

TSF Q&A: Indigenous Culture

with Charles and Siouxsan Robinson

That Sounds Fun Podcast with Annie F. Downs

[00:00:00] <Music>

Annie: Hi friends, Happy Thanksgiving. 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, y'all, we've got a great show.

But before we dive in, I want to take a moment and share about one of our incredible partners, Athletic Greens. Athletic Greens is the 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, they need to thrive. But our busy lives can sometimes leave us deficient in key nutritional areas.

AG1 by Athletic Greens, this superfood product, brings comprehensive and convenient daily nutrition to everybody. Keeping up with the research and knowing what to do, and taking a bunch of different pills or supplements can be hard on your stomach. Honestly, hard on your brain too, because who can keep up with it all, I can't even keep up with my keys.

To help each of us be the best we can be. They've simplified the path to better nutrition by giving you one thing with all the best things. It's just one scoop into really cold water every morning. And it contains 75 vitamins, minerals and whole-foods-sourced ingredients, including a multivitamin multi-mineral, probiotic, green, super food blend and more in one convenient daily serving.

The special blend of high-quality, bioavailable ingredients in a scoop of AG1 work 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. Athletic Greens makes it so easy to get so many good-for-me things into my body at one time, I love that. As the research changes so does AG1. Most nutritional products that come to market never evolve, but Athletic Greens continues to obsessively improve AG1 based on the latest research. They've made 53 improvements and counting over the last decade.

AG1 is lifestyle-friendly whether you eat keto, paleo, vegan, dairy-free or gluten-free and contains less than one gram of added sugar, no GMOs, no nasty chemicals or artificial anything. Wow, it still tastes pretty good.

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 essentially is nutrition.

To make it easy, Athletic Greens is going to give you an immune supporting free one year supply of vitamin D and five free travel packs with your first purchase, if you visit athleticgreens.com/soundsfun

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today. Again, simply visit athleticgreens.com/soundsfun to take control of your health and give AG1 a try.

Hey, and if you're looking for a way to cross some things off your list today, be sure to pop over to shopanniefdowns.com today, Black Friday through Cyber Monday, for 30% off the entire store. When you use the code BLACKFRIDAY21, BLACKFRIDAY21, all caps, go for it.

We've got signed books, every book in there I autographed with my own paw. Those adorable, "Is It Christmas Yet?" sweatshirts, jean jackets, from ABLE, and so much more. And just for fun, we're sending you a free That-Sounds-Fun Frisbee with every purchase while supplies last. Listen, I'm about you having fun. So get you a free Frisbee. Again, it's shopanniefdowns.com and you'll get 30% off with the code BLACKFRIDAY21.

Y'all I'm so excited we're heading back on the road for the That Sounds Fun Podcast Tour. We're coming to a city near you in February or March of 2022, it's going to be so fun. The only thing that's going to make it more fun is if you are there.

So if you're looking to be the best gift giver around this Christmas tickets to the tour make a great stocking stuffer. We even have a little card you can download and print out to let your friend or loved one know that you got them the best gift out there. Just go to anniefdowns.com/events for all the details and to get your tickets. I cannot wait to see y'all.

Today on the show I get to talk again with my friend, Charles Robinson and his wife Siouxsan. Charles and Siouxsan Robinson and their nine children share Native American cultural presentations with the focus on unity, through diversity. They dance at pow-wows you remember I went a couple of weeks ago. Participate in sacred ceremonies and promote traditional Native American values in a contemporary world.

They recognize the importance of honoring their heritage through dance, language, and seeing the world from a tribal perspective. Y'all remember Charles, he was on the podcast just a few weeks ago. And that day we talked about him coming back with his wife, Siouxsan, to create space for some Q&A and further conversation. They are so gracious. And I'm so grateful we get to continue to learn from them.

We intentionally scheduled this conversation to be right after Thanksgiving. Because November is Indigenous Peoples' Month and we thought it'd be great time to keep these ideas in front of our minds. As we gather with friends and family this season.

I'm so thankful to Charles and Siouxsan letting us come to them, not as educated as they are and them teaching us over and over. I'm just so thankful. So here is my Q&A conversation with Charles and Siouxsan Robinson.

[00:05:11] <Music>

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Annie: Charles and Siouxsan, welcome to That Sounds Fun. Charles, welcome back.

Charles: Thank you.

Annie: Thank you for bringing Siouxsan with you. Siouxsan, how are you?

Siouxsan: I'm good, thank you.

Annie: Really glad you're here. We are, I mean, as y'all know, after you were on the show in October, Charles, for Indigenous People's Day.

Charles: Yeah.

Annie: We had an influx of people wanting to know more.

Charles: Mh-hmm.

Annie: And want to ask more. What was y'all's experience after being on the show?

Charles: Well, is pretty amazing to see the number of followers that we began to get on the Red Road Instagram page.

Annie: Uh-huh.

Charles: And Siouxsan oversees all of that, but she kept telling me, "Look, we're getting more, where are all these people coming from?" She was telling me.

Annie: I love it. Siouxsan, were you just so surprised?

Siouxsan: I was very surprised.

Annie: Oh, I'm so glad. That's our favorite thing. We talk a lot around here about the most fun thing for me is to be a bridge. I just love being a bridge and bridging people to stuff that's way cooler than me. So thank y'all for letting us do it, it's so fun.

Charles: And you know we received emails and stuff through Instagram and through the website, and people were just really encouraging, and inquiring, and asking questions. So it's been a really neat experience, thank you.

Annie: Oh, my gosh, I'm so glad. The last time I saw you, since then, was at the pow-wow, educational pow-wow in Tennessee it was amazing. How did that one compare, Siouxsan, to some other ones you've been to? Is that what they're all like? Are they all different?

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Siouxsan: It's a lot different out West.

Annie: Oh really?

Siouxsan: Yeah. With the pow-wows here, in Tennessee, they have a lot of tourists.

Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: So usually the native dancers are in the circle dancing.

Annie: Uh-huh.

Siouxsan: But back home the center is filled with people and outside the circle as well. So there's not that many tourists out West.

Annie: Okay.

Siouxsan: Yeah, so it's a little different.

Annie: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, do you know, was it even before y'all got there, that they invited us into the circle to dance, do you know that part? Are they going to dance? It was awesome.

Charles: I wish I have a video of that.

Annie: I have a video, I can show you. We had the best time, me and my two friends who went. We'd just got out in and they said, "Anybody's welcome." And, Fallon who works with us said, "Well, I'm going to go." And then all of a sudden Jamie and I were like, "Well, we can't miss out. We got to go do this is our one chance." It was awesome. They had a couple of dancers leading us and so it was a really special event. Will you say again, how people can find pow-wows near them that they can attend like that-

Charles: You can go really to powwows.com and find out about pow-wows going on all over the U.S. and Canada. And for those who don't know, a pow-wow would kind of like Oktoberfest is for Germans without the alcohol.

Annie: Uh-huh.

Charles: Where we come together and we're just sharing each other's cultures.

Annie: Yeah.

Charles: And most of these pow-wows in the Southeastern part of the States are much more inter-tribal. In that you have all these different native people from all these different tribes coming

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together. But when you get out West to South Dakota, Montana, and up into Canada, while they're still open to everybody, they're more tribal specific.

Annie: Okay.

Charles: And, so, like the pow-wows we go to here, there may be 5,000 people coming out, and about 90% of them would be tourists or non-natives let me say.

Annie: Yes.

