

[00:00:00]<Music>

**Annie:** Hey 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 what a great week of podcasting we've had. Well, we're just on a roll, aren't we? We are on a roll. And we have got a great show in store for you today too.

But before we jump into today's conversation, I want to take a moment to tell you about one of our amazing partners Athletic Greens. Athletic Greens is a health and wellness company that makes comprehensive daily nutrition really, really simple.

We talk all the time about trying to be good friends to ourselves, and a great way to do that is by giving our bodies the rest, exercise, and nutrition that they need to thrive. But our busy lifestyles, you could get this, can sometimes leave us deficient in key nutritional areas.

AG1 by Athletic Greens, the category-leading superfood product brings comprehensive and convenient daily nutrition to everybody. Keeping up with the research knowing what to do, and taking a bunch of different pills or supplements can be hard on the stomach and tough on your brain. Hard to keep up with.

To help each one of us be our best they simplify the path to better nutrition by giving you the one thing with all the best results. I just mix one scoop into really cold water every morning. And this one tasty scoop of AG1 contains 75 vitamins, minerals, and whole foods sourced ingredients including a multi-vitamin, multi-mineral, probiotic, greens superfood blend, and more in one convenient daily serving you guys, that's in one scoop.

The special blend of high-quality, bioavailable ingredients in a scoop of AG1 works together to fill the nutritional gaps in your diet. Support energy and focus, aid with gut health and digestion, and support a healthy immune system. Effectively replacing multiple products or pills with one healthy delicious drink.

A couple of our team members use AG1 and it's replaced having to take a separate multivitamin and probiotic every day. We are here for added convenience while maintaining quality.

So join the movement of athletes, amateurs, first-timers, experts, and everyone in-between taking ownership of their daily health, and focusing on the nutritional products they really need in the simplest manner possible. That's essentialist nutrition.

To make it easy Athletic Greens is going to give you an immune-supporting free one-year supply of vitamin D, wow. And five free travel packs with your first purchase, if you visit [athleticgreens.com/soundsfun](https://athleticgreens.com/soundsfun) today. Again, simply visit [athleticgreens.com/soundsfun](https://athleticgreens.com/soundsfun) to take control of your health and give AG1 a try.

Today on the show I get to talk with my friend Dave Hollis. Dave is a New York Times best-selling author. Host of the popular "Rise Together " Podcast, that I got to be on. Keynote speaker and life and business coach.

Dave's history includes being the CEO of a media startup, former president of sales for the film studio at the Walt Disney Company, you guys, and he's worked all over the entertainment industry.

His new book *Built Through Courage: Face Your Fears to Live the Life You Were Meant For*, came out last week and I love the heart and the message of this book so much. I love the heart and the message of this guy so much. I know you're going to find Dave and his energy inspiring and encouraging. So here's my conversation with my friend Dave Hollis.

[00:03:19] <Music>

**Annie:** Okay, Dave-

**Dave:** Here we go.

**Annie:** Here we go.

**Dave:** Here we go.

**Annie:** Listen, Dave Hollis, now we're recording, now it's the show.

**Dave:** It's on.

**Annie:** Listen, I love being your friend.

**Dave:** I love being your friend.

**Annie:** This is working out great. Two days of real-life friendship, and we are just deep waters already.

**Dave:** It's on.

**Annie:** Tell me how Nashville has been to you the last couple of days?

**Dave:** It has felt like family was welcoming me back home. I mean, like-

**Annie:** Really?

**Dave:** ...in a crazy way, I have like become familiar now with a variety of people that you happen to also be familiar with.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And so like everyone knowing each other and each of these people being important to me.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** Strangely, in a world where I was like, "Hey, can I come sit on your patio? Would you invite me? Can I invite myself to your home?" That every one of these people was like, "Yeah, I'll invite you to my home. And I will make you feel welcome with the invitation."

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** It felt like wow, this is something I have not yet experienced.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Dave:** And I was this morning on a street where the number of musicians that live on the streets is a thing.

**Annie:** Yeah. It's funny, isn't it?

**Dave:** And so just like the fact that there was something of like, "Oh, this is where we congregate." Like I made a joke to one of the artists I was talking to, that you could run over a Grammy like driving down the street.

**Annie:** True.

**Dave:** And it's just a thing.

**Annie:** It's true. We have a dream of that road being able to throw a Frisbee from top to bottom of the street and only have people we know catch it. That's our dream of that one street.

**Dave:** I love that idea. And the thing is, it feels like it's coming to be, there's something happening on that road. But there's something great about it and in a world where I grew up in Southern California.

**Annie:** Mh-mmm.

**Dave:** And as much as I associated myself as a Californian for my whole life.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** My move to Texas showed me a way to be, in a way that family can exist.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** That was such a departure from. And yet, I live out in the sticks which is fantastic when it comes to the preservation of peace, and really resetting after anything that felt crazy. But also, I don't have a neighborhood right now and that I'm truly like, near the wilderness.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And coming here, I have this feeling of like, "Oh, man, this is like the way that neighborhoods were meant to be."

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** Especially when in every conversation was like, "Did you know that this person that you also love lives literally right across the street?"

**Annie:** Yeah. Did you, I mean, because really you're probably in like an eight-mile radius for all of us, except Jon Acuff.

**Dave:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Yeah. Because everybody is right here.

**Dave:** Everyone is right here.

**Annie:** It's really interesting.

**Dave:** Yeah. And also, like really close to downtown. Like, I stay in downtown and I had no concept when I booked the hotel, where I was going to be having to drive to. Everything was like 15 minutes away.

**Annie:** Yeah, it's not bad. It used to really not be bad, now everybody moves here.

**Dave:** Yeah.

**Annie:** But I mean, in the olden days, 10 years ago, it was like everything was 15 minutes away.

**Dave:** Yeah.

**Annie:** And now it's a little bit more, but it's not terrible.

**Dave:** I love it.

**Annie:** The rumors about you, behind your back, here in town have been everybody feels the same. They feel it's like, "Does he live here.?" Like, "Is he part of this?" I mean, it's been really interesting, that doesn't happen very much.

**Dave:** You know it's interesting when the decision to leave Disney was on the table. There were two cities that we talked about.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** One was Nashville, the other was Austin.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And it just turned out that the trip to Austin happened before the trip to Nashville.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And I was at a place where I so desperately needed to make a change, that that first trip to Austin we had dinner with Jen Hatmaker that first night. We had breakfast the next morning with a foster care charity that I've become part of, because of us having been foster parents. It felt very like ordained kind of moment, magical in this restaurant bathroom where I was looking at myself in the mirror, like, "Oh, my goodness, God's working here. There is something calling me into this space, maybe? I don't know." And we went from that meeting with a real estate agent just to see the city.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And it was not like, "Oh, we're going to go on this trip and buy a house." Or even like, seriously, consider moving. It was like, "Let's just go check it out and see if there's something there."

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And we got to the place that I currently live in, and I got out of the car, I could cry even thinking about this. And I said, "We have to buy this house today." Like we have to. We'll figure out the financing. But I have to create the leverage to make the move to leave Disney.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Dave:** And the leverage will be I bought a house in the middle of nowhere, outside of Austin, Texas.

**Annie:** Wow. And you still live in that house?

**Dave:** I still live in that house.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Dave:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh.

