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Annie: Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm so happy to be here with you today. Happy Monday, you guys. We've got such a great show in store for you.

So believe it or not, it is finally, finally, the last day of January, longest month of the year. That means we're going to start *100 Days to Brave* and *100 Days to Brave for Kids* together in just over two weeks. It's a great chance to reset and intentionally focus on finding bravery in the face of whatever you're currently facing, and bringing our MiniBFFs along for the ride too.

So pull out your copy of *100 Days to Brave* or buy one anywhere you love to buy books, and order a copy of *100 Days to Brave for Kids* so you and the kids in your life will be ready to dive in on February 17. To sign up and be a part of this group, a little more added accountability and a lot more added fun, just go to #100DaysToBrave2022 link. It is in the show notes below. You can claim your spot and join with us.

Before we dive into today's conversation, I want to take a moment to share about one of our incredible partners. This podcast is sponsored by [BetterHelp Online Therapy](#). We talk about BetterHelp a lot on this show. And this month we're discussing some of the stigmas around mental health.

I hear all the time from people who feel like they want to try therapy but there are things holding them back. They've internalized these thoughts, like, "I have to wait until things are completely falling apart" or "needing the help of a therapist means something's wrong with me." Y'all, nothing could be further from the truth.

Seeing a counselor can help prevent you from getting to that unbearable place mentally and emotionally. And admitting you need help is actually one of the bravest and strongest things you can do. My counselor has been such a help to me over the years. I want the same type of therapeutic relationship for you. And you can find it through BetterHelp.

BetterHelp is a customized online therapy that offers video, phone, and even live chat sessions with your therapist. So you don't have to see anyone on camera if you don't want to. And it's much more affordable than in-person therapy and you can be matched with a therapist and under 48 hours. Give it a try and see why over 2 million people are using BetterHelp Online Therapy.

This podcast is sponsored by BetterHelp, and That Sounds Fun friends get 10% off their first month at betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun. That's betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun.

Intro: And today on the show I get to chat with country music star Lauren Alaina. Lauren's a fellow Georgia native, my girl, a multi-platinum-selling singer/songwriter and she has been busy over the last few months releasing her most recent album *Sitting Pretty On Top Of The World*, starring in a Hallmark too movie that we all loved, I heard from y'all, you know, I loved it, *Roadhouse Romance*, and launching her first book *Getting Good at Being You: Learning to Love Who God Made You to Be*.

We had so much fun together. We've been meaning to be friends. I can't wait for y'all to hear from her. So here's my conversation with my new friend Lauren Alaina.

[00:03:09] <music>

Lauren: Hello.

Annie: Oh get back. We're going to start with this. Do you know you've been in my house?

Lauren: I've been in your house?

Annie: I've been saving this. I've been so excited about this.

Lauren: No. When?

Annie: 20... How old is Theo Lehman? He is seven. So 22 minus 7 is... 15? 14, 15. Amber and Matt lived with me when they were building their house. And you came over and did fittings.

Lauren: And I did fittings.

Annie: Yes. That's so funny.

Lauren: I've been in your house?

Annie: Yes. I was on the road. I wasn't there. But I was like, "Oh, I cannot wait to see Lauren to be like, 'We've shared so much over the years.'"

Lauren: What was I getting dressed for?

Annie: You were at my house.

Lauren: You get to claim that outfit?

Annie: I know. I don't remember. It was an award show because it was award show season because there's a great-

Lauren: 2015. We can look it up.

Annie: Yeah, we just look and see what happened in the spring of 2015. What year were you on American Idol?

Lauren: 2011.

Annie: '11. So you're like at 10 years of doing this full time?

Lauren: Yeah

Annie: Okay, I'm going to ask you a question our friends love hearing an answer to. What do you know about God now that you didn't know in 2011?

Lauren: Oh, gosh, everything.

Annie: Really?

Lauren: Well, yeah, I was 15.

Annie: Right.

Lauren: So I don't really know. I mean, I knew He loved me, but I don't know that I truly knew how much He loved me.

Annie: Really? After all this, that's the big takeaway? That's beautiful.

Lauren: Yeah. His love and His comfort and what He could mean to me. Like what that love and comfort could mean to me on a daily basis, and how much it was going to comfort and support me in times where I needed it.

Annie: You are only 26?

Lauren: Thank you. I am 27.

Annie: Oh 27. 27 is a big year. Do you know this? Like Psalm 27, there's like a real thing about your 27th year.

Lauren: Really?

Annie: I heard a preacher teach about this one time, that your 27th year is like really kind of shifting for a lot of people. Has that been true? 27 to 28. A lot of people make decisions in 27 that they execute in 28. Has that been true so far?

Lauren: Well, I just turned 27.

Annie: Okay, well, we're just going to check in in about 18 months.

Lauren: Give me six more months and I'll be like, "Annie, I have made some choices."

Annie: "I haven't executed but I've made the decision."

Lauren: "I've made choices that I need to now execute."

Annie: I mean, I cannot believe the highs and lows of the last 10 years. Right? Does it feel maniac? Does it feel a little...?

Lauren: When I was writing this book, I was like, "Good thing you went ahead and wrote the first one because we got some serious material."

Annie: Really. I mean, that is your title of the book is *Getting Good at Being You*. And you and I have shared friends for a long time. This is our first time being friends, but from a distance and from stories, this is absolutely what you've done. Does it feel true?

Lauren: Every single word feels true. And that was scary for me. The whole idea of even writing a book was scary for me. HarperCollins approached me to do a gift book which you've done.

Annie: With the same team.

Lauren: With them, yeah.

Annie: Yeah, they're a great team.

Lauren: They sent me your book.

Annie: They're like, "You're going to do better than this."

Lauren: They're like, "This is what we need you to do." I was like, "Okay. No pressure. Thanks." Anyway, super inspired by you.

Annie: Well, you're kind.

Lauren: You're changing the lives of women, which is like what I want to do. That is my mission as an artist. So yes, anyway, very inspired by you. And the people that I love and trust love and trust you.

Annie: I mean, when we sat down, I was like, "Here's why we're going to work. Because the people we trust think we would like each other."

Lauren: The person who I wish I could just steal her moral compass and be her is Amber Lehman. And you're one of her best friends and she speaks so highly of you. So I was so excited to be here. But anyway, the book, *Feeling True*, I was very intentional with it all being true. And I was very intentional of how I shared my stories and wanted there to be grace for myself and for everyone that was a part of every happy, painful, all the things that make up the book. But it was definitely different for me. I don't write books, I write songs.

Annie: Beautiful songs.

Lauren: And they're three and a half minutes long.

Annie: And you get to be poetic in a way you don't get to in prose.

Lauren: And you know, you can exaggerate or underplay or change a little bit. It can mirror... songs can mirror-

Annie: And people expect books to tell the straight up.

Lauren: So that was definitely different for me. And it was also I wanted to be protective of myself of everyone in the book. I didn't want anyone to ever read it, like my family, or my friends or people from my past... Like I was engaged and I talked about that in the book. I am feeling he's not read it.

Annie: You don't think.

Lauren: I don't really know where he is or what he's doing.

Annie: You didn't honor him beautifully in that chapter.

Lauren: And I tried to do that with every chapter. Every chapter is about a different kind of part of my life. I really was cautious and careful to protect everyone involved. So I'm not in the business of wanting to tell someone else's story. I've never wanted to do that. In my songs even I've been really intentional with that.

So that was definitely scary and hard to navigate because you can kind of take a song... I can write a song about you. It doesn't necessarily have to be about me. But this book was about me and the people in my life. And so that was definitely scary. I prayed a lot about it. I edited a lot.

Honestly, what I did was the not-watered-down version first and then I prayed about how to get it into a place that felt right.

Annie: I use real names, real dates, real locations the first time I write it-

Lauren: I did too.

Annie: ...and then I go back and I go, "Okay, his name..."

Lauren: I don't think we want to say his name. I think we're going to take-

Annie: "His name is actually..." Exactly right, Lauren.