Charles: Back home, back on the reservations out West the pow-wows we hit, it's probably about 90, 95, 98% natives that are there. With fewer non-natives coming to it only because it's in native communities.

Annie: So Siouxsan at those is the goal different? Because here, I know the goal, the one I got to attend is educational and selling beautiful things that Native Americans have made. And kind of like using it as a income experience and opportunity for all the different booths. When out West and South Dakota, if it's just your tribe, is it still meant to be educational or is it actually a gathering?

Siouxsan: It's just a gathering.

Annie: Okay.

Siouxsan: Yeah, we just come together to dance and to sing and to see each.

Annie: Okay. So do they still do things, so they built teepees there, the one I went to. They showed what it would look like. And then there was also that awesome fried bread. Do you get all that out West?

Siouxsan: We do. But the teepees that we have out West people actually stay in them.

Annie: Oh, they like staying in them.

Siouxsan: Yes. So here it's just like a model for people to come and see, but out West people actually stay in them.

Annie: I've never been inside one before, I went inside all three. It was so cool, they're massive.

Charles: Yeah.

Annie: I mean the thing I had never known from seeing it on TV or up close. I don't know why my brain didn't comprehend this, is the sticks they use are huge and the ability to wrap that high, it just all is different when you're standing next to one.

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Charles: Yeah.

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm.

Annie: It's incredible. It's probably true about the buffalo too. Would be my guess...very differently too in my mind. How many different tribes were represented at that pow-wow I was at?

Siouxsan: Oh my goodness. Charles?

Charles: I don't even know, I would think there's easily be 30 or 40 different tribes represented, but I don't know for certain.

Annie: I mean, I saw so many different colors. Because, am I remembering and reading it correctly, that each different like set of colors was a different tribe?

Siouxsan: No, no.

Annie: No.

Siouxsan: No. They have different dancers will have different beadwork and different designs that are from their tribe or from their family. And sometimes they've dreamt about the designs so we like color.

Annie: Yeah.

Siouxsan: There's no specific color for it, not that I'm aware of.

Annie: Yeah. I'll post, today when people are listening to this, I'll post some pictures again of the pow-wow just so they could see the colors were incredible.

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm.

Annie: I mean, we all were just stunned when everyone was dancing together. And, so, I've just never seen anything like that in real-life.

Charles: Yeah.

Siouxsan: Oh, wow.

Annie: Absolutely beautiful. I loved it. So we got a bunch of questions that have come in from our friends listening. Let's start with this, we had multiple questions come in, and, so, for our friends listening, what we're going to do is we've kind of split up the questions into sections versus reading each person's individual one.

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But this conversation about tribes. I mean, there are a couple of different people saying, "A lot of us, a lot of White people currently use the phrase tribe to talk about the people we gather with, our friend group. Might be a tribe or go find your tribe of people who do similar work as you." And our friends asking are saying like, "Is that offensive that we're using it that way?" Or does that make, do y'all feel a certain way when White people are using the word tribe to talk about our gathering of friends?

Siouxsan: I don't think so. I think, I mean, if you use the word native over a bunch of natives here, because that's kind of the term that y'all gave us.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: And so we are just, so that's us.

Annie: Right, right, that makes sense.

Charles: Because we think of tribes here, we think of the 573 different tribes, federally recognized tribes in the States. But there are tribal people throughout the world. And if we really go back far enough, every people group at one time was a part of a tribe somewhere at some point in history. But I wouldn't say it's really a necessarily an offensive term to make reference to your tribe of people or friends.

Annie: And someone did ask the difference between a federally recognized tribe and unrecognized tribes.

Charles: Right.

Annie: Are there unrecognized tribes?

Charles: There are. So you've got federally recognized tribes and state recognized tribes. And to be a federally recognized tribe and get federal funding for your tribe, there are certain qualifications you have to-

Annie: Aah, okay.

Charles: ...and it's a very strenuous process to go through and get federal recognition.

Annie: Okay, great, I did not know that. Siouxsan, one of the things, while we're talking about use of the word tribe, what about the use of the word pow-wow? Like, if we say, "Hey, let's have a pow-wow to talk about the thing we've got going on tomorrow." Like, is that something that we're using incorrectly more so than tribe?

Siouxsan: For me, personally, when I hear people say, "Oh, but we can go pow-wow," and they're not natives it doesn't resonate with me.

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Annie: Okay.

Siouxsan: And nor can like I don't know what word to replace what they're trying to use. But it's just I don't like, for me personally, I don't.

Annie: Yeah,

Charles: I'd agree. I think a lot of what it is, Annie, is that we've got phrases or different things, whether it be mascots or things. Where people have taken from our culture, words, pow-wows, et cetera, taken from our culture and they make it their own.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Charles: Without ever really giving any recognition to our native people on it.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Charles: You know we have a lot of States, here in the United States, that are named using tribal words. You have sports teams using our likeness and our image, and it's just another example of taking from us without ever offering anything in return.

Annie: Got it.

Charles: And the word pow-wow I think, would fall in that.

Annie: Okay. Let's keep talking about the mascot idea if we can. Because we had a handful of friends kind of pop in and say, "How do you feel about so many mascots being removed from schools and street names?" One friend is asking, "My question is, are the high school names and mascots offensive? And how do we advocate for those offended?" There's another parent who said, "Our school, before COVID, was about to vote this out and then COVID happened and it's fallen off the radar. How do I get it back on the radar?"

So can we just have that bigger conversation, is it offensive to you? I mean, obviously enough that the Washington Redskins are now the Washington Football Team.

Charles: Correct.

Annie: I'm an Atlanta Braves fan.

Charles: Yeah.

Annie: And we just won the World Series, it's been my team my whole life.

Charles: I was pulling for the Astros.

Annie: [Crosstalk 00:15:33]

Charles: Sorry.

Annie: Sorry. Sorry for you. But, and I know we used to have Chief Noc-A-Homa and he was retired many years ago. And they don't really do the Tomahawk chop anymore, so there's pieces that are going away. What is the feeling around mascots?

Charles: Let me just say this first, anybody, I mean 3 million natives live in the United States today. So any two you ask about it think differently on it.

Annie: Totally.

Charles: I'll share my thoughts on it.

Annie: Yes.

Charles: Is that the mascots can be very offensive and like Chief Noc-A-Homa. I mean, it's just kind of the name and it's kind of a play on that. Normally it depicts us as a caricature of something that we're not.

Annie: Yes.

Charles: Giving an example down in Fort Walton beach. We do some work down there and that's traditional Choctaw Territory. So you have Choctawhatchee High School down there and their mascot it says, "Home with the big green Indian." And it has stereotypical oversized head with a large nose. The native wearing a headdress and the Choctaw back in that day never wore headdresses. We didn't live in teepees down there.

Annie: Wow.

Charles: The name of the gymnasium where they play basketball is called the reservation. So there's a number of these sayings and even some of the totem poles and stuff they may have do not accurately represent the Choctaw people.

Annie: I got it, yeah.

Charles: So my take on it is if a school wants to use native imagery as a mascot or as a representative of the school. My take has always been that they should check with the tribe that is traditionally in those lands.

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Annie: Oh, wow.

Charles: And go to this tribe and say, "Hey, the Cherokee were here, the Shawnee were here, the Lakota were here. Traditionally, we would like to use that, can we get tribal permission to do so? And can you help us develop a way to best represent you guys." Whether it be a display case or whether it be a curriculum, educational curriculum, to offer to the students. To learn where you're giving back and you're trying to say, "Hey, let's keep the culture alive." However, if the tribe steps in and says, "No, we really don't want you to use our imagery." I think that needs to be respected.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Charles: And the reason I think that's a healthier way to do it, is because you wouldn't go, say Europe. You wouldn't go to the French and say, "Is it okay if we do this and this and this with Germans?" Right?

