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**Annie:** Hey friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host, Annie F. Downs. I'm really happy to be here with you today. We've got a great show in store, really special episode. And y'all, tomorrow is the day you'll hear us talk about it in today's conversation, but *100 Days to Brave For Kids* releases tomorrow. I've loved every minute of getting braver with you grownups over the past few years and I cannot wait for the kids to get in on it with us.

We're going to start this journey as a group all together on February 17. That's in 10 days. And then we'll finish the 100 days right before Memorial Day. So pull out your copy of *100 Days to Brave* up yourself or buy one anywhere you love to buy books, and order a copy of *100 Days to Brave For Kids*, so you and your kids and a bunch of our friends can start finding bravery in our everyday lives together.

I'll be posting the first five days on my Insta story starting on February 17, while your books are all making their way to you, and then we'll email you every 10 days and help you stick with it. It's really, really fun. You've heard me say this, the secret sauce of *100 Days to Brave* is finishing it. And finishing is all the sweeter when we get there together.

So sign up and be a part of this group. Just go to the #100DaystoBrave2022 link in the show notes and claim your spot. I hope you and the kids in your life will join us as well. So go ahead and get your copy for the kids in your lives, the small group you lead at church, maybe all the Girls Scouts or the Boy Scouts or the kids in your classroom. Any MiniBFF that you love, you can put this one in their hands. It's *100 Days to Brave For Kids* available tomorrow.

But before we dive into today's conversation, I want to take a moment to share about one of our incredible partners, [Athletic Greens](#). I started taking Athletic Greens because I was hearing people everywhere including in our office talking about it. I wanted to see what all the hype was about. Y'all know me. I want to know about that hype.

I'm in for products that make it easier and more convenient to take good care of my health and I love getting to share them with you guys. Here's what I learned about Athletic Greens. One delicious scoop of Athletic Greens contains 75 high quality and easily absorbed vitamins, minerals, whole food source superfoods, probiotics, and adaptogens that help you start your day right.

This special blend of ingredients supports your gut health, your nervous system, and your immune system. And that's not all. Is AG1 going to improve your energy level? Yes, it is. The quality of your sleep? Yes, it is. Your mental clarity and alertness? That too. It's the one thing with all the best things.

I like to use it in a cold glass of water in the morning as part of my daily startup routine. No additional supplements necessary and I really appreciate how that simplifies a busy morning. Athletic Greens has over 7,000 5 star reviews. So I'm not the only one who likes it. And it comes highly recommended by professional athletes, like me obviously. It may come as a shock to you that I'm only a semi amateur athlete but Athletic Greens has my recommendation. And they're a Climate Neutral certified company, which you know I love.

Right now it's time to reclaim your health and arm your immune system with convenient daily nutrition especially heading into the flu and cold season. It's just one scoop and a cold cup of water every day. That's it. No need for a million different pills and supplements to look out for your health.

To make it easy, Athletic Greens is going to give you a free one year supply of immune supporting vitamin D and five free travel packs with your first purchase. All you have to do is visit [Athleticgreens.com/soundsfun](https://athleticgreens.com/soundsfun). Again, that's [Athleticgreens.com/soundsfun](https://athleticgreens.com/soundsfun) to take ownership over your health and pick up the ultimate daily nutritional insurance.

**Intro:** Today on the show I'm joined by Sissy Goff and David Thomas. They are the hosts of the Raising Boys & Girls podcast and they are two of the most amazing staff of counselors at Daystar Counseling Ministries. Sissy is the director of Child and Adolescent Counseling and David is the Director of Family Counseling.

Between the two of them, they've written a bajillion books that serve as incredible resources for families. I'm so grateful they're here to lend their voice and expertise to us as we celebrate the release of *100 Days to Brave For Kids*, and talk about what it looks like to pursue courage as grownups in the increasingly anxious lives of the kids around us.

Also, I am on their podcast, Raising Boys & Girls tomorrow. So this is kind of a part one and a part two. They are dear and wise and have such well-researched and experienced wisdom to offer us. So here is the first part of my conversation with Sissy Goff and David Thomas.