Lauren: I was like, "What do I want to call him?"

Annie: Oh, 100%. 100%.

Lauren: There's multiple people. I actually think I did name my fiancée. I think I did use... did I use Alex?

Annie: You used the name Alex.

Lauren: Okay. I did name him. But then there was like the boy from high school that was in a rock band who I think I named Spike. His name was not Spike. It would have

suiting him better than his actual name. So I just tried to change it up. But that's kind of what I mean too because you don't want to like no flat out call somebody out. The book is not for that.

Annie: No. And the reason we change it is because we're telling how God showed up for us.

Lauren: In those situations.

Annie: But to pretend like other people weren't in them with us is not telling the truth. And so to protect them and let them live their lives.. I call it my family and I call it the shrapnel of the jobs we have is that sometimes I don't intend for it to be that way. But sometimes they're just people who are going to get a little shrapnel on them because I have a public life and you have a significantly public life.

Lauren: Let me tell you.

Annie: That's it. What's it been like for the people you grew up with? I mean, I guess you were 15 when this all started, so y'all kept growing up together.

Lauren: Like, for the OGs, you know, the hometown girlfriends, I only have a few that I very regularly have in my life. And for them, still. It's like every time they come to something they're like, "You remember when you did this in high school and that boy that would not give you the time of day. He's married. Actually, he's getting divorced." It's like suddenly I'm not Lauren Alaina. To them, I'm not Lauren Alaina. I mean, they appreciate my talent, they appreciate my life, but to them, it's like, "I know when you picked your nose?"

Annie: Yes, that's right. "I remember when things were really weird for you as a middle schooler."

Lauren: "You looked really weird when you were 12. And I remember that face."

Annie: My favorite people in my life, and we're both lucky that we have a collection of these, are the ones who are proud but not impressed.

Lauren: I love that.

Annie: It means so much to me when people say, "I hope this isn't demeaning that I feel proud of you." I was like, "No, I love that you're proud of me but then you also recognize I'm a human who makes mistakes."

Lauren: I have a friend, Savannah, that lives in Birmingham, and I'm about to be inducted into the Grand Ole Opry-

Annie: Yes, you are. That's where we're going next. Keep talking.

Lauren: Which is just I have no words.

Annie: Lauren!

Lauren: I don't know if you saw the video.

Annie: You fell onto the floor. I watched every second. I cried right along with you and the rest of America.

Lauren: It is one of the few moments in my life where I felt my entire body need to get to the ground. Like from the top of my head. I was like, "You have to lower your body immediately."

Annie: Right this second.

Lauren: Like, Ohh, pounded chest could go to the ground. Every drop of it or you're going to go anyway. Choose it or it's happening.

Annie: Okay, tell us about Savannah. And then I want you to tell us about what that means to be the Grand Ole Opry.

Lauren: It was like I'm making my list. They're letting me bring 40 people, which is crazy. So I'm like, "Who are the 40 people that I think would enjoy this the most?" And she'll hear this and she'll laugh. She's one of my longest friends of all time. I'm not going to invite her because, first of all, I might... I probably will invite her. She probably won't come because she'll say like, "Your family needs to come to that."

And when you said she's proud, but not impressed, she will say, "Let's just celebrate on our own and give that to one of your cousins or someone that like-

Annie: That wants to be there.

Lauren: Yeah. And I've been friends with her since we were in school.

- Annie:** For our friends listening that aren't in our Nashville kind of world or aren't in the country music world, the answer is it's the biggest deal that happens to you in country music. But will you explain what the Grand Ole Opry is and what it means to be invited?
- Lauren:** Well, okay, if I could explain what the Grand Ole Opry means to country music people, it is like church for Christian. The comparison is the Grand Ole Opry is not church, but it is like if you sing country music, you go play in the Grand Ole Opry. Like you seek that out. It is a huge deal to even get on the stage, to be asked to-
- Annie:** People often celebrate just getting invited to perform.
- Lauren:** Their first time. I will never forget the first time I walked out there. I sobbed like a baby. I look to my right, my dad's side stage, sobbing like a baby.
- Annie:** Oh my gosh.
- Lauren:** It's a big deal. I would say honestly it is the highest honor in country music. Like more than winning entertainment of the year. How is that? It is a family. You have to be asked in. And anyone that knows me personally knows I could not be given something or could be not given something that I could be more proud of.
- Annie:** Really? This is the one.
- Lauren:** It means more to me than winning a Grammy would.
- Annie:** Really? There's something about the Grand Ole Opry that it's generations. So it says you are in line with Dolly and you are in line-
- Lauren:** You'll make me cry. I'm serious.
- Annie:** It's true though, right?
- Lauren:** This thing is skin top but I got the chills up underneath it after you just said that. I'm so serious.
- Annie:** I mean, that's what it says when people join the Opry. When people get invited to join, that it's almost Country Club-like.
- Lauren:** It is the country music family. And there are people who have inspired me that I am enamored by that aren't members. I always joke, to be a member of the Grand Ole

Opry, it's your duty to play once a month. I'm like, "Well, I'm already doing that. So can y'all just like..." And I make it a point to perform there once a month because it is so good for my soul. Like it makes me happy inward.

Annie: Have you done the Opry show at the Ryman or always at the Opry House?

Lauren: I have. I've done both. And actually, my entire career started in the Ryman because my American Idol audition was on the Ryman stage.

Annie: I did not know that.

Lauren: I mean originally the Bridgestone obviously, but then they narrowed it down. And yeah, my audition was in the Ryman.

Annie: What does the Ryman mean to you? Because it means everything to me.

Lauren: Everything. I mean, I can't anymore because to me people have done it, but I was pretty sure I would know my child Ryman. It's happened before I've had children-

Annie: That that would be-

Lauren: ...for so many people that I feel like I'm not going to do it now. But I did name my dog Opry.

Annie: You're lying. Your dog is named Opry?

Lauren: My dog's name is Opry.

Annie: I don't know. I see you guys on your Instagram?

Lauren: She's got her own Instagram. And I never thought I'd be that girl.

Annie: You are that mom.

Lauren: I became that person. I became the dog-

Annie: Your dog is Opry and your child's going to be Ryman. That feels very true though.

Lauren: It feels right.

Annie: I think you should do it. In that room, I've had more profound... that room parallels church for me of feeling like when you're in there there's something-

Lauren: That's it. The Grand Ole Opry and the Ryman.

Annie: I love the Ole Opry House.

Lauren: It's like the presence of country music like you feel the presence of God in church.

Annie: When do you get inducted?

Lauren: February 12.

Annie: Oh my gosh, it's so soon.

Lauren: Yeah, it is. So they're like, "We're working out well-

Annie: And that's like a Saturday? That's a big deal. You were inducted on Saturday night, too.

Lauren: I was asked on a Saturday night.

Annie: That's good for us all to know because people can listen on the radio, they can watch online. So everybody who can't be there on February 12 can still watch.

Lauren: Hopefully I'm able to speak that night. I mean, I was so surprised.

Annie: Were you shocked? Trisha Yearwood came out and invited you to join. You had no idea? You didn't even know she was there?

Lauren: I didn't know she was there—and I'm not joking—all the way until... She wrote the foreword for this book.

Annie: Yes, yes. Yes.

Lauren: We're very close. She's become a very important-

Annie: She calls you a little sister all the time on like cooking show and all over the place.

Lauren: She calls me Junior now.

Annie: Yeah, that's it. Junior. That's it.

Lauren: Which, I mean, I can't just quit.

Annie: I just wish. I know. I wish a person would say, "Annie, That's my Junior." I wish. So well done. That's Opry level.

Lauren: It kind of put some pressure on, though. I'm like, Dang, I gotta be as cool as Trisha Yearwood. I gotta be like the new Trisha Yearwood. I've got to pray about that. Oh my word. Anyway, so she wrote the foreword for the book. And the book had just come out when this happened. And so they had been showing these videos all night. And they show a video of Chris Johnson and then they showed Trisha. And I thought, "Oh, that's cute. There's Trisha." I was like kind of watching it, I was getting a sip of water.