Annie: Right.

Charles: They're two different countries.

Annie: Right.

Charles: Two different people groups.

Annie: Right.

Charles: In the United States, today, with 573 tribes that's a lot of different people groups.

Annie: Right.

Charles: While there's a lot of overlap and similarities.

Annie: Yes.

Charles: As in like with the Florida State Seminoles. The Florida State worked with the Seminole tribe to come up with the imagery and the stuff they did.

Annie: Yaay, did they?

Charles: And, so, as a Choctaw guy, I don't have the right to go to the Seminoles and say, "You know, you guys, you shouldn't let them use your imagery." Because we're a different nation.

Annie: Yeah.

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Charles: Right?

Annie: Okay.

Charles: But I think just having that conversation with tribal people and open it up and letting them say, "Hey, we're okay with you doing it. But, and here are the parameters you need to stay within."

Annie: Yeah.

Charles: So that it can continue to be an educational opportunity.

Annie: Yes, that's a great, that's really helpful. Do you have thoughts on that? Does it make you emotional?

Siouxsan: No.

Annie: No.

Siouxsan: It's just, for me, mascots it's just another way to show we're not real, like we're not here.

Annie: Wow.

Charles: And because I don't see any other people group that is used on the football team, soccer team, or whatever. And I don't see their imagery all over the place in the way that they have ours and they, like Charles says, the caricature.

Charles: The caricature.

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm. I agree with Charles on the part where to educate, like not totally remove if it's okay with the tribe.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: And then again, at the same time, I prefer them to be removed. The only problem with that is that because native people are not really seen today, I mean, they're kind of a little bit lately.

Annie: It's a win-win and a lose-lose a little bit of, if you remove them then you also remove the opportunity to educate.

Siouxsan: Right.

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Annie: But if you don't remove them, the caricature part is what is hurtful.

Siouxsan: Right.

Charles: Yeah.

Siouxsan: And just the way how we're represented in society today.

Annie: Yeah.

Siouxsan: And everybody, most people, not everybody, but most people see us. When they think of natives, they think of like the feathers and from the 1700, 1800s and they don't see us how we are today. I think it's just easier for people to dismiss us if we're like part of the mascot issue.

Annie: Yes. So what do we do? So our school is a, if someone's listening, going, "Yeah, my school are the Cherokee or my school is the Indians," the Cleveland Indians, for example. So if it's a high school or somewhere where we can step in and do something, what's the next move.

Siouxsan: Well, I have a friend who actually, there's a mascot in Cookeville, I believe. And, so, I have a friend named Sayota Knight who has been working for them to try to remove the mascot because the way how they depict us. It's really offensive, like, you were saying, like one place they call the gym the reservation.

Annie: Yeah.

Siouxsan: And then they speak about there's another school here in Tennessee that talks about the smoke signals. There's just different, I don't feel like a lot of people know enough about native people for them to just go on their own and say, "Okay, well, we're going to keep our mascot, but we're not going to ask any natives what their thoughts are." Because there's so many that just don't want mascots at all.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: I mean, I don't, I would prefer them not to be there. However, at the same time, I try to look for different educational opportunities developed to teach people the true history of who we are and what we represent.

Annie: Yeah. I mean, y'all just got to do this at your kids' school, right?

Charles: Yeah.

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm.

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Annie: I just saw a video of your son dance for the first time?

Charles: He did this particular style of hoop dancing he's never done before.

Annie: It looked awesome.

Charles: Yeah. But I would say, to kind of answer your question from my perspective is, if your school is in an area, I would look up and find out what tribe was there traditionally.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Charles: Approach that tribe and just say, "Hey..."

Annie: How do you approach that tribe? Like I grew up in Georgia and it's Cherokee land everywhere. So maybe is it something I google?

Charles: Yeah, you can just call the Cherokee Nation, Eastern Band of Cherokee is out in North Carolina and just begin to inquire.

Annie: Okay. We can do that. We can use our Google Earth I believe in us. So I'm learning already, we're 12 minutes in and I'm learning so much. I'm so thankful y'all are willing to do this today. Thank you for hearing our questions and letting us, letting me ask these well and not well, I'm going to do the best I can, but I'm learning as we go too. So I'm grateful for y'all. Okay, so let's keep talking about educating kids, let's stick with children. We have a couple of different questions that have come in about what advice do you give... Oh, I love this one. What advice do you give to non-native parents who are raising indigenous children? Because this family has adopted Lakota children.

Charles: Mh-hmm.

Annie: So let's even expand that a little bit. So let's help that mom and dad, but if there are native children in our community. How do we help them connect with their heritage when they aren't being raised necessarily by native families?

Charles: Right.

Siouxsan: Like Charles said before regarding the mascots, approach the tribe.

Annie: Okay.

Siouxsan: And because if they're Lakota they would be anywhere in North Dakota, South Dakota.

Annie: They can call you?

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Siouxsan: Or they can call me I'm Lakota.

Annie: And what's the kind of questions we should ask?

Charles: I would think, I think if you're to call the tribes and you'll just say, "We've got a Lakota child in our community or in our home and we want the child to know their culture. We understand there's some restrictions on what we can do, but we just want to be able to educate the children to know their culture." And any resources, ask them, "Any resources you have, whether it be a language tapes, books, coloring books." Anything that's age-appropriate and bring it in and let the kids learn. The key though is going to find a native family or community wherever you're at.

Annie: Okay. Even if it's not necessarily tribally exact.

Charles: Even if it's not tribally specific just to be around other native people, because there's something about that. So like here in middle Tennessee there has been many times when we've met families, who just like what you're talking about. They have native children and they don't know their culture and Siouxsan will help them with their outfits if they want to dance or we would talk to them about different parts of our cultures. And, so, to reach out because it's really about community, right?

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Charles: It's really about growing in a community.

Annie: Mh-hmm. And we had a couple people, Siouxsan, I wonder if Red Road has some of these resources. A couple of our friends are saying, "I'm a teacher, I'm in the system of educating kids. I'm raising my kids and I don't just want to teach them about Native Americans in the 1700. I want to teach them about Native American life today." Which I thought it was so cool we got multiple of those questions.

Charles: I love it.

Annie: So how do we educate kids on Native American life in 2021?

Siouxsan: I would say go to the Reservation.

Annie: Really go visit.

Siouxsan: Go visit. Because it's a whole different world there.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

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Siouxsan: I actually like it a lot better there just because it's so different out here than it is there. I was born on my dad's Reserve which is in South Dakota, and raised on my mom's Reserve in Alberta, Canada.

Annie: Okay.

Siouxsan: And just being in the community, there's certain things that there are different values.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: Like my girls, every time we come here in the city, when they come home from the Reserve, the goals for the girls are like, "What kind of makeup do you wear? What kind of clothes or what kind of fashion? But when you go home, when the girls go home to my Reserve, they're being encouraged to become like, how do you become more kind.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Siouxsan: How to pray like to smudge and smudging is like with sweet grass yes, it's like here it's called the sage. Back home we sweet grass

Annie: So even just getting to go and visit at some point?

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm. Yeah, just go into the Reserve. Because it's just very different there and the goals are different and because we're a community. Because out here it's much more individualistic, like individual nuclear families, mother, father, children, and their uncles and aunties, and grandparents are somewhere else who occasionally come and visit.

Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: Whereas on the Reserve, it's much more connected and more of an extended family.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: And, so, here people feel like, what's their goal, like their career, their education, and how they're going to provide for their little nuclear family. Whereas on a Reserve, it's like our native communities, ours is how do we help each other?

Annie: Yeah.

Siouxsan: But the issue that we have right now is that because so many Indian Boarding Schools have been throughout the United States and Canada. And because they've been throughout the United States and Canada, we have-

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Annie: Until 1996.

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm.

Annie: I want people to hear that, like people, my age we're in Native American schools. What do they call them? Indian?

Siouxsan: In the States they're called Indian Boarding Schools. And Canada's-

Annie: So people my age, I'm 41, people my age were in high school when those were still going on, this was not a long time ago.

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm. I'm the first generation not to go and my parents-

Annie: Oh, my gosh, did your parents go?

Siouxsan: My parents went, my aunties went, my uncles, my father, my grandparents, their parents, and-

Annie: They all went to Indian Boarding Schools.

Siouxsan: ...and also my older cousins, so five years older they went.

Annie: Oh, my gosh.

Siouxsan: So I missed it by like five years. So there's a lot of dysfunctions that came out of those schools that have, because you have children who are four years old. Between four to eight put in his school and they have to stay there until they're like 18 and, so, there's a lot of behaviors that they're learning. One is like, my mom used to tell me that, she says, "All the bad habits I knew I learnt from the school."

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: And she said, "When I was home, you're taught to help each other, to be kind, to be loving, to be generous, and to take care of each other." But in the school you had to watch out for yourself because if the nuns and priests or supervisors, whoever was working, will have children tell on each other or they would praise one child over the other. And so there was just a lot of different behaviors that came out of there.

So even though in the communities there's a little bit of division, that's just a behavior that comes from the school. But it's still deep-rooted that we take care of each other in our community.

Annie: Yes.

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Siouxsan: So that's still effective throughout the United States and Canada. And even though we have all the dysfunctions that we inherited from the boarding school.

Annie: Mh-hmm. I texted Charles after I watched We Were Children, I was like, "What in the world?" I mean, I could not... So I cannot encourage people enough to go watch We Were Children. It is not fun to watch and do not watch it with children. But I learned, and then as I was telling you before we started out, the book club just read The Tender Land and which starts in a boarding school, an Indian Boarding School, and it has a lot of those stories in there. They sounded just like We Were Children, just like what I'd watched on that documentary. I might, at some point, want to get talk to one of your cousins. I'm just so interested, I want to have a conversation with someone who has survived the Indian Boarding School.

Siouxsan: Then you would talk to my mom.

Annie: Okay.

Siouxsan: Yeah.

Annie: Maybe we'll do that, we'll be in touch about it. I would love that if she'd be willing. Charles, when we want to educate kids, I mean, how do we tell kids about Indian Boarding Schools?

Charles: Wow, that's a tough one. Because you don't want to hide reality from the kids. I think there is a way of, of walking kids into it educationally.

Annie: Because we don't want to repeat it.

Charles: No, absolutely not. One of the things that we've done is we've shared some of the stories, you can share some of the dysfunction without going into the details of the sexual abuse. So there's a way to kind of introduce it to children.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Charles: And one of the things I've done is I've shared this, especially in the elementary and junior high level. And I would just encourage us, "Hey, if you have a younger sibling raise your hand?"

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Charles: All right, and they'll raise their hands and I'll say, "Okay, now, can you imagine what would happen if you were not allowed to see your younger siblings in the entire school year?" Or "You guys are here at school today what if you weren't able to go home today to see your mom and dad or your uncles or your aunties or your grandma. That you couldn't see them until the summertime that you were just taken away from them." And you can see the kids' eyes kind of opened up, they get kind of sad-looking because they realize, "Wait a second, why would somebody do that?"

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Annie: Yeah.

Charles: Why would somebody remove children from their families?

Annie: Yeah.

Charles: Because that was never part of God's plan is for kids to be raised in the institutions.

Annie: Right.

Charles: Well, we justified it, historically we justified by, "Well, we'll put them in a Christian school and educate them and all these things." But even had that been done in a healthy way, it was still outside of God's plan for children to be raised in the institution instead of being raised in a loving home and a loving community.

Annie: Yes. I mean, I'm so grateful for what y'all teach us. I'm thankful that the Red Road has so many resources that we can also go download and share with our kids. One of our friends is asking, she's says, "I'm pretty sure the land, our family's home is on is Native American land, which is true everywhere in America." You know what sister you're right, I bet you're right. So she's saying, "How do I..." I really love the language of this. "How do I acknowledge that well in teaching my kids and talking about the land our farm is on without it feeling performative. Like, I hear some native people speak about land acknowledgement." She doesn't want to feel like she's just doing it to perform, but she really wants her kids to understand the land they're on.

Charles: Well, I think, part of that is realizing that we are stewards of the land.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Charles: Anything that God gives us we're stewards of it. It's not ours to let's say own, possess, and control, and how can we use whatever it is that God gives us our time, talents, gifts, whatever it is, how can we use that to glorify God? How can we use that to share?

Annie: Yeah.

Charles: I've got some friends here that have land around Middle Tennessee and they're always opening it up to other people to come camp out on or just spend the weekend or whatever it might be, right?

Annie: Yeah.

Charles: So for somebody who has, I think, more than acknowledging that and sharing, especially with their children, that this land is historically from this particular tribe would have been here. And let's look for ways to share in that, not necessarily the culture, but in the giving spirit that this tribe hopefully would have had.

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Annie: Yeah. What a great idea that to talk about the stewardship of it. Like this is whose land it was and let's talk about how they stewarded it.

Charles: Yeah. Yeah. And if you're growing crops, if you're raising corn, let's say, "Let's give whatever percentage it is of our crops, let's give it to an organization or the value of that to an organization or to a people group or to somebody in our community who's in need. Let's find a way to give back from that which we have."

Annie: Yeah. We'll stay on the education. For our friends listening, we have this all separated into sections of how the questions came in. So, Siouxsan, I like this one, where she says, this friend of ours says, she has native ancestry, she knows someone in her family was Cherokee. But she looks white and she doesn't want to appropriate anything but would like to honor that part of her heritage. What does that look like to start? And how do you honor the heritage you have if you don't look native American?

Siouxsan: My thoughts on that are if you're native, you're native.

Annie: Okay.

Charles: Yeah. It doesn't matter if you're dark, light or you don't look like your stereotypical native.

Annie: Yeah.

Siouxsan: Because there's been a lot of... there's African-American natives, it feels weird to say White natives-

Annie: Yes, it does, I know what you mean.

Siouxsan: But natives who have white blood in them but I think if you're native, you're native. And there's a little bit of where some say, some have told me, "I feel like I'm native." So this is what I do and I just nod.

Annie: Yeah.

Siouxsan: I mean, because it's not my walk, it's their walk. However, at the same time, there's so many different people here in the United States and Canada who, like scholars, people who've become, they've written books and they say, "I'm from this tribe and this tribe."

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: However, being able to document where you come from. At least having, like, if you come from the Cherokee Nation that somewhere along your lineage that you're able to at least look back and say, "This is where it is." And not just guess. Because we've had so many friends here in Tennessee, who've told us, "I'm this much native." And I have met someone last week who said they're

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Lakota and Blackfoot and I was like, "Oh wow, I've never..." I said, "Where's your family's from?" And they said a whole different place, like New Mexico for Lakota and I think it was like California for Blackfoot.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: So I-

Annie: You just had to sit there and be like, "Mm-hmm?"