**Dave:** I know. You'll come over one day, you'll see that house super-

**Annie:** I'm ready. I'm ready for that pool, man, I am here for that pool.

**Dave:** It's ready for you.

**Annie:** It's beautiful.

**Dave:** Thank you.

**Annie:** I will keep going down this path. But I'll also just tell our friends that you've given me permission to ask questions [**Crosstalk 00:08:15**]

**Dave:** You can ask anything that you'd like.

**Annie:** When you think back to that day when you bought that house and you saw what your family was going to be?

**Dave:** Yeah.

**Annie:** And now you are not married to Rachel anymore. Your kids aren't with you all the time, it seems, based on social media. But the house is the same. What is that like to stay? Why didn't you go, "You know what, I'm going to buy a new house? I'm going to move somewhere new, I need to start over?"

**Dave:** Yeah. Well, the house isn't the same, the house is different. Though the house itself is the same, the energy of the house and the inhabitants of the house, they're different.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** I think I ended up staying in the house, in part, because at the beginning of our conversation about divorce. I was not probably capable, to be totally honest, of finding a new place and decorating it, and actually still also surviving in a way that staying in a place that I was familiar with, that was furnished that-

**Annie:** Yeah, of course.

**Dave:** And so I just had to process a lot of grief. I had a vision on that day that we bought the house of how we'd live in that house as a family of six for the rest of time. And that vision going away and in that earliest moments, was so overwhelming that my imagination for what might be next was just overwhelmed and compromised by fear, all right? By fear of like, well, I mean, I made a list I had 46 things that I made a list of that I was afraid of. Because that was my primary emotion in the absence of being able to connect to what I knew would exist now that it was gone.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Dave:** And that blank piece of paper, it's a thing that when it's handed to you, and your future sits on it. Now, 18 months later, I'm like, "Oh my goodness, how great that I've been able to, like, really draw a vision of how I want to try and have the rest of my life show up." And I've said as many times as I can, that the legacy that I leave on this planet, will be a reflection of everything that's happened after 45 and not really anything that happened before.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Dave:** I mean, I had a great career in corporate media inside of Disney and other places. And I hope at my funeral, they don't even bring up the fact that I worked in Hollywood.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Dave:** I want to have something else something greater, and I can see that vision now. That blank piece of paper was filled out. But at that beginning, oh, it was equal parts terrifying and exhilarating, but mostly terrifying.

**Annie:** Wow. Okay, so I think my next thought is a lot of us live in, quote-quote, "Houses" where things change and don't look the way they want to. I'm thinking about God and I'm thinking about how there are times where God and I are the ones in this house. And I go, "Hey, everything's changed here. Why do I have to stay here? Everything's different, why am I staying?" Or "How do I stay or whatever?" So, I guess, I want to know how staying in a season of leaving and grieving affected your relationship with God?

**Dave:** Well, at the beginning, I had trouble believing in anything.

**Annie:** I'm sure.

**Dave:** Because so much of what I believed in, I thought would never ever change. I couldn't contemplate the possibility of not being married for the rest of my life. I had moved from California to Texas to work in this company where I thought, "We'll do this thing forever. We'll have an impact and help people. It's going to be so good, and it's going to exist forever."

And the fact that those things that I've been so sure of didn't exist any longer. All right, "What else have I been so sure of?"

**Annie:** Oh, Dave! Gosh!

**Dave:** And I was like, "Oh-oh I'm not so sure about this God now."

**Annie:** Right.

**Dave:** I'm not so sure about my personal identity, I'm not so sure about, right? And so I had in like, this deconstruction of life, a real opportunity to inventory everything, like what matters and what doesn't. And what I found out, of course, is that very, very few things matter. Like, what are the capital T truths of my life? And at the beginning, as much as there was this, like, "Why?" Like, "Why would this happen?"

**Annie:** Right.

**Dave:** What could I have done? What should I, is there a reason like, what's it for? Anyone who starts a journey of change like this, at the beginning, has no objectivity to understand it?



**Annie:** Mh-hmm. Wow.

**Dave:** Just none. Just none.

**Annie:** You can't. You're like, "I can't make decisions right now."

**Dave:** No.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** Because I can, today, tell you that the things that happened in that moment had me questioning God Himself, were the most profound and likely biggest levers for who I'll be known as at the end of my life.

**Annie:** Wow. Wow.

**Dave:** Okay. And so-

**Annie:** But you never picked them?

**Dave:** But I didn't pick them.

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh!

**Dave:** Yeah. I mean-

**Annie:** Life is so hard.

**Dave:** Life is so hard and so crazy. But at the beginning of 2020 or, I guess, end of '19, I'd had this opportunity to holiday party with our company. To make this audacious claim that 2020 was going to be my best year ever.

**Annie:** No.

**Dave:** So I, into the universe in front of my team and everyone, I make this claim and what I realized, and I said this to you yesterday like I didn't have a say in the conditions through which my best year would come.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** And so, as it turned out, I yep, I don't want to have to experience that hard season. I don't want to have to go through 2020 again, but I did end up having my best year ever. But it required me experiencing the worst of kind of everything and

anything I couldn't have even imagined. I would say what I could've imagined, I couldn't even imagine the things that I felt.

But to get back to your questions, like the beginning was, now I have to question the things that were previously unquestionable. But I was also, because of the grief, because of the disorientation, because of the fear around that blank piece of paper, I found myself interested in not dying, figuratively and literally.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And so I started, I mean, I started with running. Then it was after the run sitting on a rock in nature. I was carving out time on the back patio that I've called the patio of peace. And I was on my knees figuratively and literally hands in the air, "Are you there?"

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** Like, "What is happening?" And it turned into such a different frequency of communication that in like a James 4:8 kind of way, "Draw near to God, and He'll draw near to you."

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** I kept coming closer and He kept revealing Himself in ways that I'd never seen before.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Dave:** And in some ways what was happening on a rock at the end of a run. But in other ways, it was the way that people were emerging in my life. To remind me of my truth in a season where I didn't, myself, have certainty in it.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And, so, I had my pastor as a for example. I write in the book he, every single day for the first eight weeks of this experience, sent me the same 11-word text every day.

**Annie:** Ah-ah.

**Dave:** And it was, "What small piece of sadness can I hold for you today?"

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh. What a gift?

**Dave:** And it was just the gentle reminder that someone was walking with me. And it wasn't an attempt to minimize it was an attempt to explain. It was just a recognition that this stinks.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** "And I'm here. And if I can take even just a pound of the weight that you're carrying from you, let me do that friend." And I would respond sometimes, sometimes I wouldn't. It didn't matter, that same text came every single day.

There was a person in my DMs, of all things, that's back in November, so six months before this conversation of divorce even shows up. Just started sending me a prayer every day. And why I saw him, why even noticed I can't, God probably, his name is Jared. He just had a thought a day. And every time I was moving into something new; I'm going to publish my first book, I'm going to coach for the first time. I was really trying to step into and use some gifts, that to be honest with you, I had fear for. Like, I don't know if I'm qualified to be a writer? Can I do this podcast? Can I do these things?

**Annie:** Right.

**Dave:** And every time he sent a DM, it just seemed to speak to exactly what I needed to hear on that day. And while I was grateful for the notes, it wasn't until we got into the conversation of divorce that I realized that Jared was there as a seeding emissary.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Dave:** He was just seeding for six months. This reminder of a faithfulness that existed, that in my receipt of those notes was priming me for a willingness in the midst of questioning, to come back and draw closer.

**Annie:** Yeah. And the writing a book on courage after that. How do you do that? How do you just lay all this in front of us from only 18 months ago? What kind of courage does it take for you to write *Built Through Courage*?