Annie: Were you side stage?

Lauren: I was on the stage.

Annie: Oh, you were on the stage.

Lauren: Very smart of the Grand Ole Opry because they have these little video things happening all night. They said, "You'll play your first two songs, and then we're going to cut for a commercial break and play a video."

Annie: Got it. And they've been doing that with every artist.

Lauren: Yes.

Annie: Okay.

Lauren: Because they didn't want me to be like, "That's not true." And so I was like, "Okay." And I'm like not even really paying attention to it. Like, I'm getting a sip of water. I cracked a joke to my guitar player. Like half paying attention, half not paying attention kind of deal. And then I hear Trisha's voice so I kind of look up and I was like, "Oh, that's sweet." And then I go back to like... I mean, you can see in the video, I'm not.

Annie: No.

Lauren: And she goes, "Junior is that you?" And I was like, "Oh, that's cute. They told her I was going to be here tonight." She goes, "Hang on, I've got a surprise for you." I'm like, "Okay." She comes around the corner, I still don't. Annie, it's not there. The thought has not entered right.

Annie: Right, right.

Lauren: No chance. There's no part of me that was like, "Oh, this is it. This is the moment I've been waiting for." Because it's such a big deal to me that I don't think I could have even hoped for it to be happening.

Annie: Or "maybe I have to do this first. This has to happen first" or "I'm just putting my time in doing shows. I love doing shows at the Opry"

Lauren: Yes. It is going to happen but I was like it wasn't happening that night.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Lauren: So she comes out and she's like, "I know your mom's here." And my mom was here. I had invited my mom. She was staying at my play. Totally random just invited her to come. And I was like, "Yeah, she's here." And she goes, "I know your dad's here." And I was like, "No, my dad's not here."

And I got this really overwhelming awkward feeling because my mom has a new husband. She's just gotten married in the last few months. And he was there. And I was like, "She thinks that my stepdad is my dad. And this is going to be..."

Annie: Oh, my gosh.! Oh, gosh. You're like, "Oh!"

Lauren: So I'm having this internal like, "What do I say? What do I do?" Now that you know that, go watch it.

Annie: I have to go watch it.

Lauren: And I go, "No." And I'm literally like, "My dad..." And I'm like in panic mode, like, "What do I do? I don't want to embarrass Trisha Yearwood but that is not my daddy." And my dad and I have this thing where when I was little, daddy's girl, obviously, I would hold his pinky. And everywhere we went, I would just put my little hand around his pinkie. And that's how we went everywhere.

So now our thing is anytime I see my dad, anytime I tell him bye, he does this to me. If you ever see me do that, I'm doing it to my dad. I do it all the time in a lot of performances. I feel like somebody should do like a comp...

Annie: A compilation of the videos.

Lauren: ...compilations of videos just me doing this. But anyway. So I'm looking around and then they turn all the lights up. And my guitar player knows and he gives Lauren, "Look in the back." Oh, it makes me want to cry right now.

Annie: I know.

Lauren: And I saw his pinkie.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Lauren: And you can literally see in my face, I'm like... and I look and I go, "This is not happening." I start to like, Oooh. The reason I love the Grand Ole Opry so much is because my dad grew up playing banjo.

Annie: Wow.

Lauren: And he always wanted to play there and he never got to.

Annie: Wow.

Lauren: So I had this deep-rooted appreciation for the Grand Ole Opry. So it's like I knew I would never be asked without my dad being there. I made that clear to my manager, Trisha. I was like, "Dad has to be there. I don't want to know. I want this to be the one time it's a total surprise. I don't want a heads up. I want to be surprised. That's how I knew because I told her that probably five years ago."

Annie: Wow.

Lauren: And I mean, down to the floor I went. I mean, I dropped it like it was burning hot. I was, whoop, the ground. I was like my knees can't support me in this moment. So yeah, it was arguably the best day of my life.

Annie: And for it to be Trisha, for it to be... The whole thing was just really beautiful.

Lauren: I mean, I know there's no such thing as a perfect day or a perfect-

Annie: Maybe.

Lauren: ...but that was like a perfect day for me. It was a perfect night for sure for me. And then I would go backstage and there's Garth Brooks just hanging out and he's like, "Congratulations, ma'am." And he like takes his hat off. And I'm like-

Annie: I can't. I cannot imagine Garth calling me ma'am and saying congratulations. I just-

Lauren: And I was like, "Hello, Garth. Good to see you here." But the fact that they both... first of all, they're Tricia and Garth.

Annie: Right.

Lauren: They've graduated to the first name basis.

Annie: Yes, yes.

Lauren: Once you get there, you've made it.

Annie: That's right.

Lauren: When I get called, "There's Lauren," I'm going to now.

Annie: You're going to know.

Lauren: It's going to be the day.

Annie: Because there's a lot of Laurens. So sorry to tell you.

Lauren: Yeah. Lauren Daigle really just ruined that for me.

Annie: She messed that up for you.

Lauren: She sure did.

Annie: You're just too close in age. That's the problem is you're kind of peers. Have you all become friends yet?

Lauren: We've met a couple of times, yeah.

Annie: Okay, great. I would hope so.

Lauren: I love her.

Annie: I would bet you now like each other a lot. Yes.

Lauren: I mean, she's really good friends with my friend Ainsley. Ainsley is one of my best friends.

Annie: She's amazing.

Lauren: I was a bridesmaid in her wedding.

Annie: Yes. Do you know I knew her husband before I knew her?

Lauren: Well, I went on their first date.

Annie: Wait, what? You went on their first date with them?

Lauren: Yeah, I did. Well, I was there for their first interaction.

Annie: Okay.

Lauren: I don't know if they would classify it as their first date.

Annie: That's more or less their first date. I like it.

Lauren: Ainsley will tell the story way better than me. And she may actually kill me for this. I can't remember exactly how they met but mutual friends or something. They had been chatting and we were at her house, she was packing you to go on a trip or something, and I'm not kidding, I was in the kitchen washing her bra for her. Like hand-washing a bra for her. And then in walks Justin.

Annie: Who is nine feet tall?

Lauren: He's 6'7 or something. 6'11. Six over five. Well over five.

Annie: And she is not.

Lauren: Is she 5'3?

Annie: Yeah, I was going to say two. So yeah.

Lauren: She's not at all. I was there for that.

Annie: Her book is coming out soon.

Lauren: I know.

Annie: I can't wait.

Lauren: I love her so much.

Annie: Yeah.

[00:25:40] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our incredible partners, [Thrive Market](#). Thrive Market is an online membership-based market on a mission to make healthy living easy and affordable for everyone. They'll deliver what you need so you can spend more time on what matters most to you.

Thrive Market carries all my favorite clean brands, things like Chomps snack sticks, I love them, Mrs. Meyers hands soap and dish liquid, and Califia Farms for my oat milk creamer. Listen, I believe in it. All these great clean brands that don't clean out my wallet. You can shop everything from ethically sourced pantry essentials to sustainable meats and seafoods to non-toxic cleaning and beating products.

And honestly aside from the name brands, the Thrive brand is my go-to for so many of my staple grocery items, like spices or broths and baking supplies. They carefully vet each and every item so you can trust that if it's there it is the best. I love that I can trust it without having to do additional homework myself. Thank you very much.

Not only do they have membership options for every lifestyle, so you can subscribe monthly or annually but Thrive Market allows you to be healthy in your own way with the flexibility to shop by what you eat and how you live.

So like if you follow a low sugar or a Keto or a gluten-free eating plan, if you prefer zero waste products or BIPOC owned brands, Thrive lets you filter by 90

plus values and lifestyles to find what works for you. So cool, right? Using these filters saves so much time as opposed to my trip to the traditional grocery store where I have to sift through labels and end up making impulse buys like Oreos.