Siouxsan: And when I first came here, I was probably a little bit more harsh with people, just because it was strange to me that so many people. Because I don't see, one thing I don't hear a lot of people saying is, "My great-great-grandfather was Black." Or whatever. But I hear it consistently, "My great-great father was native." Some people have said that Pocahontas was their great grandmother.

Annie: Oh, gosh.

Siouxsan: And I look at them, I'm like, "But I was unaware that she had any children."

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: I thought she died before she had children.

Annie: Yeah.

Siouxsan: And so just like, if they're going to research and have a little bit of accuracy, even though you don't look like it. Like, I have friends who have very blue eyes, very light skin and light hair, but I know who their family line comes from and so do they.

Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: And it's not just something that they've like created. And so that there's a little, like we could all track down where our family line comes from especially if you're here in the States. If you, if you're native here from the states, because I know my great, great grandfathers. Like I have there's just Mani Segars is my mother's grandfather.

Annie: Wow.

Siouxsan: And there's just so many, and there's no English translation for that. So we know like several generations of who our family come from, where our families come from. But if somebody, if they look White, I mean, that doesn't mean anything, it's just research your-

Annie: Do the research.

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Siouxsan: Mh-hmm.

Annie: Yeah.

[00:38:51] <Music>

Annie: Hey friends, just interrupted this conversation real quick to share about another one of our incredible partners Olive & June. Y'all know this about me, I like to have painted nails. I just do. I love a little pop of color or sometimes a nice neutral to complete a look. But also welcome to Christmas where we, and New Year's, where our nails are going to get fancy, they're going to get fancy.

I'm just not the best at doing my own nails. I try, but they end up looking not great. They either chip easily or they're not smooth, but the alternative is spending a lot of money and time I don't have to get regular salon manis. But do not fear Olive & June's Mani System is here to save the day they make it possible to have do-it-yourself manicures that looks salon perfect and lasts for over seven days, can you believe it?

Olive & June's Mani System comes with everything you need for a great looking DIY manicure. All packed in one box and only five steps. It comes with an easy to grip handle called a Poppy that fits on all their bottles and steadies your hand so that you can get a smooth coat of paint on both.

The Mani System has six polishes breaks down to about \$2 per manicure. I mean, y'all, that is less than what I used to spend for just like one manicure in the salon, and the Olive & June polish is beautiful. They have tons of options. The Polish, especially with their signature top coat is so shiny it looks just like gel and it does not chip. It lasts a whole week which is much longer than my do-it-yourself efforts typically last.

The Oliver & June Mani System is the secret behind salon-perfect nails at home, all-in-one, no guessing, no messy nails, no salon price tag. And as one of my friends, you get 20% off your first Mani System at oliveandjune.com with my code. THATSOUNDSFUN. Your new nail life is here, get 20% off your first Mani System when you use the promo code THATSOUNDSFUN at oliveandjune.com. We're done with expensive, bad manicures, especially for the holidays you guys okay. This is the new us, oliveandjune.com and the code is THATSOUNDSFUN. And now back to our conversation with Charles and Siouxsan.

[00:40:45] <Music>

Annie: One of the questions in the same section that I really liked was, I liked all of them. But this friend of ours says her son's fiancé is Native American. And she just is like, "I feel very uneducated, I'm afraid I'm going to offend her when I'm not meaning to." That has to happen all the time. It's probably happened eight times since we've been friends, Charles, and I've said something like, "Annie doesn't know, this is mildly offensive." How do we do that? How do we help someone who has... now she's going to have this woman in her family, this Native American and she doesn't want to be

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offensive. So what's the education look like? How do we start? What are those conversations look like?

Charles: I think just like that right there saying, "Hey, I was going to let you know now I'm going to say some stuff that's offensive and I really don't mean to. But it's out of my ignorance and I'm asking you in advance to have some grace and forgiveness for me when I ask some really dumb-sounding questions." Right?

Annie: Yeah.

Charles: Just kind of lay it out there and once the communication starts, once the community begins it becomes a safe place to make mistakes.

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm.

Annie: Yeah. So put yourself in that situation. What's the first couple of conversations that would be easy entry for this mother-in-law. Like, "What tribe are you from?" Is that an easy entry conversation? What else?

Siouxsan: "Where are your people from?"

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: What kind of ceremonies or what kind of like do y'all live in teepees or do you live in-

Annie: What did the Choctaw live in if not teepees?

Charles: Well, we lived in more of these thatched-roof hut.

Annie: Okay.

Charles: So I think just what Siouxsan is saying, just feel free to open up and ask them a question. "Tell me about your family?"

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Charles: And as people begin to talk about their family, like if somebody would ask Siouxsan, "Tell me about your family?" That would begin to encompass the land, the people, the countryside, the foods, it really opens the door to a whole lot of stuff.

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm.

Charles: So starting off by asking, "Where's your family from? Where's your tribe from?" And asking where's your tribe from is okay. Some people are not really sure how to say that or, "What's

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your nation?" I've heard people say that. But I think, for the most part, if you say, "Hey, where's your tribe from, where are your people from?"

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Charles: "Who's your family? Can you share a little bit about where you come from?"

Annie: Yeah.

Charles: And then, in turn, be willing to offer about your own family and maybe where they came from around the world.

Annie: Yeah. You and I went over this question ahead of time. So before people hear me ask it, I want them to know that we've discussed this ahead of time. While we're talking about marriage, I thought this was an interesting question. This person is saying, "You seemed very accepting of Charles from when you were on the show last time." If our friends didn't hear that that's Episode 333. Because you said you wanted your children to marry Native American people. "I support that too." Says the friend asking if that's his preference. But why is it okay for you to say that yet this person feels like they'd be attacked if they said they wanted their kids to marry someone who's white.

Charles: Great question though. Golly, what an honest question

Annie: I know, what an honest question I thought so too. That's why I was glad we got to-

Charles: Yeah, I would say the difference would be, if I were to say, I really want my daughters or my son to marry brown-skin person that would be different, right?

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Charles: So instead of let's replace the word White with say, somebody is Norwegian and they say, "I'd really like for my children to marry Norwegian or Scandinavian spouses. So, and, part of the reason for us is because our culture is so real and so alive and my hope is that their spouses would want to participate or be accepting of our culture. And our experience has been that a lot of times non-natives are not so much accepting of it.

Annie: Oh, wow. And they marry in.

Charles: Yeah, exactly. Especially in the Christian world and most of that is out of a lack of understanding of it.

Annie: Yes, of course.

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Charles: But yeah, and I know it does sound bad, "Yeah, I want my kids to marry white people." Yeah, you would be torn and feathered if you were to throw that out there.

Siouxsan: But also like if you look in the '60s, I mean, people were killed and beaten if they even tried to date a black man.

Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: So we're not trying to kill anybody, we just want our children to be able to like, whoever is for them. Obviously we would whoever they choose to love and that they marry is that they're happy and that they're loved and that they're able to just walk through life together. And with non-natives, it's a little bit difficult for a native to marry a non-native, because then you have to explain everything.

Annie: Sure.

Siouxsan: You're like literally spend the whole time like, "Okay, we do this because of this. We do this." And then the culture is just very different. Like out here, outside native communities-

Annie: I do like that you're saying in and out I think it's really interesting.

Siouxsan: ...is that here if you don't make good eye contact here, then you're considered sketchy and disrespectful. Whereas in our community you wouldn't make some intense eye contact with elders. Like I've met men who would greet Charles, but they'll greet me with their eyes lowered.