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**Annie:** Sissy Goff, David Thomas, how dare I be lucky enough to have you on That Sounds Fun?

**Sissy:** How dare we be lucky enough to be on here with you?

**David:** We're so excited.

**Annie:** Y'all are just the best. I was just saying to you, for our friends listening, on February 8, I get to be on the Raising Boys & Girls Podcast-

**David:** Which was our when.

**Annie:** I don't know about that. But we flipped. There's a part one and a part two to this. So they can go and hear part two on February 8. I'll make sure nobody knows. But will y'all tell a little bit about Daystar here in Nashville so that our friends listening globally can get an idea of what Daystar is?

**Sissy:** Well, one little boy called it the little yellow house that helps people. So we both are counselors at Daystar Counseling Ministries, where I have been counseling predominantly girls and families since '93. And David has boys and family since '97.

**David:** We were six years old when we started.

**Annie:** You were.

**Sissy:** So a lot of years of doing this work. And we see kids individually, in groups, and we have little summer retreat programs, too. And we have-

**Annie:** Oh my gosh, it's not a little summer retreat program by the way.

**Sissy:** It's a cool thing to get to be a part of. And we have 2,000 families, I think, currently that are coming to Daystar.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh!

**Sissy:** 13 human therapists and five docs.

**Annie:** Y'all have 2,000 families you are serving right now?

**David:** We do.

**Annie:** Do you have an idea of how many have come through?

**Sissy:** No?

**David:** That's a great question.

**Sissy:** That's a great question.

**David:** We've been around for 30 plus years. How many?

**Sissy:** '85 was when we started Daystar.

**Annie:** Wow. I mean, hundreds of thousands of kids would have to be the guess. I said this on your show, but I really mean it. Like, our town is different because of Daystar. I don't know a kid who has a moment or a problem or a situation where a parent thinks, "I wish I had professional help," that they don't come here. I know there are probably other kid counselors in town, but-

**Sissy:** They're great.

**Annie:** ...everyone comes to Daystar. What happens when you see a kid from 1995 at the movie theater? Do you talk to them? Are they grown-ups now?

**Sissy:** You know, as therapists, we have to wait for people to talk to us first to get the confidentiality. But yes. And because Daystar is so different in that it feels... I mean, you've been here. So it feels so warm and engaging. And so I think kids don't feel like... they feel like we're their buddies too. Their therapists and their buddies.

And so I feel like most of the time we have kids approach us who are so excited to see us, whatever age they are, and now obviously, as old as we are, it's generations of them.

**David:** Well, that's what I was going to say. Yeah, that ages us because one of the things we do in addition to working with kids is we offer what we call parent consultations, where parents come in without kids and just want to ask them questions. Like, does this sound normal? What would you recommend in response to this? And we're officially old enough that we're now doing parent consultations with parents who were kids that we saw.

**Sissy:** It's wild.

**David:** And sit across the room... This happened to me last week from this kid that I love, who's a dad now an amazing dad. And to think, "I can picture you as a sixth grade boy. I can." And to have known your story and seeing you live into your story in this way and be the father that you are right now. It's beautiful to have the privilege to watch that, the progression of all those things.

**Annie:** Why did you give your life to this?

**David:** You know, it's interesting. I think I'll answer for me, then you answer for you. I think in some ways I may have kind of always known that I was going to do something like this, but detoured away from it in different chapters of my story.

But I can remember as a kid, you know, being really comfortable, strangely comfortable as a boy when friends would tell me hard things that were going on in their lives and it didn't make me want to exit the conversation or run away. And I can remember, in college, I was a counselor at a camp for elementary aged kids and my colleagues kept coming to find me when they had a homesick kid who just could not stop crying or kids who, you know, were away from home for the first time and their parents had separated or divorced. And it just felt really natural to be with those kids in that space.

So I think I always knew I wanted to work with kids in some capacity. I tried to be a pediatrician and then the whole math, science thing just got in the way of that. Like, "Brother, that is not your calling. There's way too much chemistry going on there and you do not have skills in that space." And so it felt so natural to go this direction.