And with Thrive Market your membership is doing good things in the world, for families in need and for our planet. When you join they donate a membership to a family in need which I think is so cool. I just love it. And today Thrive has donated four and a half million dollars in healthy groceries and counting.

Thrive does carbon-neutral shipping and is on a mission to be the first climate-positive grocer. Can your grocery store do that? No, mine can't either. Now it can when you go to thrivemarket.com/thatsoundsfun. Join today to get 30% off your first order. You guys 30% off and a free gift. That's thrivemarket.com/thatsoundsfun to get 30% off your first order and a free gift. [Thrivemarket.com/thatsoundsfun](https://thrivemarket.com/thatsoundsfun).

Sponsor: And I've got one more amazing partner to tell you about, [Everlywell](https://everlywell.com). So, okay, maybe it's eggs, maybe it's almonds, maybe it's the unsuspecting banana or that carrot. If you struggle with common symptoms like bloating or stomach aches or migraines or indigestion and wonder whether they could be related to food, the Everlywell food sensitivity test may help you find more clarity and guide a two-part elimination diet by measuring your reactivity to 96 common foods.

Everlywell's at-home lab tests give you physician-reviewed results and personalized insights so you can take action on your health and wellness all at an affordable rate and transparent cost. With over 30 tests to choose from, you can pick the ones that make the most sense for you. Food sensitivity, metabolism, sleep, and stress, and thyroid are just a few of the many options.

So here's how it works. Everlywell ships your at-home lab test straight to you with everything you need for a simple sample collection. And using the prepaid shipping label, they include you just mail your test back to the certified lab. And in a few days, your physician-reviewed results and actionable insights are sent to your device. And you can share the results with your primary care physician to help guide next steps.

Over a million people have trusted Everlywell with their at-home lab testing. Y'all, it's such a relief to know what you're dealing with and have clarity about it so you can make decisions based on that knowledge. That's how I feel knowing my own sensitivity to gluten. I'm thankful for how easily Everlywell's testing is to complete and how quickly the results got back all without even having to leave my house.

And for my friends here at That Sounds Fun, Everlywell is offering a special discount of 20% off an at-home lab test at everlywell.com/thatsoundsfun. That's everlywell.com/thatsoundsfun for 20% off your at-home lab test.

[Everlywell.com/thatsoundsfun](https://everlywell.com/thatsoundsfun).

And now back to our conversation with Lauren Alaina.

[00:29:48] <music>

Annie: When you're talking about Amber, when you're talking about Ainsley, when Amber talks about you she feels like she has gotten this up-close view of you choosing God over and over and walking-

Lauren: Aw. Really?

Annie: Yes. Yeah. And Ainsley kind of says similar things when she's like, "Oh, Lauren and I have been praying about this," or "We were talking about this and we both feel like God's kind of doing this." Both of them have talked to me about what you pray. Like, "Oh, yeah, well, I know why she's praying about that." What is your prayer life like?

Lauren: A conversation. I would say I've really defined my prayer life over the last three years.

Annie: Really?

Lauren: I mean, I've prayed my whole life.

Annie: Sure.

Lauren: But it's definitely since my stepdad passed definitely changed for me, kind of kicked me into this... I describe it a lot in the book, the scenario. I mean, he died from cancer and it was 47 horrific. I was very angry, like so angry, I said to God when he died, "I won't ever talk to you again." Which was a joke because I've now written a book about it.

Annie: That's right. That is such a true thing to say, though. That's a real genuine thing to say. So many people have said things like that.

Lauren: Well, I know it sounds so abrasive and so like... I was really scared to put it in the book because I didn't want to be offensive. But I mean, that's where I was. I was so grief-stricken that I was like, "I'm not even..." And I remember thinking, "I know you're real and I know you're out there."

Annie: That's right.

Lauren: It's not even that I don't think you're there or you're not listening and you don't care. This is how I felt. And then the day Sam died, he described heaven to us.

Annie: Uh-uh.

Lauren: That's my favorite chapter in the book. And it's because it is one of the moments in my life that I knew I had to tell.

Annie: Wow.

Lauren: There are moments that I feel like I should tell or maybe I shouldn't tell, or maybe this could be helpful. But that was the one moment in my life where I was like, "I'm going to tell the world about this," because some people don't get that. Most people don't get that experience in such a painful... I mean, losing life and witnessing it, it changes you. And I feel like it can go a couple of ways.

And Sam was so prayerful. So he was just a really, really good man. So inspiring in so many ways. I mean, all the way to the end. Just never felt sorry for himself. That's what made it so difficult for me to watch. But I think God gave us a little... not a little. A huge God nod. He was like, "I'm going to let you see a little bit into where he's going."

And he described it to us, and he was like, he said, "Mom..." I can't even say it the way it happened. You kind of had to be there. But a room that was filled with terror and pain and fear and dread turned into peace and hope and love like that. And that moment... first of all, I said, I wouldn't ever talk to Him. Boy, have I talked to him more than I ever thought. I mean-

Annie: Right. Ain't that wild?

Lauren: It was a moment that I thought would end my relationship with the Lord and it transformed it beyond what I could ever explain.

Annie: Wow.

Lauren: So for me now God is my Father. I use Him as a source of... I mean, I feel like He is my best friend. And I can say to Him, "I didn't like that. That was really not what I wanted to happen there. Please help me see how this is good." I'm not going to tell you. I've been through some things. And every time when I get to the place of healing I understand how that was the worst experiences, how they were so important to me as a person, and how they've gotten me to be this woman.

I've run from the Lord a couple of times. But I always run back. I have people in my life like Amber and Ainsley that kind of hold me accountable to that and help me to do that. So to hear that they kind of said they've witnessed me constantly go back, that makes me feel so happy.

Annie: You and Amber were reading a book together, weren't you? Weren't there something y'all were reading?

Lauren: Ainsley and I did.

Annie: Oh, did y'all? Okay.

Lauren: The Seamless Bible.

Annie: That's it. Seamless. I was like, "One of them told me y'all we're doing the same together.

Lauren: However, Amber has now posted like 100 books on her page the other day. And I've got to read them all because I'm telling you, if there is a person... One day my therapist said to me, "Is there a woman in your life that you appreciate how she treats people, how she lives her life that you really would like as a mentor?" And I picked Amber. And I called her and told her and she cried.

Annie: Yes, for sure.

Lauren: And she's not really a crier, you know.

Annie: No.

Lauren: So she is very important to me.

Annie: And y'all met because she does your styling. She does your clothing.

Lauren: She dresses me. Now, Amber, I hope you like this. I picked this out. I know you're going to hear it.

Annie: Can you hear my outfit? You picked it out.

Lauren: It's a leather turtleneck that I've picked out.

Annie: Listen, there'll be times where Amber will see me on... I'll either put some of the internet or she'll see a picture from stage and she'll text me be like, "Hey, did I get that for you?" And I hear what she's really asking or what she's saying is "Don't wear that."

Lauren: I have flat out been called by her and she says, "When I picked those pants out, I didn't pick them to go with that shirt that you ultimately put on with. And you did it."

Annie: Same. Same.

Lauren: "You've done it. It's happened but it probably shouldn't have."

Annie: I Face Timed her from backstage and I was like, "Hey, this shirt and this jacket?" She's like, "Nope." And I was like, "Well, okay, I got to solve it real quick."

Lauren: I have literally at one point, I was so panicked mixing and matching that I was sending her pictures. And she was like, "No, no, no, no."

Annie: Yes.

Lauren: "That's okay. Yes, I would pick that out." This is why I pay you to do this.

Annie: That's right. That's right. One of the things I've learned from Hillary is, at Hillary's cases, at shows she has pictures of the full outfit. So in her case, she opens it up and it's a picture-

Lauren: It's a looks book.

Annie: Yeah, of everything she has in her case before she goes out and sings.

Lauren: But you know I'm going on a new tour and it is... I just announced that I'm the brand ambassador with Maurices Clothing. And I've got to like... I don't have to. I am going to incorporate their clothing on stages.