Annie: Out of respect.

Siouxsan: Out of respect.

Annie: Aah, interesting.

Siouxsan: So there's such a difference.

Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: And with my mom married a man who was a White man, Scots-Irish, I guess.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: And that was really hard for her because she, not only did she have this whole cultural difference in their lives, but she also was removed from her reserve. She wasn't allowed to be on her Reserve. So she got kicked off the Reserve because she married a White man.

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Annie: Oh, wow.

Siouxsan: And I don't know how many white people marry someone else and they're kicked out of, maybe they're kicked out of their family. But for us, it's more, at that time, it was called Bill C-31.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Siouxsan: That which established, that allowed women to regain their rights back. Because my mom when married my older siblings' dad she lost her rights as a native person and so she wasn't allowed to live on the Reservation. So my grandparents, so when my mom and her husband separated and my two brothers and sister, my mom couldn't take care of them on the Reserve. So she had to have them, she had to work off the Reserve and then they had to stay with my grandparents.

Charles: So, if you can imagine that, because her mom, tribal member marries a non-native she lost her status as a native person up in Canada.

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm.

Charles: But now listen to this, Annie, if it was a native guy who married a non-native woman, the woman gained native status on the Reserve.

Annie: It doesn't seem right.

Charles: Thank you.

Siouxsan: So we have a lot of reasons why. Like, it's just we'd like our bloodline to be stronger.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: Like I would like the kids to each time they marry outside of a tribe that they're, the tribe that they're affiliated with becomes more deleted.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: So their children won't be able to have acceptance because of the government's mandate of like, you have to have this much percentage of native blood to be allowed to register here.

Annie: Got it.

Siouxsan: And so if they marry a non-native their child won't be able to, depending on how much blood she has, like I'm half Lakota, half Blackfoot. So my children have been like, our children have been able to be registered.

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Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: But if they marry someone who's non-native, and because Charles is Choctaw their bloodline goes into 3, 4 different ways.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: And so they marry a non-native then it becomes even more deleted. And then their child is not even hardly recognized as it native legally. By us they would be recognized, but by the government.

Annie: Which is, in effect, for a White person that is nothing I have to think about. Because I already am like 4% Scottish, 4% English, some percent German. Like I already, for majority of my friends who are White, we are already a collection of cultures.

Siouxsan: Right.

Annie: We are not, now I used to live in Scotland. I have friends that have been Scottish, their whole lineage is Scottish.

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm.

Annie: And so that's not me though. That's not most of my American friends. Most of us open ancestry.com or 23andMe and I've got single digit percentages for a lot of dominantly White countries. And so that to me is you're teaching me this, I'm realizing like, "Oh yeah, we're not trying to..." If I was Scottish that'd be a different thing. If I was a 100% Scottish, but I'm American, I'm American, that's all I know no matter what is what I am.

Siouxsan: Right. And you don't really lose your whiteness, your White citizenship. I mean, for us, it's we lose our citizenship.

Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: Like my nephew is half Blackfoot and half Filipino.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: And somewhere in his native bloodline, somewhere there, there was I guess white blood that came in on his mom's side, on her father's side. And because it's like 1/18th of that bloodline is gone. He cannot be registered in his tribe.

Annie: Wow.

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Charles: So and nor can he be considered, like, we have a thing where if we're 50% native, then we have the right to work here, live here, go to school. But if we can't prove we're 50% native then we don't have that right.

Annie: Got it.

Charles: Being born in Canada and being able to come into the States. So it's very convoluted. Bottom line is with regards to the marriage, we want our kids to marry somebody they love regardless, and will treat them well.

Annie: Yes.

Charles: That's bottom line.

Annie: I believe that. If y'all had a 40-year-old sitting around, I would ask, "Can I marry him?" Because I think y'all's family is amazing. I think it is so interesting, because you have to, there are so many spiritual, physical, cultural, governmental things, political things you have to think about that me and my White friends are not thinking about. Maybe some of us are. Me and my White friends are not thinking about them when we are picking who to marry. Craig just got engaged, I don't think, do you know even, I mean, you know what country Hannah is from, good job getting engaged. We are very excited for you.

Okay. Let's talk about faith for a minute. A couple of people had some really specific questions that I, you know me I love this stuff. So one of our friends says, "How does your relationship with Jesus affect the way you embrace your traditional roots, especially in terms of traditional Native American religion? Are there aspects of traditional spiritual practices that align with a spirit that's not from Jesus and how do you navigate that and kind of pick the pearls out? Where does your life with Jesus match some of the Native American culture that traditionally, as far as we've heard is not Jesusy." Jesusy, that's great, Annie, I'm doing great.

Charles: I like that word, Jesusy.

Annie: I'm the lowest of the three of us, doing great today.

Charles: You know people look at it as a great divide between following Jesus and Native spirituality. But I would suggest it's a very short step.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Charles: When we take a look at the things that were important to Jesus, all of these qualities, all of these ways of treating people are right in line with traditional Native values. And I'm being very generic there because there are so many different tribes and different people groups and different belief systems. So each tribe may have different beliefs on some of these things. But for the most part

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it's about, man, just loving people and giving, and sharing, and helping, and all these things that Jesus did.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Charles: Just living that out. With regards to specifics on what one tribe may believe in who God is. There are so many similarities, that it's not a big step. It's just like Paul in the book of Acts, about this unknown God, right?

Annie: Yeah.

Charles: And let me tell you a little bit who I believe this is and we don't really find that conflict at all. The conflict we find and we've ministered in a lot of different tribes.

Annie: Yes.

Charles: The conflict we find is from the damage that has been done by Christians that came before us, that's really it. And native people, generally speaking, do not get caught up in the little-bitty things. They don't get caught up on in using instruments and not using instruments in church.

Annie: Sure.

Charles: Immersion or sprinkling? Native people don't really care a whole lot about that for the most part.

Annie: The denominational things that are big deals to some of our friends, yeah.

Charles: Yeah, it's not an issue.

Annie: Yeah. So when you are, I mean, one of our friends asked, "Aren't certain tribes polytheistic. So how do you share about a singular Jesus in tribes that have been traditionally taught that there are lots of gods?"

Charles: Yeah. As well, people say the same thing. Well, so, you're saying you believe in a single God, but there's a Father, there's a Son, and there's a Holy Spirit, that's three. That sounds kind of polytheistic to me, right?

Annie: Yeah.

Charles: So you encounter these kinds of questions. And one of the things, and I love how Siouxsan has shared with so many people, is that we don't come in and say, "You've got to believe this, and you've got to believe that." We believe the Holy Spirit is more than capable of working in people's

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hearts. but where Siouxsan has done an amazing job over and over again, is when she shares her own personal story.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Charles: And she'll say something like, so... or they'll ask her, "How did you come out of this, with the challenges you had grown up?" And she'll say, "Well, this is my story. This is what Jesus did for me. And if you want to buy into that, man, I'll show you how to do that."

Annie: Yeah.

Charles: But more than that, they've got to see it in her lifestyle and that's what they've done.

Siouxsan: And I think that, you know, He says that when He comes into your heart that He's your teacher, right?

Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: And he shows you, because when He is in your heart, it's very, very hard to do things that are not of Him because your heart, your spirit would be conflicted.

Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: And, however, at the same time, sometimes it's conflicted because there's a certain bias that has been told about Native people. Like for instance, like I was told when I first became a believer-

Annie: How old were you?

Siouxsan: I was 20.