**Dave:** Well, I mean, number one, I start the book with a letter to the reader.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** Where I do want to be clear, upfront, is that I'm in a new relationship, and we play these games to try and continue to get to know each other.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** A card was pulled and in this card game we have, that tries to provoke questions and answers so that you can do so and one of the questions was, "Describe yourself in three words?"

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** And the conventional thing is to pick three individual descriptive words, but my words, were work-in-progress.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Dave:** And so like in the letter to the reader at the beginning of this book. I do start with this disclaimer that, "Hello, I think I've got a fantastic book. That will equip you with the kind of courage that's required to take steps closer to honoring the intention of a creator who knew exactly what He was doing when He put you here."

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And yet I am a work-in-progress.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And the stories that I end up telling, as much as they do very much take you through what it was like, on that rock at the end of that run. And questioning this God and even the story of Jared. Like, all of those things end up being there as this like, "Hey, here's a peek into how the cultivation of courage during the hardest and best year of my life showed up." And a little bit of a map on how if you have any way of connecting to the stories that in my life that maybe are a reflection of something you've experienced, well, great.

But also know that I'm still working through so many of these things. But writing that book was one of the greatest gifts that could have happened because of the catharsis of putting the words on paper and the process. It's not, there's no there, there when it comes to the ending of our marriage. We had a great marriage. It didn't end for some big reason, but 1000 small ones. And I'm not, this isn't some showy telly, what really happened?

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** No. this is talking about the aftermath of when you think your life's going to go a certain way and other plans present themselves. How do you cultivate the courage to keep going and develop the resilience, but also the good that comes in the hurt?

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** Because I'm sitting here in front of you in the best shape of my life, and I don't mean just physically, I mean, mentally and emotionally and spiritually. I'm in the best shape of my life.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And that shape is a by-product of a thing that I never wanted to happen.

**Annie:** Yeah. That is just wild, how God and life that is the gift of how hard planet Earth is.

**Dave:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Is that good almost always comes out of it, always comes out of it, maybe? I don't know.

**Dave:** I don't know. It's like, in a crazy way, I do think, and this is again like the objectivity that you have now relative to the subjectivity then. I do think that with the objectivity I have today, I will be ready when.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** Like it's not like, "Oh, my hard stuff is done so-

**Annie:** Right, right.

**Dave:** Like I got to check the box and I have satisfied having to go through hard stuff, no. I'm just like in training for what ends up being my preparation for the next hard thing. And I'm not going to want that thing to come either.

**Annie:** Right,

**Dave:** But at least now I have another set of evidence and, man, there's some good hard facts in this one.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** Of how ready I am. Of how much I can handle, and how strong I can be on the other side even if I don't like having to go through whatever it ends up being.

**Annie:** Yeah.

[00:21:44] <Music>

**Annie:** Hey friends, just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about another one of our incredible partners, Green Chef. I know we're all doing our best to fit in all the things that matter to us. Work and rest, and spiritual rhythms, and exercise, time with our people.

Well, as much as I hate to admit it, eating well at home can fall a little low on my priority list when life gets busy. It's why I'm so grateful to have found Green Chef. Green Chef is a USDA certified organic company, with meal plans that include keto, paleo, plant-powered, and options for those of us who simply want a dinner menu with a little more balance.

Green chef's expert chefs curate every recipe they are seriously so delicious, and there's so much variety, with over 30 meal choices every week. An updated menu weekly and the flexibility to switch plans, you'll never have to sacrifice taste for nutrition.

You can enjoy restaurant-quality dishes in the comfort of your own home. The sesame ginger chicken was so flavorful, I could have sworn it was takeout rather than something I whipped up myself. I love it that the Green Chef bags come with pre-portioned ingredients and easy-to-follow instructions that are delivered right to your house. Eating well has never been simpler, y'all. You're saying I can mark meal planning and grocery shopping off the to-do list done and done. What a time saver during busy weeks.

Green Chef is America's number one meal kit for eating well. Meaning they're the best meal kit for every healthy lifestyle, whether you're keto or paleo, vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free, pescatarian or you just want to eat more balanced meals. Green Chef is also the most sustainable meal kit off-setting 100% of their plastic use, which you know I love, and 100% of their carbon footprint and emissions. I think that's awesome.

So go to [greenchef.com/thatoundsfun125](https://greenchef.com/thatoundsfun125), and use the code THATSOUNDSFUN 125 to get \$125 off, you guys, including free shipping. Again, that's [greenchef.com/thatoundsfun125](https://greenchef.com/thatoundsfun125). And the code to get \$125 off including free shipping is THATSOUNDSFUN 125. Green Chef, the number one meal kit for eating well, y'all are going to love it. And now back to my conversation with Dave Hollis.

[00:23:52] <Music>

**Annie:** So many of our friends listening and I have wrestled with this in my writing as well. It is so cathartic but it isn't just my story.

**Dave:** Yeah.

**Annie:** So without being, I want us to be as honoring as we can be. But also how do you balance telling this story when your ex-wife also is a writer and also is very well known. And I'm thinking about our friends at home who are listening and they're like, "Yeah, I want to write my story too. I want to write my story too." How do you do that? Because the book is really honoring and you talking about your relationship, and your history is really honoring. How did you get there instead of writing the one you could have written?

**Dave:** Well-

**Annie:** Has anybody asked you that?

**Dave:** ...100%. Here's the thing, my primary identity, the day before we had a conversation about divorce was husband to Rachel.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** It was an identity that I knew more than I knew any other part of myself.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** And as much as the grieving is a thing that, in part, is a grieving of loss of identity. I still am connected to honor that person that I was even in the aftermath of things not turning out the way that I thought that they would.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** And in the transition of my marriage, outside of my identity to God, my identity is probably most closely related to the relationship I have with my four kids.

**Annie:** Yeah. They're so cute.

**Dave:** Yeah. And here's the thing, three of them can read.

**Annie:** Right. right. So they can read books.

**Dave:** They can read books.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And as much as they're not likely to read these yet, they will.

**Annie:** Yeah, that's right.

**Dave:** And, so, I take that into consideration. But also, Rachel and I are going to be family for the rest of my life.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** Like we are raising these kids, we're co-parenting. Our relationship is wildly, wildly different than it was.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** But it doesn't change the fact that she's a part of me and I'm a part of her, and that we still have these four kids. We're having Thanksgiving this year at my house. And the cast of characters that will be on hand now includes human beings that we are in relationships with, that aren't each other.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And the new normal as much as it's, again, it's not a thing I could have ever contemplated.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** There is something that has come out of this, that has afforded a healthiness in our relationship, that is different than some of the dysfunction that existed inside of our marriage.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And I would have fought to stay married for the rest of my life.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** Right?

**Annie:** I believe you.

**Dave:** But the question and I put it in the book, so I'm happy and comfortable talking about it. The question that was asked at the beginning of our conversation about divorce was a simple one. In that, she wanted to know, "Can you be the man that God created you to be married to me?" Which makes me want to cry a little bit, I'll be honest, because it's still such a heavy. I remember the day that I heard the



question the floor of my home fell out. And I, in the absence of the objectivity that exists today, man, I could have made a million arguments for how I could, of course, still become this person that God put me on the planet to be. And I look at pictures of myself from 18 months ago and I don't recognize myself.

**Annie:** Really?

**Dave:** I am fundamentally a different person. And I feel more connected now to so many different things that are important as a part of my capital T truths in life.