**Annie:** I guess you were like, "I'll be a healer or a healer." You always knew.

**David:** I think I have always known. What about you?

**Sissy:** So I remember sitting in 10th Grade English and doing those... I don't remember what they were called. Where you would write five people you might marry, five jobs you might have.

**Annie:** MASH.

**Sissy:** Yes, yes. And one of mine was always child psychologist because I didn't know... I mean, we're enough older than you but when we were growing up in the 80s, nobody was talking about counseling.

**Annie:** No.

**Sissy:** I didn't even know anyone who was in it. Heard nothing other than my one source as Marlena on *Days of Our Lives*.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh! Was she a counselor?

**Sissy:** I guess she was a child psychologist or maybe just a psychologist in general. Says a lot about me though. I was watching *Days of Our Lives* as a kid.

**David:** We all were, and kids in the 70s.

**Sissy:** We skipped school to watch this really famous wedding. Ain't that funny? But the best. Have very similar journeys.

**Annie:** With *Days of Our Lives*.

**Sissy:** Yes, with *Days of Our Lives*. Yes. And I thought about being a pediatrician too, or was for a minute heading that direction. But yeah. So I think for me I just was intrigued with the idea. And I grew up, there was a kind of a family business that most everybody in our family was in. And they were in the hotel industry.

**Annie:** Here in Nashville?

**Sissy:** No Little Rock, Arkansas. And so my dad was pushing me hard towards hotels and had to work at the front desk at our hotel a couple of times, and a couple of summers, and I just didn't like it. And something about me knew I wanted to help people and predominantly kids. And I think what I have realized as a grownup is that I really set out to become who I wish I'd had in my life.

**Annie:** Don't we all do that, though?

**Sissy:** Yeah.

**Annie:** Is that what we do?

**Sissy:** Maybe.

**Annie:** Maybe.

**Sissy:** You are already doing it.

**Annie:** Well, yeah. I mean-

**Sissy:** Interviewing yourself at six. Now we know.

**Annie:** That's right. When I even think about my relationship with kids, the MiniBFFs in my life, a lot of times I'm wanting to be for them the grown up I didn't have. I had great grownups-

**Sissy:** Me too.

**Annie:** ...but I didn't have an Annie. And I think I always kind of wanted this cool... I wanted like a cool no-mom person in my life. And, and I had some close to but I find myself often... I'll hear myself going, "Oh, I bet that's what you wish someone would have said to you. That's why you're making that invitation to that kid," or "That's why you're making this plan is because that's what you wanted." I wonder if we all do that? Maybe I don't know. Does everybody need to be in counseling?

**David:** I would say this. I think there really are two kinds of people in the world. I think there are those who are aware of themselves, like their strengths and struggles and those who aren't as much. And I think those who are aware, probably want to. Or even if they don't want to, there's somebody in your life that's moving you in that direction in a way that you need to. That is not necessarily because I have all the stuff I need to work through, but just there's opportunity for growth. Just space for me to be a better version of myself, to figure out my blind spots, to live more out in my strengths less out of my struggle. What would you say?

**Sissy:** I love that.

**Annie:** I agree. Yes. I talk a lot about therapy. I've been seeing my counselor since 2013 pretty regularly. But I also went to counseling... I mean, talking about not knowing, I searched my thumb a long time and my parents sent me to... rightfully so was kind of like, "Telling her to quit isn't working." And she's in elementary school. And so I went to counseling as a mid elementary school kid and-

**Sissy:** How brilliant of your parents to do that.

**Annie:** Right? 1987 or something. Or '89. I was pretty impressed too. And I always got Cheetos and Yoo-hoo at the end. Like that was when there was Cheetos and Yoo-hoo at the end. But we have people ask us a lot when I talk about therapy, when do I need it? How do I need it? How do I know if my kids need it? So are there lines in the sand? Or is it just trust in your gut? Or how do you know?