Annie: Oh, wow. Okay.

Siouxsan: I was 20 and up until that time, I had never heard the name of Jesus, which I'm so glad.

Annie: Right. Because you didn't have the baggage.

Siouxsan: Yes. Because there's so much I noticed that the thing with a lot of believers today is that they compartmentalize their faith.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

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Siouxsan: And some are Baptists, some are Pentecostal, some are Catholic, like there's just so many different boxes.

Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: Because I grew up with on my Reserve, so I grew up with our traditions. Like I grew up being in a native community. And, so, when I became a believer I was told, "You can no longer dance pow-wow, you can no longer do your native dances."

Annie: Oh, wow.

Siouxsan: And I asked them, I said, "Why?" And they said, "Because it's against God." And I said why again? And they said, "Because it just is." So, because I was a new believer, and as many people who are new believers there's a certain amount of love that you feel towards Him. Well, I still do so it hasn't left, but it's just very intense. And, so, after I left the Bible study that day, I told him, I said, "I know-"

Annie: You told God this?

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm.

Annie: Okay, good. "This is what I said. I said, 'God!...'". Yeah that's it.

Siouxsan: I was like, "If this is absolutely against you and you want me to stop dancing, then so be it. But you're going to have to explain to me why." Because it was, these dances that I did that saved my life of how many times I tried to take my life because of the colonization process, the interference of the dysfunction that I grew up with.

Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: This was what I found peace in. The sweat lodge where I would go to I found peace there. I found love there. I found community there. So you need to tell me why this is wrong. So I went to, so the next week, so I kept waiting for signs all week. And the next week we had gone to the Bible study again and the man who-

Annie: Were you on the reservation still?

Siouxsan: No I was in Vancouver, BC.

Annie: Okay.

Siouxsan: Because I became a believer April 20th, and then I moved to Vancouver almost two weeks later.

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Annie: Oh, wow.

Siouxsan: Yeah.

Annie: Was that already planned or did that happen because?

Siouxsan: It just happened. Yeah.

Annie: Oh, wow. We need to have a whole episode with Siouxsan's family. I know, I see what's coming. I'm about to have a whole side project where all I do is talk to you and your family, okay, keep going.

Siouxsan: But, so, the next week we had gone to the Bible study and there's a man at the Bible study named Peter. And he says, "You know, last week Jacob said Siouxsan wasn't allowed to practice her dances anymore." And he said, "It didn't feel right in my spirit." And, so, Peter, he's quite the scholar in the Bible, like he reads it in and out and just totally he's really good with it.

Annie: Yeah.

Siouxsan: But, he said, "So I started reading and started looking at Scripture." and started seeing, like, why is this wrong? He says, "Siouxsana, I just need to ask you a few questions. Like, are you, at these pow-wows, do you guys get intoxicated with alcohol and stuff and do drugs or whatever?" And I said, "No." I said, because I was like, well, me growing up the way how I was raised is that you are not allowed to have anything like that touch you if you were in your outfit.

Annie: Oh, right.

Siouxsan: Because it was just like, there was a great level of respect. And he says, "Well, what else do you guys do?" I was like, "We eat, sing, dance, visit." And, so, he said, "Well, I was looking in the Bible and I came across David, and David was standing before the Lord and he danced before him naked.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: And that should have been abomination. But he said, he says, "And then I went further and then I looked where it talks about the prodigal son, and it talks about the father. When he saw his son come home, he said, "My son has come home, prepare a calf my son has come home."

Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: And that night they sang and they danced. He there's nothing in Scripture that tells me that there's anything wrong with dancing. And from what you said is like, you're not worshipping anything there. And even if, and that's the thing people don't understand, is that Native people have a great respect for creation, for people, for creation, because without your trees you would have no air.

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Annie: That's right.

Siouxsan: Without your sun, the whole world will be completely dead.

Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: So there's a certain... give respect where it's due.

Annie: Yes. Yes. That's beautiful. Can we talk for a second about Thanksgiving?

Charles: Yeah.

Annie: So when everyone's hearing this it's the day after Thanksgiving. Do y'all celebrate Thanksgiving?

Charles: We do. Yeah. We celebrate every opportunity we have to gather together as a family and eat a lot of food.

Annie: Mh-hmm. Yeah, that fits every culture.

Charles: Right.

Annie: That's incredible.

Charles: So we don't necessarily celebrate the mythological picnic between The Pilgrims and Wampanoags. But the spirit of Thanksgiving is what we celebrate.

Annie: Mh-hmm.

Charles: That is come together with family and friends. We have the luxury now of being able to understand how the early Thanksgiving actually took place and some of the stuff, and the timeframe, and the reason for the celebrations, and all of those things. And it's not what we studied growing up and it's not what we celebrated as kids in elementary school.

Annie: Sure.

Charles: But the spirit of Thanksgiving where we come together and we do show thankfulness to God for everything, and hopefully we do it more than just once a year, right?

Annie: Yeah.

Charles: From that perspective we do celebrate it and I get to watch the Dallas Cowboys.

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Annie: Yeah. You and your Texas sports man. Did you watch the Cowboys against my Falcons? Bless the Lord, what are we going to do? The Falcons, I cannot with them, Charles. I'm telling you, nobody's tested my faith and perseverance like the Atlanta Falcons it's the most spiritual thing I'm a part of. Siouxsan, when I'm thinking about Thanksgiving, is there a way, if you're talking to a majority non-native audience right now.

Siouxsan: Okay.

Annie: Would you rather us incorporate better education about Native Americans during Thanksgiving or just think about the spirit of Thanksgiving? Would you rather us do better education or remove that fictional story from the narrative altogether?

Siouxsan: I think doing a better description.

Annie: Okay.

Siouxsan: I don't think removing it, that doesn't do anything. It's just like out of sight, out of mind.

Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: Just like tell them the real story of what happened.

Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: A lot of people like the good ending and the happy Indians, and the happy pilgrims.

Annie: The picnic, right? Yeah.

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm.

Annie: The cornucopia.

Siouxsan: Right.

Annie: Of all the foods that they could not have grown there.

Charles: Right.

Siouxsan: And, so, maybe they have a Thanksgiving where they're thinking, "Thank you for allowing us to be here."

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Annie: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: "Thank you for allowing, your people wanted to share the land."

Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: There's a whole different type of Thanksgiving. Because we knew that we were not owners of this land, we're stewards.

Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: And, so, I think just having a better understanding about the Native Americans. First nations people in Canada.

Annie: Does Red Road have some resources for us around that, that we could read and look up or get pointed toward?

Siouxsan: We're actually, I'm actually working on several things right now.

Annie: That's great. Okay. Are you working on a book about your life? I would like you to.

Siouxsan: I'm actually working on my mom's.

Annie: Great.

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm.

Annie: Okay, good. If I can help at all, let me help, I would love to. I want to read that. So if I can help you get it out quicker, I'm here for you. Okay, Charles, we got to talk about Cigars.

Charles: Yes.

Annie: Because we've talked Thanksgiving, let's talk Christmas. Let's give some people some cigars for Christmas. Will you talk about your cigar company? Because we saved it last time, because I want people to know about it now, so we can go get them.

Charles: So we started the cigar company four years ago. With the idea of the proceeds of the cigar sales to go to fund the work we do with the Red Road.

Annie: Okay.

Charles: And, so, uh, the cigars are rolled down in Nicaragua. And one of the master blenders was an 83-year-old Cuban man who is allegedly the Cuban cigar world. So even if they did not have our name on them they would, I would just say, as far as cigars go, they're really high quality premium

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cigars and, so, the name of the cigars Atsiniki. Atsiniki is my name in my wife's Blackfoot language. Atsiniki means storyteller.