**Annie:** Yes.

**Dave:** And honoring that intention of why I was placed on this planet, in part, because of an impossible decision that someone else made.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** And so it's such a hard thing because it's in an audience like yours, and in an audience that, and I grew up in the church my entire life. And I certainly grew up with a lot of conversation around the way that you fight to stay married for the rest of time and I still believe it.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** But I also know that that belief would have kept me potentially from the thing that I know in not being married. And so it's such a, how do I reconcile those things? And I can't tell you, I don't have a good answer for you.

**Annie:** I love that you don't have a good answer for me. Because so many of us wrestle down things I got yelled at, I mean, you get yelled at on the internet times 100,000-

**Dave:** I love getting yelled at, please.

**Annie:** But I got yelled at yesterday because someone wanted me to take a harder stand on something. And I thought, "Well, the problem is you don't know what's in me."

**Dave:** Yeah.

**Annie:** "And you don't know that I can't reconcile this thing that is between two worlds. Like that of what I was always told and what I'm experiencing, and what to do with those two things."

**Dave:** Yeah.

**Annie:** And just because I have a blue check doesn't mean I have the answers, right?

**Dave:** Yeah. Also, I will say, it is, I want to say it's easy. I don't even know that it is conscious to have definite, "For sure, I'll fight you for it." Opinions about something before you've been through it.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And I had those.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And it's different when you've had the experience of the person that you are arguing with.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Dave:** And I don't you know this is not, I believe in the sanctity of marriage, and I want to fight for every person who's in a healthy marriage to stay married for the rest of time. And that's all I'm going to say about that because I don't want anybody to come at me on the internet.

**Annie:** Well, I mean, that's a question I have for you when y'all did announce getting divorced, I mean that half the internet, the entire internet was angry at you.

**Dave:** Yeah. Well, I-

**Annie:** Was that part of the grieving?

**Dave:** No.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Dave:** I mean, but here's the thing, I am so proud of the community that was created and I understand what they felt, I felt it. And if I do think back to as much as we had a podcast, we were talking about components of our relationship. And I can, through the lens of where we sit today, I can see so clearly, "Oh, wow, we were publicly doing therapy in front of people about the problems we had in co-dependence. About the stuff that we had and our visions being a little bit different."

But what it sounded like was, "Hey, we're a couple goals Dave Hollis, and Rachel Hollis. And we've figured everything out. And we want to teach you how to figure it out too."

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** And that as much as it wasn't the intention is the way I think it could have been received. And that combined with what felt like a record scratch of not, the only time people get upset is when they get surprised.

**Annie:** Oh, say that "The only time people get upset is when they get surprised." That's exactly right.

**Dave:** And so like, there was a surprise in this because we'd created such a relationship, and there was surprise in this for me. I got upset-

**Annie:** Yeah, of course.

**Dave:** ...because of it feeling surprising. And, so if people took it personally or they felt whatever they felt, I honor those feelings. I think it's reasonable to feel those feelings. And, also, you weren't in our marriage. And, so, like respectfully, the person on the internet who isn't in the arena as a spectator doesn't get to play the game or dictate how the game gets played.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** So at a certain point I want to honor it and I want to say, "Yeah, I felt that way too." But also, I hope that you can have some compassion for, grace for the four kids I have.

**Annie:** Yes.

**Dave:** And they're really paying for. Just because one person makes a decision doesn't mean that it's not hard for that person also.

**Annie:** Of course.

**Dave:** Right?

**Annie:** Yes.

**Dave:** Like, there's hard on all sides of divorce.

**Annie:** Yes. When you look at your life, if you dot-mapped courage in your life, and opportunities to be brave, are there spikes in it or is it a straight line up and to the right? Like, is courage something that we should feel a bit every day, or are there like 18 months ago, was that a spike in courage and then you got to drop back down? Does it look like a heartbeat or does it look like a hill?

**Dave:** Oh, this is a great question.

**Annie:** Thank you.

**Dave:** And I actually, the thing is, I think it should be linear, okay?

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** It should be. Because if you were every day increasingly drawing on courage, it means that you are every day pushing just a little further away from comfort.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** You're every day facing fear on a different level. You're every day trying new things that expose you to the opinions of other people or challenge the programming that you had growing up of how to be good or right.

**Annie:** Right.

**Dave:** So if you were, you're crushing the game.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** But the reality is, I think it ends, for me anyway personally, I used a lot of courage at the beginning of a career inside of media. And then found myself leaning on some natural talents that had me not pushing as hard into spaces that I hadn't previously been inside of.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** And the decision to leave Disney as the head of sales was a byproduct of not having to study for tests and getting straight A grades, because of the quality of the intellectual property around me and the strength of my teams. But also, the reflection of me not fighting for pushing into spaces that were going to, in the discomfort, help me grow.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** And in the absence of growth, in that absence of growth I'd stopped not just only growing I'd started dying.

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Dave:** And so the courage that then was-

**Annie:** Did you know at the time?

**Dave:** I didn't know it at the beginning of that death. But I did know it not long after and that was my biggest fear was a question that was asked of my middle son in a spa while we were outback. And he was looking for tarantulas and scorpions, and out of my mouth fell not living up to my potential.

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Dave:** And as it came out of my mouth, I realized I was in real-time living into my greatest fear. By in a job that was everyone else's dream job and was great.

**Annie:** I'd like to meet one person who hasn't dreamed of working at Disney.

**Dave:** I want to be the president of sales at Disney, yeah, that sounds great.

**Annie:** Everybody thinks of Disney as a fun place to work, yeah, for sure.

**Dave:** And it was an amazing job. I got a job at 36 from 36 to 39 it was overwhelming, which made it extraordinary.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** Because I was out of my depth. I was trying to find ways to convince Steven Spielberg to take me seriously.

**Annie:** Which is like...

**Dave:** Which is hilarious.

**Annie:** That's wild. Do y'all still have Spielberg's phone numbers?

**Dave:** Not anymore. No, when you leave, you're gone, it's over, and goodbye. But the work that I had to do to try and create some credibility in a space where I had no experience was exhilarating. I was out of my depth. And I was growing because of the discomfort and I felt fantastic.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And then as I got the hang of the job, as Marvel and Lucasfilm were added to the portfolio with Disney and Pixar. Selling Star Wars and Avengers movies to theaters, once you get the hang of the job and have a relationship with the filmmaking community, changed the way that I felt about myself when I was by myself. Because I knew I was on some days mailing it in and still getting praised for having done a good job.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** It doesn't take courage to maintain the status quo.

**Annie:** Right.

**Dave:** It doesn't take courage to just be okay with being okay.

**Annie:** Right.

**Dave:** And in that setting where I'd become okay with doing whatever it took, but not more. To still do a good job and get bonuses, I felt miserable, because there was dissonance between who I was put on the planet to be by God and the way I was showing up every day. And that space was where shame, and regret, and under-fulfilled expectations or compromised confidence lived.

And I had to go on a journey after that conversation in the spa to try and create integrity between this version of who I know I could be and the way that I actually applied this gift set that I have, to my work and to the world. And, so, that took courage. It took courage to leave Disney.

**Annie:** Yes.

**Dave:** It took courage, I had to go after I made that impulsive, leveraged decision to buy the house and ask permission to be let out of a four-year contract that was only seven months in.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh.

**Dave:** Yeah. And the courage, I mean, I sounded like an insane person walking into Bob Iger's office to ask permission to be let out of a contract.