**Sissy:** Well, I think trusting your gut is one of the most important things, as a parent, you can do. Period. And then we have a lot of resources to help with different issues. And our thinking is always try these things at home at first. And if they don't work, then that's when you have somebody else step in. And there are a million places you can get great resources.

So say you feel like, "Is my child really struggling with depression? What's going on? Or anxiety?" And you find five things you can do at home. And if you don't see a difference, I mean, used to... I probably would have said in three months, but I think in the pandemic, I would say give it a month maybe and try and do some things. Or the other option that I think we're seeing cooler and cooler responses from today is to ask your kids. Would you like to talk to somebody?

**Annie:** Wow.

**Sissy:** And I feel like often they will say yes. And the ones who say, "No, I would never do that," maybe needed too, maybe take them in too.

**Annie:** And between y'all, you have a lot of resources that people can read, right? So first of all, there's the Raising Boys & Girls Podcast. But then we all kind of spill out your list of book titles so that...? And we'll link to them all. But I'd like you all to kind of tell us what are some resources that people can get?

**Sissy:** David has some new ones that are coming out soon that are available to preorder probably.

**David:** I'm going to say yes. I have a new book out coming out called *Raising Emotionally Strong Boys* and a workbook that goes with that for elementary age boys called *Strong and Smart* about-

**Annie:** Oh, great.

**David:** ...building emotional muscles. So super excited about that.

**Annie:** Brilliant. Okay.



**David:** And you wrote a book for girls called?

**Sissy:** Yes. And they kind of go together.

**Annie:** I know. I was like, hold on.

**Sissy:** Yes, yes. *Raising Worry Free Girls*. And then one called *Braver, Stronger, Smarter* for elementary aged girls. And then I wrote one for teenagers called *Brave*, which I texted you and said, "How do you feel about me writing a book called *Brave*?"

**Annie:** I said, "Hurry." That's what I said. I said, "We need it."

**Sissy:** You're so sweet. And then we have quite a few separately and together. Maybe just raise-

**Annie:** How many books have y'all written total?

**Sissy:** I'm on 12th.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh.

**David:** She's a machine. She is just... I don't even know what to say about her.

**Annie:** What are you on?

**David:** I'm on 10.

**Sissy:** Exactly.

**Annie:** Yeah, your humility is lovely.

**David:** I can't keep up with her.

**Annie:** Two books behind her.

**Sissy:** Right. Right.

**Annie:** Wow. Y'all that is incredible.

**Sissy:** So Raisingboysandgirls.com has all of them listed. I mean, the other one that we would maybe mention is *Are My Kids on Track?*, which in it we outline the four emotional, four social, and four spiritual milestones we feel like all kids need to reach and are reaching to a lesser degree than ever before.

**Annie:** Brilliant. So much of what I hope to do through the show, the problem is, my listeners are not just in Nashville, right? Neither are yours, neither are Raising Boys & Girls. And so I was like, "Oh, we got to have some other resources besides hurry to the yellow house and get a good appointment with somebody here. So that's great. As you know, *100 Days to Brave For Kids* is coming out. And one of the reasons we-

**Sissy:** We're so excited.

**Annie:** Yeah, thank you.

**David:** We are.

**Annie:** One of the reasons that I wanted to have you on is anxiety is a massive thing right now with kids. Is it louder because kids have language for it? Is it louder because it's worse? Is it louder because in America we just talk more about emotions than they did in the 1950s or the 1980s? What is it? What is it about anxiety right now?

**Sissy:** Yes. All of those things.

**David:** I'd say lucky for us we have an anxiety expert with us today.

**Sissy:** No.

**David:** Tell us why it's louder?

**Sissy:** Well, the only reason you would say that is because girls are twice as likely to deal with it as boys.

**Annie:** Really?

**Sissy:** Yes.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Sissy:** So you see a lot of anxious kids as well we spend a lot of time talking about. So I'll jump in and then you say for boys, because I think sometimes it's different.

**David:** It looks different for boys.

**Sissy:** But I mean, I would say there's two different phenomenons going on. One is I do think the rates are exponentially rising. We were-

**Annie:** Before the pandemic or because of?

**Sissy:** Before the pandemic.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Sissy:** When we wrote *Are My Kids on Track?*... I wish I knew what year it was.

