back Your Time* I told you I read it, I am moved by it. I am a big seasons person, and so as we're entering into fall, technically, I'm really inspired to be thoughtful.

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: And to make sure I end this year the way I want to, and I start next year the way I want to.

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: So thank you for writing it, I can't wait for our friends to read it.

Christy: Oh my gosh, it's humbling.

Annie: The last question we always ask, you know this because could you been on the show. Because the show is called *That Sounds Fun*, Christy, tell me what sounds fun to you?

Christy: Oooh, this is so cliché, but I don't even care because it's true, everything fall, all the things.

Annie: Really?

Christy: So like the sweaters and like the, I got-

Annie: We still got like two months till we get to it-

Christy: I know I just keep willing, I've got my whole house with pumpkin and candles. And my son was like, "Why does our house smell so good?" I was like, "Because buddy, it's fall."

Annie: It's time.

Christy: Yeah, it is time. So bonfires, and s'mores, and football Saturdays, please let there be football Saturdays this year.

Annie: Oh, yes.

Christy: And just fall, man, I'm a Southern girl.

Annie: And you are a UT person, right?

Christy: Yeah.

Annie: Yes. I mean, I feel like UT is going to start rebuilding.

Christy: Hey, listen, true or false, fans every year we'd say, "This is our year." And I stand by that, every year-

Annie: Everybody says that, and now Alabama is the only one who is right.

Christy: 1998 bring it, I got a shirt that says, "Play like it's 1998."

Annie: Oh my gosh, I love it, "Play like it's 1998." That's so funny.

Christy: The good old days, the glory days.

Annie: Oh, I love it. Well, when Georgia plays Tennessee we should make a little wager of some sort, you want to?

Christy: I'll Marco you about it.

Annie: Let's Marco, I'll respond, I will immediately respond. Well, I love you, thank you for doing this. I'm so glad we're friends.

Christy: Oh, it was so fun. Thanks, Annie, thanks for having me.

[00:54:19] <Music>

Annie: Oh, you guys, isn't she the best? Oh my gosh, I love her so much. So smart. So many good ideas. Hey, make sure you pick up your copy of her new book, *Take Back Your Time* and follow Christy so you can tell her thanks so much for being on the show, I love when y'all thank our guests.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find Annie F. Downs on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), all the places you may need me that's how you can find me. And I think that's it from me today, friends, go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun to you, I will do the same. Have a

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That Sounds Fun Podcast with Annie F. Downs

great couple of days, and we'll see you back here on Friday with my friend and one of my favorite leaders, Carey Nieuwhof. See you guys then.

[00:55:02] <Music>