**Annie:** Right.

**Dave:** But that courage was the first decision of courage that was then followed by a string of them when I found myself not with the greatest team in the world. Not with the greatest intellectual property in the world. Not with the greatest filmmakers in the world.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** And that, again, like so as your dots are showing up on the graph, you're going back up high.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And the good news is, I think in the five years since, more or less that I've left, I have pride for where the dots of courage end up living. Even as I've been the most uncomfortable of my life, the discomfort is what's produced me sitting across from you as the best version I've ever been.

**Annie:** Yes. Yes. I mean, I think, in my life, I would say it looks more like a heartbeat pattern than I wish it did. But it's a heartbeat pattern that's turned at a 45-degree angle.

**Dave:** That's great.

**Annie:** Right. And so it's like, I mean, I wish it was high, high all the time. But I feel like, well, at least I can know that what is asked of me and being brave right now, is lightyears ahead of what I could have even asked myself five years ago to do, Right?

**Dave:** Yeah. By the way, I think the decision to cultivate courage or be brave, face fear, all those things. It gets easier every subsequent time that you are asking your courage to present itself.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** It's easier to command it.

**Annie:** Interesting.

**Dave:** And I think you're able to command a broader swath of it, right?

**Annie:** Yes.

**Dave:** So it comes with-

**Annie:** You have more tools.

**Dave:** You have more tools, it comes quicker, and it has more strength. It can handle even a greater degree of fear. Because you've convinced, you've shown yourself, you have now this like evidence trail that, "Oh, last time I had to be courageous I survived."

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** "Last time I didn't just survive, I thrived, I actually grew into this better version of myself. I learned these things. And, yep, that heartbreak was bad, or the stumbling publicly was bad or failing in that, small business was bad. But you know what? I know what not to do next time."

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** All right, I can be courageous with this piece of knowledge that I didn't have last time. And I might make a mistake again, but I won't make his biggest mistake as I made that last time because I now have this thing.

**Annie:** And it just remains true, I stay on pretty hard, I know you do too. I stay pretty hard that the Bible is true. And when God says He'll work it out.

**Dave:** Yeah.

**Annie:** He says He'll work it out. He doesn't say you're not going to make mistakes and that's the part I thought it said. Is that when God works all things together for the good of those who love Him, I thought it meant, "And there won't be problems."

**Dave:** Yeah. Well, I think a lot of times people think, "Oh, well, I've been praying for it, so it's going to happen the way I've been asking."

**Annie:** Whoa, whoa.

**Dave:** And that's like no. God hears prayer and God answers prayer. But God didn't say He's going to answer prayer in the way that you've asked for it.

**Annie:** Right.

**Dave:** And so that, by the way, that's a lesson that comes in our hardest seasons.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm. Yeah.



**Dave:** Like no one voted for what we're going through in COVID. No one is asking for any of what's happening in the world in real-time. And yet, the process of processing the things that we are, are equipping us to handle the things that we'll face. And that's the thing that, again, you can't appreciate in real-time. Because some of what's being honed, some of the things that are being forged in this fire, you don't even realize why you need that skill yet. Because you haven't got to the place yet in your life where you need to use it.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** I feel grateful for things that I was screaming in my backyard about just 18 months ago, all right? Like the gratitude I can have today for that thing that I was like, "Why, God, would you bring this thing to?"

**Annie:** Yes.

**Dave:** "Why is this also happening?" And again, it's just time changes the lens that you're able to really appreciate any of these things through.

**Annie:** I think one of the things I know you for as a distance friend, now a close friend, is resilience. It feels like it's a word that on purpose or not kind of reminds me of you.

**Dave:** That's so sweet.

**Annie:** I think of resilience. When you look at, let's talk about COVID for a minute. Because your book, *Build Through Courage* is about being brave. We need to talk about resilience. And we're in a world now where COVID is doing more, they say, than it was doing before.

**Dave:** Yeah.

**Annie:** And I feel in my body, I don't have it in me to do that again. What is the resilience you feel or what's the encouragement you'd give for us having to face this thing, again? That we thought was a once-in-a-lifetime thing?

**Dave:** Yeah. I mean, it feels trite almost to use the line, "How is this for you and not happening to you?"

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** But there is something at the essence of, can we in the preparation for handling another wave take a second to appreciate any of the good that came in the hard that's already existed.

**Annie:** Brilliant. Brilliant.

**Dave:** All right?

**Annie:** Yes.

**Dave:** And this is not to dismiss death or sickness, the fear, inconvenience of homeschool, none of it.

**Annie:** Right.

**Dave:** Everyone has had to go through hard things. And yet, one of the first things I wrote in this book. And it happened just at the beginning of COVID existing, was this idea that we take this time in the rush to return to normal, let's take this time to really understand what parts of normal are worth rushing back to.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** And I think that we've done some work in this space already, right?

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** Like there are things that we used to do, and swear would exist forever that fundamentally have changed in our mind as things that have to happen.

**Annie:** Yeah, like blowing out birthday candles. We were doing that all along? I never thought about it.

**Dave:** Wait a second, but the way that we afforded weight to things that in an environment we've come out of just don't matter anymore.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** Like, "Okay, wait..." And it's kind of like the big event in my life, 18 months ago, affording me this permission to inventory what mattered and didn't. I think we're all inside that space.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** There's a quote that I use in the book from Tyler Durden of *Fight Club*.

**Annie:** Yes.

**Dave:** Which is, "It's only once you've lost everything that you're free to do anything."

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** And in a way my experience, this doesn't connect perfectly to COVID, but my experience with going through something hard, had me really struggling, at first, to understand why. And then I started to look at where there were examples of people who went through hard things that had good things come as a result of the bad thing.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Dave:** And I found, like you, of course, you're going to find most people that you admire, most companies that you admire. Were built through struggle, and adversity, and resilience, and as a by-product of the resilience, something great was born.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** But as I'm like in this rabbit hole, and there's a lot of like corporate examples and business leaders and whatever I turn to the Bible. And there you go, again, there are these examples of like Job, and Jonah, and there's Lazarus, right?

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** Like Lazarus had to die in order for his good thing to happen, right?

**Annie:** Right.

**Dave:** His people didn't get it.

**Annie:** I have literally never thought about that.

**Dave:** The timing didn't make sense in real-time. But Lazarus had to die so he can be brought back to life. And it made me do this inventory of like, "Well, what had to die in my life, so that I might be brought back to life."

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** And guess what, as it turned out, like unfortunately for me, and unfortunate for anyone who goes through a hard thing. Oftentimes, really big and important things have to die in your life, for you to be brought back to life. The most important relationship in my life, my identity, my sense of normalcy, in some ways my sanity.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** All of those things had to die. But the beauty in that death, in that ridiculous Fight Club quote, was in that death, now in the ashes. I was in this place of freedom to define who I'd be reborn into in the absence of things that had always, always existed, but now we're dead.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And some of us need COVID. And again, I don't want COVID to last for one more second. But some of us need COVID to kill something in our life. And I'm not talking about a person, I'm talking about a relationship to technology or a way that we spend time connecting with our kids. If we don't do that today, we need that relationship to die and be reborn into something new, because of the way that this quarantining, maybe, changes the way that we're connecting.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** I don't like that it's happening. But if it's going to happen, is there a way for us to connect to any of the good that's come from it, so that we can look forward to the good that might still exist inside of it?

[00:46:27] <Music>

**Annie:** Hey friends, just taking a quick break to tell you about one of our amazing partners, Modern Fertility. The traditional guidance with fertility has been just wait and see. But now we have tools to help us plan for and track everything in our lives.