Annie: Oh my gosh! That's your name in her Blackfoot language?

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm.

Charles: Yeah.

Annie: That's cool. I didn't know that, that's really cool.

Charles: And we've got three different blends and we've named these three cigars after three of our children. So you can imagine the competition as to which cigar people like more with the kids

Annie: Right, and there's nine kids total you've got to up your game.

Charles: Right. We got to up our game. So we have like a mild, medium, and a fuller bodied one.

Annie: Spicy? Is that last one spicy?

Charles: Right. So the mild is Nanaiya which means, in Choctaw, it means peace and reconciliation.

Annie: Okay.

Charles: The Imaiya is the next higher one is strength. Imaiya means victorious in, Choctaw and then Tashka, which is the most, the boldest, strongest means warrior in Choctaw.

Annie: Okay.

Charles: And, so, they can go to our website akisnekcigars.com. And while we do not sell online I'll direct the folks, anybody interested, I'll direct them to shops. Because we want to support the brick and mortars, the people that are in the shops day to day out. And they can order through these friends of ours at the shops.

Annie: Oh great. So you have like a list of stores we can contact.

Charles: Yeah.

Annie: Because I think we're going to order a lot, so you need to warn some people maybe to warn some people.

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Charles: Thank you so much.

Annie: You need to warn some people because we're adding it to a gift guide we're telling them today. Will you just give them some heads up, that we're coming. The That Sounds Fun friends are coming for some cigars. Is there anything we didn't talk about that you want to make sure we cover from last time or from questions you've gotten. Anything you want to make sure we know, so we do this really well and really educate ourselves well?

Charles: I would add this, as with the Red Road and the work that Siouxsan is doing there. She has developed these women's groups on Reservations. Where she's there for these women who are going through suicides, addictions, abuse, hopeless or whatever it might be, right?

Annie: Yeah.

Charles: And either they're going through it or they have family members that are going through it.

Annie: Sure.

Charles: Siouxsan walks with these women through these challenges and these issues. And I share that because I just want to applaud, say thank you to Siouxsan for the work you do. Because you're having a huge impact in Native communities, and touching women's lives there, and walking women back from the ledge, and really giving them an opportunity to have hope in life. And she does that through the Red Road Ministry, so that's very special.

Annie: Yeah, that's amazing. I hope our friends will continue to support the Red Road. Theredroad.org is that correct?

Charles: Mh-hmm.

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm.

Annie: Yeah. And I've, I mean, I've really loved following y'all on Instagram. I feel like I'm learning something, literally, every day that I didn't know. So I'm really, really grateful. I mean, y'all got to come back again at some point, okay?

Charles: We will.

Annie: Is this okay? Siouxsan, are you willing to come back?

Siouxsan: Sure.

Annie: Most barely. She's like, "Annie, give me a year, give me a year and I'll think about coming back." I'm sorry, we didn't get to all the questions, but I hope we, I mean, we got to every sector, every

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section. Books and movies, do y'all have any recommendations of stuff people should read or listen to or watch?

Charles: I think the last time we recommended *One Church Many Tribes*.

Annie: Oh, did you? I don't remember that one maybe, *One Church Many Tribes*. Okay.

Charles: By Richard Twiss, T-W-I-S-S, *One Church Many Tribes* is a great book.

Siouxsan: *Neither Wolf Nor Dog*.

Charles: That is an excellent book.

Annie: Okay.

Siouxsan: And that's by Kent Nerburn.

Annie: Okay. *Neither Wolf Nor Dog*.

Charles: And it is, oh, my gosh! Yeah, it's a fantastic book.

Annie: Okay, great.

Charles: Yeah.

Annie: We will read both of those. And then the "We Were Children" I would recommend everybody watch with other adults.

Siouxsan: And "Indian Horse".

Annie: "Indian Horse".

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm.

Charles: That's another really good one. It's in the same vein as "We Were Children" but it's more cinematic.

Annie: Okay, great. Y'all thanks again for doing this. I'm so grateful. The last question we always ask, you're going to have to come up with another answer this time, but Siouxsan it's your first. The last question we always ask is because the show is called That Sounds Fun. Tell me what sounds fun to you?

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Siouxsan: Zumba.

Annie: Zumba, I love Zumba. We should Zumba together. Wait, do you love going?

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm.

Annie: Where do you go in Franklin there's somewhere?

Annie: Yes, at the FAC.

Annie: Wait a minute, do you go to b.fab.fitness?

Siouxsan: I go with Javen.

Annie: Yes.

Siouxsan: You go with Javen and Caleb?

Annie: Listen, yes. We have done the same class, that is so fun. Okay, good answer. How many days a week do you, do you just go once a week?

Siouxsan: Well, I actually just started going back.

Annie: Oh yeah because of the pandemic stuff yeah.

Siouxsan: But I sort of used to go very regular before the pandemic.

Annie: It's so fun.

Siouxsan: Oh my gosh! It's very like, they're happy people.

Annie: Yes. They're happy people and all of a sudden you're like that hour is done and I'm sweating so much, and I laughed constantly.

Siouxsan: Mh-hmm, and you're happiest.

Annie: Yes. Great. Good answer. Very good answer. Challenging, now you've got to come up with a good answer.

Charles: Well, I will say this, I went to Zumba with her one time and I almost blew out my knee.

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Annie: It's not as simple as it looks.

Charles: But do you know what sounds fun to me? Right now, the weather is so amazing, it's just being outdoors right now with the family, leaves are falling. That sounds fun to me, just being outside with family.

Annie: Yeah, it's a little cold, Charles? You're tougher than me. You're tougher than me, you're tougher than me. Thank y'all. Again, I feel very honored, you would let us ask questions, let us bring our uneducated selves to your very educated self and I appreciate your grace. Every time we've done this and every real-life conversation we've had, I'm very thankful. I mean, this is real-life, but I mean, not recorded. I'm just thankful that y'all, you just are willing to educate and not judge me for what I don't know. So I'm very grateful.

Charles: Thank you for caring enough to open up your studio and your doors to us to be able to share it and be a part of this.

Annie: Anytime, anytime let's get some cigars. Let's go.

Charles: All right.

[01:12:11] <Music>

Annie: Oh, you guys don't you just love them? They're just incredible. Okay, so, in the show notes, you will see linked the redroad.org. If you want to donate to them, if you want to look there for resources, if you want to get pointed to some other Christmas gifts to offer to your friends and family this year, and a link to Charles's cigar company, if you want to purchase those for Christmas.

Make sure you are following them. Tell them thanks so much for being on the show and how much today helped. Oh my gosh! I just felt like I was in a class learning, it was so great. Thank you all so much for your questions. Every single time we ask you, y'all send us the best questions for Q&A episodes, which another one's coming next week and I'm really excited. So thank you guys so much.

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 is 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 so do you I'll do the same.

Today what sounds fun to me, oh man, like a turkey sandwich. Can we all just agree that the day after turkey sandwich is the business, it's the business. That's what sounds great to me. So I hope you had a great Thanksgiving. I hope you have a restful week. I hope you enjoy watching some football all today, all tomorrow, all weekend long. We'll see you back here on Monday with a good friend of ours, who's been on the show before. I'm so glad he's back, my buddy Scott Harrison from Charity Water. We'll see you guys on Monday. Have a great weekend.

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[01:13:41] <Music>