Annie: Of course.

Lauren: And I'm like, "Amber, help me."

Annie: "Go with me."

Lauren: "Amber, we're going to Maurices and you have to help me because I will put the wrong pants with the wrong shirt every time."

Annie: Yes, every time. Every time. Who else is on the tour?

Lauren: Spencer Crandall.

Annie: Uh-huh.

Lauren: He's opening up for us. And I'm very excited. That's my second headlining tour. We sold out the first one. No pressure, guys.

Annie: No pressure, buddy.

Lauren: It'll be really embarrassing. Like going into the pandemic is the last thing I did. The headlining sold it all out. And then coming out of the pandemic we got to do it again. Please book the tickets.

Annie: When are the shows starting?

Lauren: End February. Last week of February. We're starting in New York, I believe. That's the first day. I'm not sure.

Annie: The next time you do a show, you're going to be a member of the Grand Ole Opry. Right? I know. You should have them say that. Ladies and gentlemen, we know you bought the ticket of the newest member.

Lauren: And I'm the youngest living.

Annie: Are you really?

Lauren: I will be.

Annie: Oh, that's awesome.

Lauren: Right now I think it's Kelsey. And I'm a little younger than Kelsey.

Annie: That's awesome. Okay, here's my other thought-

Lauren: "The youngest living member of the Grand Ole Opry!"

Annie: Last we checked the youngest living member of the Grand Ole Opry. On TikTok, Ryan on TikTok-

Lauren: Stop.

Annie: ...he's your biggest fan. For our friends listening, so I found him a totally different way, him and his sister totally a different way. But then I started seeing how what a huge fan he is of yours. And he's a 25, 26-year-old guy who's autistic. He and his sister do their TikToks together. We'll link to them if everybody wants to go watch. But he loves you. He has the purest heart, doesn't he?

Lauren: Okay. I have to say when I saw the video, the first video, we've had multiple-

Annie: Yeah. There's the one you're getting in the Grand Ole Opry where he's like, "Ooouuu!" I just showed our whole staff."

Lauren: And then he said something like, "What does that even mean?"

Annie: She said, "Do you know what Grand Ole Opry is?" He says, "I do not. I do not."

Lauren: "I do not. I do not. But hey, I'm that happy too."

Annie: Yeah. "I'm excited for Lauren." Okay, the first video.

Lauren: I think they could tell him, "Lauren decided to be a garbage truck gal," and he'd be like, "Oh, she did not?"

Annie: "So proud of her. So proud of her."

Lauren: "She's going to be the best."

Annie: That's right. He seems just-

Lauren: I wish everybody loved me as much as Ryan do.

Annie: That's right. I know.

Lauren: I would be selling out like Sadie's.

Annie: That's right. How did you see the first video?

Lauren: I mean, I wasn't TikToking. I'm always a little late to everything.

Annie: Same.

Lauren: Like I got Instagram after people have like hundreds of thousands of followers.

Annie: I actually do the same.

Lauren: And I was like, "Maybe I should give that a shot." Which by the way, please go follow me on Instagram. I'm 8,000 people away from a million.

Annie: I think I follow you, but I'm going to sort it right now either way.

Lauren: I have 8,000 people away.

Annie: Okay, we're going to do it. We're going to tell everybody.

Lauren: Everybody go follow me up. I'm going to get those balloons.

Annie: You're so punny. It just makes everyone so happy.

Lauren: But anyway. So everybody sent me this video of this guy on TikTok, Ryan. And so I literally got TikTok for Ryan.

Annie: So you could see him.

Lauren: To respond. So I ended up-

Annie: What was the first one? Just he's a fan?

Lauren: So the sister asked, "Ryan, if you could go to dinner with any celebrity, who would it be?" And he asks, "Can it be a female?" And she says, "Yes." And he goes, "Okay, Lauren Alaina." And she goes, "Okay, why?" And he said, "Because she's a Christian and because she's sweet and because she's nice." It wasn't "because I like

the way she sings." It's "because I think she's pretty, because I..." It was like true things that he observed about my character.

And if I could say what I would really like for someone to remember about me is that I'm a Christian and then I'm sweet and then I'm nice. And probably funny. I'd like to think I'm funny. But I mean, him just saying that I was like, "Huh."

And so we've become friends. I flew him out to my release and he'd never been on a plane and his mother said, "He couldn't believe he did it." But he loves me because he's like, "Do you know that we're in a plane? We're in a tube in the sky. And he was like, "What's happening?"

Annie: Did y'all come here? Did y'all go somewhere else, with a show somewhere else?

Lauren: It was here. Yeah, it was here.

Annie: That was really sweet of you.

Lauren: And they love Jesus. And I love people that love Jesus.

Annie: I thought it was really sweet how responsive you've been. Something our pastor at CrossPoint, Pastor Kevin, we also call him the pastor of the pod, he says a lot is, "Do for one what you wish you could do for all." Right?

Lauren: Wow.

Annie: Because we don't have capacity to do for all.

Lauren: Oh, I love that.

Annie: So you're doing for one what you wish you could do for all. I think you've done a really beautiful job of making Ryan, from my observation, you are seeing him, but you're not putting him in some category of like, "He needs my help." No, you just see him.

Lauren: And love him. I felt like he saw me. And I don't always feel super sane. I feel like everybody's looking but I don't always feel sane because I'm like the girl on stage in the shiny sparkly pants that Amber so beautifully picked up.

So to be seen and known and understood is very different than just to be watched and looked at. So I felt like he saw me, right? And he loves my music. Oh my gosh!

He did tell me... I've got a song called *Run* and has "we ran like H-E-L-L. And he said, "You say a bad word in that song." And I was like, "Ryan, I am so sorry.

Annie: "I apologize."

Lauren: ...that I did that. I called my mother and now I'm having to talk to you about it."

Annie: Right. Right. Right. It's so sweet. When I'm thinking about Ryan and his sister, who were you thinking of when you were writing the book? Were you thinking of young women? Were you thinking of your fans? Were you thinking of the book you wish you had when you were 19? Who was the audience you're thinking of? You couldn't have known that they were Ryan's in the world who saw you so beautifully?

Lauren: I wrote it for my 16-year-old self and for anyone out there male or female that may feel the way I felt then. And it was not seen. It was very hard. I was very famous at a young age. I was on *American Idol* at its peak. And I was in my awkward phase. Which by the way, I've got my hair kind of scrunched.

Annie: Yeah, it's really nice.

Lauren: This scrunch is coming back.

Annie: That's what I've heard.

Lauren: It's like a wet look.

Annie: It sounds crunchy, which I appreciate.

Lauren: It's like a wet look. I paid someone to do this, you know.

Annie: Okay.

Lauren: I've had a bunch of things to do today. So I was like,-

Annie: Like, "I'll just do it."

Lauren: "...I feel my best."

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Lauren: But my best awkward scrunchy hair itself was on national television. And the scrutiny...

Annie: I can't imagine, Lauren.

Lauren: I was so young. I was like a baby.

Annie: I mean, I get too mean DMs and I have to retire for the day.

Lauren: I have a lot of restrictions around social media now.

Annie: Do you?

Lauren: Oh, yeah.

Annie: For your own mental health?

Lauren: Oh, yeah. So you can put time limits on. I am not able to access social media more than an hour a day.

Annie: Lauren! That's brilliant.

Lauren: Well, each one. But I never ever hit it on Facebook or Twitter because-

Annie: I wouldn't either. I'd hit six times on Instagram.

Lauren: But I will be on Instagram until I'm like... I've got one eye open. I'm already sleeping on the right side of my brain and the left side of my brain I'm still looking at people's pictures.

Annie: Still scrolling. An hour a day on Instagram and TikTok I guess?

Lauren: And in TikTok. All of them, but I reach it on Instagram pretty regularly. Less now that I've had it... I've had it on there about maybe a year.

Annie: Is that same true when you're on the road? Is it different?