The wellness, finances, careers, education, why is fertility still wait and see? That's why Modern Fertility was created. It's the easy and affordable way to test your fertility hormones at home with a simple fingerprick. Mail it in with a prepaid label and you'll get your personalized results within 10 days.

Traditional testing with your doctor can cost over \$1,000. But Modern Fertility gets you the same information at \$159, a fraction of the price. And if you go to [modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun](https://modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun), you can get \$20 off your test. And also if you have an HSA or an FSA, you could put those dollars toward Modern Fertility.

You'll get insight into your hormone levels, how many eggs you have, and other important fertility factors. The results go deep into what every hormone means. And you can also talk one-on-one with a fertility nurse to review your results and options for the next steps.

I found it really interesting to read through the report and talk with the nurse after I got my results back. And if you want kids today or maybe one day in the future, clinically sound information about your body can help you in that decision-making process.

Right now Modern Fertility is offering my friends \$20 off the test when you go to [modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun](https://modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun). That means your test will cost \$139 instead of several hundreds or even 1,000 plus dollars it could cost at a doctor's office. So get \$20 off your fertility test when you go to [modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun](https://modernfertility.com/thatsoundsfun). Modern fertility.com/thatsoundsfun.

And I have one last amazing partner to share with you, ZonderKidz, and their Jesus Storybook Bible. I wish I had all the right words to express how much I love the Jesus Storybook Bible from Zondervan.

Y'all know and love the author Sally Lloyd-Jones. You know we've had her on the pod. Well, her Jesus Storybook Bible has been a bestseller for over eight decades, you guys. Introducing kids to God's wonderful story and the Savior at the center of it all. One of my very favorite aspects is how every story points to Jesus as our Savior. From the Old Testament through the New Testament.

It contains 21 stories from the Old Testament and 23 stories from the New Testament, and visually brings Scripture to life for children sharing how Jesus is at the center of our story.

Sally doesn't just tell kids that God loves them, she describes God as never stopping, never giving up, unbreaking, always and forever love in the most captivating language.

It's the perfect kids' Bible for any age up to sixth grade. But let's be honest, adults in Annie's love it too. The Jesus Storybook Bible makes an ideal gift for Christmas. And there's also a gift addition with a beautiful cloth cover and gold foil.

Get your copy in time to go through it with your kids for Advent. You can purchase ZonderKidz's Jesus Storybook Bible from your favorite place to buy books or online from [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) or [christianbook.com](https://www.christianbook.com). And now back to finish my conversation with Dave.

[00:49:29] <Music>

**Annie:** One of my favorite things that a pastor said one time was talking about life, death, and resurrection. And talked about how when Jesus was in the garden after He

resurrected Mary didn't even recognize Him. And the pastor kept leaning on you've got to remember that resurrection does not look like life.

**Dave:** Mh-hmm.

**Annie:** After death, you do not get life back, you get resurrection. Which feels like what you were saying at the beginning, that you don't even recognize yourself from 18 months ago.

**Dave:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Because the resurrection may have resemblances of life, but it is a brand new thing. And you kept saying that, just now, "There's a new thing. There's a new thing."

I think so many of us who are in the middle of the death need to hear why you're asking God for something new, not for life back?

**Dave:** Yeah.

**Annie:** It's something new.

**Dave:** Yeah.

**Annie:** And it's better than, right?

**Dave:** t's, oh, it's better than, but it still takes time getting used to.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** It's better than but it's still uncomfortable. Because the thing that you've always known is different than the thing that you've always needed.

**Annie:** How do you do that? How do you have those little lines? Go on. Go on.

**Dave:** But that's real. And by the way, part of where courage ends up coming in is being comfortable leaning into those things you need, at the expense of making other people who have become comfortable with who you've been uncomfortable. They're going to be uncomfortable because you're now giving up on what you've known for what you need. They've only known you for what you've known.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** They become comfortable with you in that space, in that role. And part of the invitation in the book and this like hope that you will recognize that you were created with a purpose. You were put here on purpose, with intention, and that the honoring of that intention is work that you got to do.

It takes courage to honor the intention. Because sometimes heeding the call, not just sometimes I think it's most times. Heeding the call is going to require you stepping into a space that you've not been in before.

**Annie:** Oh, I think it gets all the time.

**Dave:** All the time, right?

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** But if you hadn't been-

**Annie:** Unfortunately.

**Dave:** Unfortunately. But if you haven't been in the space, and you're surrounded by people that have been always familiar with you. Only ever comfortable with you being who you've been.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** The courage to stand into who you were meant to be, means weathering their reaction to you becoming something new.

**Annie:** Yeah. When I was on-site one of the sentences I left with is, "The only people who don't like your boundaries are the people who cross them."

**Dave:** 100%. 100%.

**Annie:** And so you go like, "Yeah, I bet you don't like that. Because I remember yesterday when I didn't have this boundary."

**Dave:** Yeah.

**Annie:** "And you were very comfortable. And now I have a boundary and it doesn't mean, and I get it." There's compassion for everybody in the story, because my boundary is new to me, too, in some ways. And so I'm very sorry about that, it's hard for you.

**Dave:** Oh, yeah.

**Annie:** That that it's hard.

**Dave:** Oh, yeah.

**Annie:** Oh, Dave, how are the kids?

**Dave:** The kids are great. I mean, it's funny, not funny, interesting, it's just a real fact of life in real-time. I was voice memoing back and forth with Rachel while I'm here in Nashville. And she, because it's our kids' first week of school, I had them at the beginning of the week, she has them at the back end of the week.

**Annie:** And y'all just both commute them to the same school? So y'all live close by?

**Dave:** We live within 20 minutes of each other. They go to the same school all the time. And then when they're with me, well, I'm in charge of getting them there. And when they're with her, it's hers. And she said in the voice memo, "You know what, as much as this last stretch of time has been hard. Dang, it! Our kids are well adjusted or as like well adjusted as you might hope, given the circumstance of what they've been through."

And I was like, "You know what, at the end of the day that may be one of the most important single sentences that could be shared between people who have transitioned in their relationship that their kids are doing well."

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And it's interesting, as a dad, I had a bit of aha moment of, I was sad for them as much as I was sad for myself. And I don't know that I maintained consistency as often as I had prior to the divorce in rule enforcement.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** Maybe to the detriment of these humans every once in a while. And then I found myself becoming comfortable with who I was becoming in a way that was like, "Oh, you're actually getting an even better version of me. I'm a good dad, and I'm going to be a better dad." And the sheriff's back in town.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Dave:** I hate to tell you that the grieving period, sure, we can extend it. But the intermittent bedtime, technology-flexibility dad, that guy is gone. So I'm going to need you to go ahead and put the devices down. And I'm going to need you to go ahead and get in bed. Thank you very much.



**Annie:** I love it. I love it. I mean, I just think that one of the things it sounds like you've done really well, that I've watched some of my friends here do well, whether it's through grieving, loss of a spouse or a parent is that there's an option to fake it in front of your kids. And go like, "I'll just go cry in my closet." And sometimes that's appropriate, I'm sure.

But also there's an option of like, "Hey, this is who I'm bringing you to this so I can bring you today." And that guy lets you on the screens more than the last guy and future guy.

**Dave:** Oh, yeah. I mean, I went through a Cal Ripken-esque streak of crying at the beginning, like I was very consistent. Is it a day? Yeah, I'm going to go ahead and cry. Perfect.