Lauren: Yeah, yeah.

Annie: Okay. Because when I'm on the road, I feel like after a show you want to respond to people and you want to-

Lauren: I can override it. If I'm doing something like that, if I feel like it's a healthy thing-

Annie: A work thing or a healthy... yeah, okay.

Lauren: Because for me social media is work.

Annie: Me too. Right. That's the thing.

Lauren: It was also kind of a big lesson that I learned. I didn't put it in the book, but I've had a boyfriend now for well over a year.

Annie: I've also heard he's a very good guy.

Lauren: He is.

Annie: Well done.

Lauren: [unintelligible 00:46:10] got me a good one. I'm really thankful.

Annie: Yes, yes.

Lauren: I've never posted him. I've posted the back of his head. He was playing Galaga. Or my mom was playing Galaga and he was playing like... what's the thing where you pull the thing down and the ball goes up and you hit the things?

Annie: Oh, what's it called? Pinball.

Lauren: Pinball. Thank you.

Annie: Thank you, Johnny.

Lauren: Thank you, Johnny. He was playing Pinball and I thought that was so cute. And I've said like this, I have a boyfriend, I've never shared anything about him really. And it's kind of another boundary for social media that I've made. Now when I get married, I will tell people I have a husband and I probably will show them-

Annie: Maybe show a picture.

Lauren: I'll probably show my husband. I'm going to Dolly Parton it, though. 40 years. I'm going to make that marriage work.

Annie: That's right.

Lauren: 40 years, I'm going to be like, "Here's my husband on Instagram." I learned a lot about social media over the last few years from past experiences because I had a couple of really public breakups and I had to ignore a lot of questions and choose to not answer a lot of questions. And I couldn't really be upset that I was being asked the questions because I put it out there and I set myself up for the questions.

So yes, I now don't share very much about my personal life at all. If I think something's really funny, like the Pinball, you know, my mother-

Annie: I think you and I do similar is that you show a lot of your personal life. You show us dressing rooms, you show us your friends. For me, there are two topics that I keep really close to me. And one of them is dating, purely because it involves someone else.

Lauren: Uh-huh. And then when it ends? Like I was engaged to that one guy. That wasn't fair for him. His heart was broken, my heart was broken and it was on the cover of magazines. That's like a very not-

Annie: I can't imagine.

Lauren: ...okay thing to have to, you know... Nobody really wins in a breakup. And then when there are millions of people involved, it's-

Annie: It's hard enough when there's too involved. But when you add the millions, yeah, absolutely. So you've done a beautiful job of keeping this one.

Lauren: I'm going to keep him quiet until I get that ring. And then I feel like that's going to be a little hard to hide. And then it will be a discussion of what are the boundaries around husband and children and what are my... But I mean, my social media boundaries are pretty straight.

Annie: An hour a day. I'm really interested in doing that as we're walking towards... Everybody listening just heard us talk about Lent. And as I'm walking towards Lent, I'm thinking through how am I going to change my rhythms for Lent? I'm like, Man, an hour a day might be really important.

Lauren: And I'm very strategic about it.

Annie: You're like, "I've only got an hour."

Lauren: Sometimes my way around that, I'm very hands-on with all the things. I write all the captions, I pick out all the-

Annie: You're the only one funny enough to write all your captions. No one else could do it.

Lauren: Well, my buddy Michael do. I consult him sometimes.

Annie: There you go.

Lauren: Like, "What do you think about this?" And then he'll be like, "No." He has helped me come up with some good one, actually. I mean, there's only like one person I really trust. And that person is Michael. But I've worked out too... Like I did a few weeks of I didn't open a single app. Like did not open it. Needed away from it. Just needed a break. And so I made a schedule of what I wanted to post. And I wrote all the captions. And then I had my team post them.

Annie: Wow.

Lauren: And nobody would ever know. I don't even know what we posted in that time period. But yeah.

Annie: How's your faith walk different when you're careful about social media? Does it affect your Facebook at all or is it just like mental health make you feel better?

Lauren: It just makes me better in every way. Like I'm a better daughter, I'm a better girlfriend, I'm a better aunt, I'm a better friend. I'm a better person in general because... I think what we're all missing about... we're going there to feed something, right?

Annie: Yeah. Say this. Preach this.

Lauren: It's an ego problem. Right? And we need this... for me.

Annie: Yes. I was about to say, for you and me, this is true.

Lauren: It's like an affirmation. We want the lights. We want the people to look at it and see it and make us feel good about it. And I've had to get myself into a place of where I'm like, "I have to post these things, update people." Now I'm sharing the

excitement. I'm not going there for the excitement. I found the excitement in the actual moment that I'm capturing and I'm sharing it and the people like it or they don't. But I enjoyed that moment.

I think when I started actually enjoying my life and picked people in my life that enjoy it with me, I don't need the likes. I don't need the likes. I appreciate them and they're wonderful.

Annie: And we are trying to get you 8,000 more.

Lauren: I'm trying to get to that million.

Annie: What else? We got to be in a million. This show comes out Monday. So we got from Monday till February 12 to get you to a million. Come on.

Lauren: Let's get me to a million.

Annie: A lot more than 8,000 people got access to hearing about this, so we're going to get you to a million.

Lauren: If you like pretty pictures with nerdy pose, that's Lauren Alaina.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. Come to get her to a million. Stick around.

Lauren: For the puns.

Annie: For the puns. That's exactly right. That's exactly right.

[00:51:47] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation one more time to tell you about one of our amazing partners, [Athletic Greens](#). Y'all know I'm always on the lookout for ways to support my immune system. And when I found one that does a ton of other good stuff for my brain and my body, all in just one serving, I was hooked.

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Sponsor: Here at That Sounds Fun and at the That Sounds Fun Network we love learning new things about podcasting and continuing to improve in the work that we do. And that's why we are so glad to learn about [Anchor](#).

If you haven't heard about Anchor, it's seriously the easiest way to make a podcast. Let me explain. Not only is it free, yeah, that means you paid \$0 for it, but it has simple-to-use creation tools that allow you to record and edit your podcast right from your phone or computer. And Anchor will distribute your podcast for you. So people will be able to hear your content on Spotify, Apple podcasts, and all the other platforms that they love listening on.

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And now back to finish up our conversation with Lauren.

[00:55:08] <music>

Annie: I feel like you model, I mean, you do great in getting good at being you, but also just on social media and real life. I feel like you model there's permission to learn and grow. Like so much of this book, you said, like, "Here's what I did and I would do it different," or "Here's what I've learned." I mean, there's a couple of times where you make lists of pay attention to this, because this is how I would have done this different.

Lauren: And if you're feeling this way-

Annie: Trust your gut. Man, I love how much you told people to trust their gut.

Lauren: If you feel like something is wrong multiple times, it is wrong.

Annie: It is wrong.

Lauren: It is wrong.

Annie: That's right. My counselor and I say a lot. She's like, "We can trust our guts."

Lauren: If something inside you is saying, "I don't think that this is right for me," it's probably not.

Annie: That's exactly right. That's exactly right. So do you ever feel embarrassed or worried about people seeing you change or people seeing you make a different choice?

Lauren: Yeah.

Annie: Me too. That's why I'm asking.

Lauren: Yes, I do.

Annie: I feel that too. I feel embarrassed sometimes.

Lauren: When I dyed my hair blue, I had remorse immediately because I was like, "My Nana's going to call."

Annie: Nana is not going to like it.

Lauren: Oh my gosh, you know, my Nana gets on that Facebook and she will respond. Oh, my Nana is a savage. She gets on there and she's like, "That's my granddaughter." I'm like-

Annie: "Nana you don't have to do this."

Lauren: ..."Nana, you need an hour on Facebook a day." No, I'm kidding. Yes, I do because, well, for me, it's been interesting to navigate because I was introduced to the world as a child. And I'm not a child anymore. I'm a woman. But I've had to really try to just embrace who I am and just believe and know that others will, too, because I'm just trying to show up every day and become a better version of myself.

And I've been saying this a lot when I've been talking about this book. And I really want this to be clear. And I know that you probably feel this way too when you write a book like this. Where you're giving advice, I felt very awkward a lot of the time writing the book because it felt like I was in the like I know everything sheriff.

Annie: Right. Right. Right. But then we know.

Lauren: I'm going to tell ya. I don't know everything. I know what I put in this book and I also know that I probably need to pick it up and read it right now. So I haven't arrived at this place of healing where I don't wake up with the uglies, I don't make bad decisions, I don't... Like I've not arrived. It's not some equation that I've solved and I've got this answer. I need to do these things daily too. I need to meditate. I need to drink a gallon of water a day. I need to eat well, and exercise, and sleep well, and pray and call my mother. I need to do these things every day. They just make me happier when I do them. But I will say I don't always achieve it.

Annie: Right. Right.

Lauren: Then I felt so weird. I feel like I have to say that because also the fame thing is interesting because people kind of put you up on this pedestal of like, "Ah, look at her life." My life is your life just in front of more people. I have the same. I cry. I laugh. I sleep. I have bad dreams. I have good dreams. I achieve. I fail. I go to the grocery store. I get sick. I get better.

I hope this book can connect me more to people. And it kind of all does go back to that being seen thing. It's just I want the young girl out there that's in high school right now who has a different body than most 16-year-old girls because that was me. I'm a very distinctly shaped woman.

Annie: Oh, that's very well said. I love that. Distinctly shaped.

Lauren: I have a very different body shape. I think that. There are lots of women shaped like me out there. But my perception was I'm different. That's not good. I can't be different. Me being different transformed my life into what it is. So I just wanted to write the book for that girl out there. If she's too tall or too short or too heavy or too thin or too... There is no too. There's no too.

Annie: That's right.

Lauren: You are perfect the way that you are and God loves you, your family loves you, I love you. I don't even know you, wherever you are, but I want you to know I love you. You're loved. If you want to improve yourself and take steps to make you feel your most comfortable self, that's wonderful. But there is no changing who you are.

Annie: I folded that page down. Hold on, let me read it to you. Let me read what you said.

Lauren: Okay.

Annie: "If you aren't happy now you won't be happy when you reach that goal." I remember maybe four years ago, I felt the healthiest I've ever felt my body. And at the same time someone broke up with me that I really liked. And I went to my counselor, I was like, "Wait, that's not supposed to happen."

Lauren: "I'm killing it right now."

Annie: That's it. And she said, "Yeah, see your whole life you thought if you got to a certain size, you would get everything you wanted. And you're realizing that it's about your mind, not your body." And I was like, "Oh." So for the rest of life it's

been like, I mean, the last four years, Listen, I will buy you a boat all day long and you will keep helping me be same. I will give you all the money, all the money.

Lauren: I sometimes think to my therapist, I think, "Can I just move in here? Can I live here?"

Annie: "Will you just come with me? Can you come on tour? We need a bus. Here's what I want. I want to bus-

Lauren: I'm going to hire a therapist to follow me around.

Annie: The acupuncturist. somebody to help me work out. I just have a bus of resources.

Lauren: Oh my gosh, hair, makeup, Amber.

Annie: Get Amber, she's coming with us, the counselor.

Lauren: The kids will come. We'll get a babysitter. I need a therapist.

Annie: That's it. But that helps me so much. You wrote about it too of this idea of like, we all think if I got to this thing, money, size, married, kids, if we get to the thing, we're going to feel like we've made it. And then you get there-

Lauren: And it's like, "Oh."

Annie: "Oh, I want something else."

Lauren: I was thinking about my 19-year-old self just the other day. I was stressed about something happening now and I was feeling super anxious. And I'll just tell you what it was okay. It was budgeting for this new tour. I'm trying to pick out like-

Annie: My next meeting.

Lauren: ...production and how much I want to spend, and do we want to do this lighting package or do we... And I was like, "Oh my gosh, are we going to spend that much money?" I was like-

Annie: Things people do not know we have to figure out inside of touring.

Lauren: And I looked at Trisha-

Annie: Your manager, not Yearwood.

Lauren: Yes. My other Trisha.

Annie: Just to be clear.

Lauren: Well, because she and I started working together about seven years ago. And I said, "When you and I started working together, I had negative dollars in the bank." Trisha loaned me \$10,000 when we started working together to get me back on my feet. Well, it was good day and I paid that back. Was pretty proud of that. But the fact that I'm like, I was like, "If that girl could have been living right now, she would have been like, whoa, what are you going to do? What? And you're going to be on tour and you're going to have-

Annie: Headlines.

Lauren: ...number one song and you're going to be the boss of picking all this stuff out?" So I try to think about that. Like, enjoy this. Worry less, enjoy more.

Annie: Oh, worry less, enjoy more. Will you put that merch line out there? That's beautiful. Worry less, enjoy more.

Lauren: Sure, I will.

Annie: I am so thankful you came on here.

Lauren: Me too.

Annie: Really

Lauren: I was very excited when I heard that we were getting to do this.

Annie: I know. I feel the same. I've wanted to sit across the table from you for a long time. And so just add of friendship. And so I'm just thankful that the first one is recorded. I hope the few future ones aren't recorded.

Lauren: Me too. Let's go to lunch.

Annie: Is there anything we didn't talk about that you want to make sure we talk about?

Lauren: I kind of talked about the tour but I'm very excited about that.

Annie: Can't wait. Please tell me you're going to sing a lot of songs from the new album.

Lauren: I am. All of them almost, I think.

Annie: Really? You're going to do the whole new album?

Lauren: Yeah, I think.

Annie: Pretty close?

Lauren: Maybe not couple.

Annie: I mean, you gotta still sing *Road Less Traveled* because you need to know sometimes I fall singing *Road Less Traveled* down the street.

Lauren: I will never play a show where I don't play *Road Less Traveled*.

Annie: Thank you. I hope not.

Lauren: I don't think that will ever happen. So the tour is called The Top of the World tour presented by Maurices. You're welcome Maurices and thank you Maurices.

Annie: Both. Both. That's right.

Lauren: It's called The Top of the World Tour after the album *Sitting Pretty On Top Of The World*. And I'm excited. I think we're going to do almost all of it.

Annie: Okay, good.

Lauren: Plus our hits and some other things that we're pretty excited about. But the album is important to me in general. It really lines up with kind of what I wanted to achieve with the book which is hope and healing and-

Annie: Tell us the truth.

Lauren: The *Road Less Traveled* album was like learning to love me, me learning to love me.

Annie: Wow.

Lauren: And then this album was me loving me when someone else didn't. So which I think it can, you know... And I had two breakups. Big ones. And so that can really make you question yourself and take away some of the things that you believe to be true about yourself that are true about yourself. It was a real-time of growth the last few years for me just being a woman and living that out.

I'm actually really proud of how I handled it and I'm proud I went through it, I'm proud of all of it. I mean, I almost got married. That's serious business. I got as close to getting married as you get without putting the dress on. I wrote about all of it and about where I am now. I wrote about-

Annie: Singing them feels good or singing them feels...?

Lauren: So good. I don't feel the pain from them anymore, which feels really nice. And I just get to remember. I don't feel it anymore.

Annie: When you sing that... a word we use when we talk to worship leaders or singing it over, you know, you sing a song over a group of people, but you do that too. And when you get to sing some of those songs that were from your pain into someone else's story, I mean, people are going to get healed all over the tour. Really.

Lauren: That is why I write these things. I initially write it for me, and then it's for everyone else that needs what I needed when I wrote it.

Annie: Right, right. That's beautiful. Are you playing in Nashville?

Lauren: I am.

Annie: Ooh, what's the venue? You don't know? You don't know in your heart? Let me look on the internet. Hold on. We're going to look it up and then we're going to-

Lauren: Brooklyn Bowl. Is that a place?