And I did contemplate like, "Oh, do I want to..." like, I don't want to make them feel like they need to feel sad or because now they're seeing dad cry. But I also am raising three boys who I hope become men that are super comfortable with their emotions.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And so I was like, "Yep, I'm going to cry in today and it's going to be okay." And normalized it, and my hope was, anyway, that if I can normalize that, "Hey, I'm going through it and it's hard. And it's okay that it's hard because we're going to get through this."

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** That it might invite a conversation for them to bring up how they felt on the days it was hard.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And it was beautiful.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** Because I mean, one of my kids is just so expressive, he's so deep in his feelings. And he came to me like, "I'm feeling a tsunami of sadness." And I was like, "Well, the descriptor tsunami honestly makes me want to cry now. But please explain where it comes from? Why it's here?"

I went, this is a little bit of a sidebar, but it was instructive in how I tried to engage with my kids. I started a form of therapy that I'd never done before. I've always, I'm a huge advocate of therapy.

**Annie:** Me too.

**Dave:** You can go ahead and send as many notes as you like if you don't like therapy, but-

**Annie:** Not our people, everybody knows.

**Dave:** Great, great. But I started doing something called Internal Family Systems. Which was this idea of like me, as self, being the observer of the parts in my being. Whether it's my helper or my thoughts or my emotions or my whatever, and trying to create a relationship that said, "You are not this thought, you are not this emotion, you are the observer of them." Very much like an untethered soul kind of way.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And that work was life-giving, I mean, transformational in the midst of this hardest season. Because I couldn't at the beginning, disassociate my sadness from me being like I am this sadness.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And instead, I got to this place where I could have an actual conversation. I sound like a crazy person but it works trust me. With this emotion in an interrogative kind of way. In a similar, like in my mind, it works in a way that like we're sitting at this table looking at each other right now. Where the example I always used because it just I think lands easiest for people is my anxiety.

**Annie:** Mh-hmm.

**Dave:** I named my anxiety "Clark". Because Clark I mean, simply, right?

**Annie:** Great name.

**Dave:** And, so, Clark is the most present emotion that I was struggling with, in a world where I did not know what was going to happen after I thought I knew what was going to happen.

**Annie:** Yes.

**Dave:** Clark is named, in part, because with the glasses on Clark is the counter to Superman and I want to be super. So I need to understand what role, Clark do you believe yourself to be playing here when my anxiety would present. I'm talking situational anxiety. This isn't the kind that might need medicine or some kind of deeper, I want to honor the fact that there is like, chronic-

**Annie:** Totally.

**Dave:** A different kind.

**Annie:** This isn't the low-hum anxiety concept.

**Dave:** No.

**Annie:** This is there's a situation that my anxiety is coming out.

**Dave:** That's right. Because I have to be careful, because I am also like, but, if you are a sufferer of clinical anxiety, then you need to also have a different kind of treatment than naming it potentially. But I named it, "Clark, you're sitting here, why have you presented yourself?" And we would just have a conversation.

And Clark would reveal, "Oh, well, there's this piece of your life where there's still some ambiguity, that if you were actually creating a plan it would solve the reason why I believe myself to be needed here."

**Annie:** Wow.

**Dave:** And so Clark doesn't realize that he's a negative emotion to me. Clark thinks that he's here to help. And changing the paradigm in our relationship to, "Oh, that thing helper, Clark, is here." So over time, it was like, "Oh, he's dropped a trail of breadcrumbs, I can follow them and put a plan in this place in my life." Clark feels great, he's now taken off. And I feel better because I now have clarity in a space that previously had an ambiguity.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** I tell the story, in part, because when I'm now sitting with my kids, and the tsunami of sadness is presented.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** I get to now have a conversation that's informed by my own journey inside of therapy for the year's worth of time. And, so, all right, "Can you ask the tsunami why he's here?"

**Annie:** Wow.

**Dave:** Right now, with an eight or nine-year-old kid, interestingly, they have an imagination that affords them, like adults sometimes. I tell the story, they're like, "All right, you're weird." I'm like, "Well, I am weird." But like beyond being weird.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** You can think that something is woo-woo or whatever. But at eight, it was like, "Okay, let's have a conversation with it."

**Annie:** Yes.

**Dave:** And it ended up being like this beautiful thing to walk alongside someone whose experience I wanted to honor. And part of, I hope, the willingness to even introduce the fact that the tsunami existed. So we could ask the tsunami a question came because I wasn't hiding in a closet crying on the days when I felt sad.

**Annie:** Yes.

**Dave:** That's a long way to close this story...

**Annie:** Oh, are you kidding, I love it.

**Dave:** I mean, look at, there are so many off-ramps, though.

**Annie:** No I loved it. And I do a similar thing. I think our imagination is a tool God has given us to see what we don't see, to have conversations. I mean, here we talk about a lot being a good friend of yourself. I mean, I'll look in the mirror and be like, "Hey, what are you feeling?"

**Dave:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Something is really you, are you hot? Are you hungry, angry, lonely, or tired? Is it one of those first? If it's not one of those can we talk, I mean, and I will answer myself.

**Dave:** That's good.

**Annie:** Because I have to be, especially in my current life I'm not married yet. I'm like, I need to be, there isn't someone else to bounce this off of?

**Dave:** Yeah.

**Annie:** So it is like looking in the mirror and being a friend to yourself.

**Dave:** That's good.

**Annie:** Okay, *Built Through Courage*; I mean, all of us are going to need this. I need this. I'm ready to finish it. I'm so happy. Thank you for writing it.

**Dave:** Thank you.

**Annie:** It was out of a place of real sacrifice that you wrote this. And when that happens, when people write from there, there's a multiplier from God on it. And so that is I'm very excited for you friend.

**Dave:** What a kind thing to say?

**Annie:** It's true.

**Dave:** I appreciate that.

**Annie:** I mean it. Is there anything we didn't talk about that you want to make sure we cover? I mean, we have a bazillion things to cover, but...

**Dave:** Oh my goodness no. This is like the most fun conversation, honestly-

**Annie:** Oh, I'm so glad I loved it too.

**Dave:** ...I loved it.

**Annie:** How do we ever dream up doing it, we got to do this like eight more times.

**Dave:** I'm in.

**Annie:** Here is the last question we always ask.

**Dave:** Oh, here we go.

**Annie:** Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you?

**Dave:** Well, this is such a weird answer.

**Annie:** Great.

**Dave:** But I have been-

**Annie:** And don't check your phone, we don't let people check their phone around here.

**Dave:** ...I've been in a season of saying, "Yes" to anything. In a weird way, like the freedom that comes in hard things happening that you don't expect. You embrace the reality that control was always an illusion.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And if it is, then why not maybe jam a little bit more into every single day, because you got-

**Annie:** Which is how I tracked you here and 5:30 p.m.

**Dave:** I am here for it. I love it. So fun for me, recently, has been just this idea of saying yes to things that I've never done before. Even if they end up not being fun once I am, like totally immersed in them.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** I have found, like, I really have just been on this hunt, in this last 18 months, to like really get to know myself.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** "Who are you? Who are you, not married? Who are you as a single dad? What do you want to do? What do you want to do with your spare time? What do you want, like, what do you like."

**Annie:** Right.

**Dave:** And I, in some ways, lost touch with what I like and I have been given a permission slip to go find it out.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And so putting my toe into a bunch of different pools to see what actually feels like passion has been the fun.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** So I am in real-time, I mean, this sounds fun and it sounds super terrifying. But I feel like I have to say it on podcasts so that I go through with it.