Annie: ...pretend like we didn't. Oh, Brooklyn Bowl. That's brand new.

Lauren: Yes, it's brand new. That's why I was like,-

Annie: That's why you don't know, yeah.

Lauren: "I'm going to call it the wrong thing."

Annie: No, that's cool.

Lauren: I'm excited.

Annie: It's really awesome.

Lauren: I looked it up and I was like, "This is legit."

Annie: It's over by the baseball stadium. I only know I drove by it. And I said, "What is that? What is that thing?" And then I saw someone else had a concert there. That's awesome. So we can get tickets to any of your shows at Laurenalaina.com?

Lauren: Laurenalainaofficial.com.

Annie: Oh, thank you very much.

Lauren: Somebody took Laurenalaina.com. Why did you get to do that?

Annie: I was 15. Stops you on my website.

Lauren: I was 15. I also saw someone has Lauren Alaina on Twitter. So I'm Lauren_Alaina. But I will say I think her name is actually Lauren Alaina.

Annie: You think that's really who she is.

Lauren: I'm serious.

Annie: You looked at that and you're like, "Oh, that's..."

Lauren: I looked at and I was like, "This feels true."

Annie: "You are actually Lauren Alaina.

Lauren: I can't actually be upset. I DM'd her and I said if she would trade with me.

Annie: She said, No.

Lauren: She didn't even know me.

Annie: She didn't even know you?

Lauren: No. I slid into her DMs and she was like...

Annie: She's like scared. She showed her friends and like, "Don't open it. Don't open it."

Lauren: "I don't know who you are but that's my name too so get a life." I think she owns the website. I forgot one thing we've got to ask you about because a bunch of our friends from AFD week interview said, "Don't forget to ask Lauren about *Roadhouse Romance*." It was so good. Tyler Hynes.

Lauren: Tyler Hynes.

Annie: I mean, you sounded good, you looked good. You are great actress. Was it as fun as it looked?

Lauren: Oh, it was so fun. The craziest part though was it's like set in Tennessee, but we filmed it in Canada.

Annie: Yeah, for sure. When they show the mountains of Tennessee on all those, you're like, "Listen, we don't get white on the top down here."

Lauren: I know. Also, like the fall, I'm in turtleneck the whole time, I'm like, "It is 75 degrees in the fall in Tennessee."

Annie: That's right. That's right.

Lauren: But I loved it. I loved the cast. I'm going to do more.

Annie: Good, I hope so. That's what I was going to ask.

Lauren: Bucket lists. I got to do a Christmas one.

Annie: You've got to do a Christmas one.

Lauren: I'm like, Everybody be praying about the Christmas.

Annie: Yes, that's right. We'll just direct to [unintelligible 01:08:13].

Lauren: That's what I'm praying for right now.

Annie: That's right. That's what we're asking the Lord for for you. A million Instagram followers and Hallmark Christmas movie. Lord, won't you do it.

Lauren: What more could I want?

Annie: I will feel fine. Life will be complete. Well, it was very good. And it was so fun how many of our friends were like, "Please ask her about *Roadhouse Romance*."

Lauren: Everybody is obsessed with him. It's so funny.

Annie: Yes.

Lauren: And they're like, "Tell us about the kiss." I'm like, "That was the worst part of the whole thing because you're not in this relationship with this person and it just feels so like..." Also with COVID, they made us take a safety class basically before. It was like, wow, if there was any part of me that was going to feel like I enjoyed this, you guys have...

And they did it very early on. It's the last thing you see in the movie but they did it early on, which I think is good because I would have been like every day, "Oh, I'm going to kiss him. I'm gonna kiss him." I've kissed very few people in my life. So I'm like, "Now I'm getting paid to kiss somebody."

Annie: And you have to do it a lot, right? Don't y'all do it multiple times?

Lauren: Like seven times. I had to kiss him seven times. And every time because of COVID, they made us like swish-

Annie: Oh my gosh

Lauren: ...swish like stuff in our mouth to kill the germs. I was like-

Annie: Wow. Killing everything. Kill the mood, kill the-

Lauren: This is what I'm going to do to my daughter. When she goes on a date, I'm going to just occasionally hand her this sip cup-

Annie: That's right.

Lauren: ...and the like Listerine swish.

Annie: Swish. Get that out there.

Lauren: She's not going to so she'll never be kissed. We have another friend that is doing her first Hallmark Christmas movie right now. And she met the guy and had to do the final scene on the first day. She called me after she was like, "I had to kiss him a bazillion times. I didn't know he existed two days ago."

Lauren: Well, hey, but I think that's probably the better way.

Annie: Just to get it out of the way.

Lauren: Because, you know, then they kind of become your friend, and then it's like, "Okay, now you're just going to kiss your friend?" Like I wasn't really friends with Tyler when I kissed him. Which I know that sounds so weird. But I feel like it would be... like if all of a sudden I had to kiss my buddy Connor Brock, it'll be like, "This not going to work."

Annie: Right. This is going to feel weird. But if it's a stranger, "Hey-

Lauren: I know that sounds horrible, but it's strictly your job. You don't have any kind of other relationship with that person at all. For me, it was easier. Next Hallmark maybe day one locking lips.

Annie: Merry Christmas, locking lips.

Lauren: Merry Christmas.

Annie: Oh, my gosh. Lauren, well, we have one final question for you that we always ask. But I also want you to know that you're welcome here anytime.

Lauren: Oh, thank you.

Annie: I would love for you to come back anytime that you have something... even if you don't have something to talk about. If you're just like, "I wonder what Annie and That Sounds Fun friends are doing."

Lauren: Hey, Annie, I always have something to talk about even when I have nothing to talk about.

Annie: Let's just us a show of just talking through. Okay, the last question we always ask. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

Lauren: Touring.

Annie: I wish everybody could see your face. You're like, "I don't know. I don't know."

Lauren: Cooking. I like to cook. I like to read. I like to think. Those are all fun things.

Annie: Touring is the most fun.

Lauren: Touring is the fun thing.

Annie: It's like summer camp on wheels.

Lauren: Well, I didn't realize too how much it makes up who I am, that sense of connection, that sense of purpose, and that feeling of just belonging.

Annie: Yes, yes, yes.

Lauren: I mean, I can't think of anything that sounds more fun than an entire weekend of shows. That hasn't happened for me in a very long time.

Annie: It's about to happen after-

Lauren: Bring it.

Annie: ...you're inducted in the Grand Ole Opry. Oh, congratulations.

Lauren: That sounds fun too.

Annie: That sounds fun too. That's right.

[01:11:48] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, isn't she the best? I'm so excited for her. Remember February 12. If you're hearing this before February 12, that is when we can tune in and see her be inducted into the Grand Ole Opry. Man, I'm so happy for her. And are you following her yet on Instagram? We're getting that girl to a million. Go follow her, tell thanks for being on the show. And be sure to grab a copy of *Getting Good at Being You*. Check out her website so you can see when the tour is coming close to you. And I may be there too. I'm going to come see one of these shows.

Hey, remember, we still have some tickets left for our That Sounds Fun tour shows. And we want you to be in the room with us. You heard Lauren and I talked about

how much we both love touring. Y'all, I cannot wait. These nights are going to be so fun with comedy and live podcast interviews in every city. You know who the guests are now. You're going to make new friends. You're going to see a lot of confetti. You're going to laugh. Y'all, head over to [Anniefdowns.com/events](https://anniefdowns.com/events) to grab your tickets today.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, on our tour bus named Cinnamon Roll. All the places you may need me, that's how you can find me.

And I think that's it for me today, friends. Happy Monday. Go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun to you. I will do the same. Today what sounds fun to me. I'm grabbing coffee with my friend Katie. That sounds really fun. I can't wait to see her this afternoon.

So have a great week, you guys. We'll see you back here on Thursday with your friend and mine, Sadie Robertson Huff. I've got a big plan to talk her into being a Peloton instructor. Y'all gotta be here for it. Okay, we'll see you guys on Thursday.