**Annie:** Okay, good.

**Dave:** So I've been dating this woman named Heidi who's fantastic, and also happens to be a transformation specialist and a bodybuilder in her past.

**Annie:** Yes.

**Dave:** She's got like, so many amazing qualities but among them, she knows how to help people get into incredible shape.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And very, very early on, at the very beginning of our relationship we were working out and she said, "My goodness, you have the musculature." A word I'd never heard in my entire life.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** For someone who could actually, really, become strong and have a lot of muscle if you want it to.

**Annie:** Uh-huh.

**Dave:** And it reminded me-

**Annie:** You're like, "I like this relationship."

**Dave:** I like this relationship, she thinks I could be stronger.

**Annie:** Right.

**Dave:** It actually reminded me when I was in like, second or third grade, do people usually answer the question real quick and then leave the show?

**Annie:** No.

**Dave:** Oh, is it okay to keep talking?

**Annie:** No, this is 100% what we're here for.

**Dave:** Oh, great. So when I was in like second or third grade, I got a letter from the Gifted and Talented Education Program.

**Annie:** Uh-huh.

**Annie:** GATE.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And it was basically like, "Hey, Dave, you're smart."

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And it was the first time that a third party called me smart.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And that affirmation from the expert had me believe it for the first time.

**Annie:** Right.

**Dave:** And I, to the detriment of everyone who had to deal with my ego, I believed it every single day since.

**Annie:** Still believing.

**Dave:** Still believing. But Heidi, as a professional inside of the fitness and health space, suggesting to me that there was something just inherently in whatever musculature is. I mean, like still I need to look it up. I think it means that I have this ability. So I have been having fun with strength training.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** In part, because I had a limiting belief of what my body could do or how strong I could be. And as it turns out, for me, as I've dialed in getting really specific about nutrition, getting really disciplined around pushing heavyweights in a gym.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** I've never had this much muscle on my body in my life.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And I've committed this sounds fun. I'm trying to say this sounds fun.



**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** To standing on a stage in a physique competition-

**Annie:** No!

**Dave:** ...where I will be dipped in-

**Annie:** Dave!

**Dave:** ...oh, yes.

**Annie:** In very brown paint, that will make you very shiny and oily.

**Dave:** The 9th day of November, 6th, 7th day of November? Anyway, like two weeks after-

**Annie:** Like bodybuilding competition?

**Dave:** Two weeks after my book comes out. As a display of my courage to try things that I am terrified of, I'm going to be in a bodybuilding competition.

**Annie:** That's awesome.

**Dave:** Is it though?

**Annie:** Yes, oh my gosh. Oh my gosh.

**Dave:** Yeah. So-

**Annie:** You're going to get like spray tan and then oiled.

**Dave:** Just spray me, oil me, find some flower, throw me-

**Annie:** Do you have to wear like a bikini?

**Dave:** So here's the thing I said yes thinking I had to which did not sound fun. Because no one wants that, literally, and I mean, literally no one wants that. But as it turns out, physique is one of three divisions.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Dave:** And the physique division wears boardshorts.

**Annie:** Great.

**Dave:** I am here for boardshorts, like yes-

**Annie:** Great. That worked out great for you.

**Dave:** "Can I put a sunset on the boardshorts?" "Yes, you can." "Fantastic."

**Annie:** Physique wears board shorts?

**Dave:** So there's physique, then there's like the next level and it's all about like, how much weight, how much mass you have on your body? It's not like level one, two, and three.

**Annie:** Sure.

**Dave:** It's almost like boxing has heavyweight, and lightweight, and flyweight, if you're the champ you're the champ.

**Annie:** Right.

**Dave:** But it's just about like how much weight. The middle level you're wearing like a boxer brief.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Dave:** Which you know, like I've got a boxer brief on now I don't want to get into details, but like I'm comfortable in a boxer brief, okay? It's the top-level, Mr. Olympia kind of level that wears the banana hammock.

**Annie:** Great.

**Dave:** And so that's, can you say banana hammock-

**Annie:** You did.

**Dave:** ...in front of Annie F. Downs?

**Annie:** You are the first one. You're the first one, I think that that's happened on here someone will correct this.

**Dave:** What is happening? So anyway, I'm never, well, never say never.

**Annie:** Right.

**Dave:** I don't think I'll ever be that muscley, but the idea of-

**Annie:** You can't know?

**Dave:** Yeah, I mean, truly-

**Annie:** But you get the boardshorts.

**Dave:** There's a lot of things I didn't think I'd ever be.

**Annie:** Right.

**Dave:** Here I am single daddy of four people and I'm going to be in a physique competition.

**Annie:** Oh, I cannot wait to watch as much as you will let us watch.

**Dave:** I'm going to, but here is the thing-

**Annie:** Is the win entering or is the win winning something?

**Dave:** The win is entering.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Dave:** 100%.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Dave:** I mean, I just, do you want me to stop talking?

**Annie:** No, we have three minutes.

**Dave:** Oh, we have three minutes, okay.

**Annie:** We're great.

**Dave:** Here is the bottom line, the bottom line is the entry is the win.

**Annie:** Okay, great.

**Dave:** I just, what I was going to say is I just went through this triathlon experience that I didn't train perfectly for. It didn't go as well as I wanted and yet, getting in the water was the win.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** if I was disappointed in the outcome.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** In part because I, now, know what it's going to take. To train to do it as well as I know I want to for next time.

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Dave:** And so getting on that stage that's the win.

**Annie:** Right.

**Dave:** Because I very well, very, very well may not win, I don't think I'll win. But I'm going to know-

**Annie:** Dave, what if you win?

**Dave:** No, don't say it. The thing is the reality is in not winning would be the best thing that could happen for me. I want to give my very, very best and be humbled by part of the experience.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Dave:** So that in the humbling I know where I have work to do for the next competition.

**Annie:** Can we also just say the joy the entire internet would feel if you got a trophy or something? A medal? Do you get medals? Will you get trophies or medals?

**Dave:** You don't appreciate where joy on the internet comes from? The joy on the internet would come from me not meddling and not having an ab.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Dave:** I just want one ab.

**Annie:** Okay. Yeah.

**Dave:** Can we get one ab on this guy over here?

**Annie:** Yes, I think so. You got months to do it. Yeah.

**Dave:** I'm 6'4, I got like almost three months. I need one ab.

**Annie:** Oh, this is going to be so great. We wish you all the best. You are, according to That Sounds Fun, you are the physique winner of this tournament. You're the only guy in boardshorts here so thanks for doing this. I appreciate you making time, I'm really glad we're friends.

**Dave:** Me too.

**Annie:** I'm thankful.

[01:09:51] <Music>

**Annie:** Oh, you guys, don't you just love him? So honest, so generous, I just think the world of him. Be sure to pick up your copy of his new book, *Built Through Courage*. Go follow him on Instagram so you can thank him for being on the show today.

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 and I will do the same. And for me what sounds fun to me today, well, I'm thinking about my Georgia Bulldogs tomorrow, and so I'm excited to watch some football tomorrow, that sounds fun to me. I would love to hear what sounds fun to you, tell me over on Instagram.

Have a great weekend, friends, we'll see you back here on Monday with you know her, and love her, Moriah Smallbone, also known as Moriah Peters, now known as Moriah. Y'all are going to love this conversation. We'll see you back here on Monday. Have a great weekend.

[01:10:53] <Music>