**David:** 2015 I think.

**Sissy:** Yes. So at that point, it was one in eight kids were dealing with anxiety. When I wrote *Raising Worry Free Girls*, which was right before the pandemic started, we had jumped to one in four.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Sissy:** And now adolescents are one in three.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh!

**Sissy:** Ain't that crazy?

**Annie:** One in three. That means most families probably have someone who has really profound anxiety, not a scary night, not a but profound living with this hum in their life.

**Sissy:** Yes. And we would, I think, both say your oldest. Or most famous is the oldest.

**Annie:** Really?

**Sissy:** Sometimes the birth order flips. I met with a family yesterday that I think the birth order had flipped for a different reason. But yes. Would you agree with that?

**David:** Oh, absolutely. When I drill down and think about the kids that struggle the most, a lot of firstborns. And the presentation with boys does look different. As we were talking a few minutes ago, boys' anxiety often looks more angry than worried and fearful. Just like depression looks more angry than sad. So it's easy to miss with boys.

I sit with a lot of parents, I will say like, "I don't think he's anxious. He just is angry a lot. He's mad a lot." I once had a mom say to me talking about her son who had some anxiety and depression. She said, "It's like he has this low grade chronic irritability. It's like he wakes up just like, you know, unsettled and like the least of things can kind of set him off. And that's often a cue to me. Like there's a possibility there's an undercurrent of anxiety or depression there."

So it's easy to miss with boys. And because girls are twice as likely I think we're often thinking more about girls struggling in that space when there certainly are plenty of boys who do.

**Annie:** I wonder if... This is a pure "I wonder." Y'all are the experts? I wonder if sometimes when young men, little boys look angry, the thought is something is wrong. They're mad about something or ADHD or they can't sit still or and it may just be anxiety.

**David:** Oh, you are so on target. In fact, boys who have a lot of anxiety, like when a lot of worry is occupying their minds, they look in a classroom setting like boys with ADHD. They look restless, distracted, under focus, fidgety. And so I've seen plenty of boys who were misdiagnosed with ADHD who really did have some anxiety, that if we can clear that out, there's a possibility we'll see the normal amount of boys being kind of restless and fidgety in a classroom, as you know well as a former educator, right?

**Annie:** Yes. Do you know there was a year where I was working on my Master's, I did my masters studying on how to teach boys.

**Sissy:** Wow, that's so fun.

**Annie:** And so my principal gave me a whole classroom of boys for a math class. And it was the hardest thing I've ever done. I mean, they did not want to sit still. We had to do so many different things. But school isn't probably built as successfully for boys as it is for girls. Is that true, the way it's set up?

**David:** I agree with you. You're so right. You know, it's a lot of sitting still and maintaining focus which boys struggle more with regulation. It's heavy on written and verbal

expressions. And those more often are going to be girls' strings. So I think you're 100% correct. There just are a lot of things about the way it's structured that don't bend to a boy's strengths.

**Annie:** Yes, it was really fun to learn and study and to just look at how different the system is built for young men.

**Sissy:** You're a phenomenal teacher for boys.

**David:** I was thinking the same thing.

**Annie:** I loved it.

**David:** If anybody could have captured the attention of a room full of boys is you.

**Annie:** For math. Can you imagine you're just drowning every day? But it was very funny. They were sweet dudes. We get a lot of questions from our AFD Week in Review emails that go out on Fridays. We tell them who's going to be on the show and they ask questions. We have never gotten as many as y'all back.

And of these pages, multiple of them are mad little boys. As I'm scrolling over, I'm like, "Oh my gosh, here's a parent of 14 year old boys that is concerned. Here's a parent of a six year old boy that's concerned." And they're asking the same question. And there's a female version of this too. She actually says anxiety. But their question is, how do we... One of them said shelter. How do we not shelter too much? One of them said, "How do we not scare them?" But how do we let them grow independent?

I think that's got to be... when you're sitting with parents, the balance of how do I not shelter them or do this wrong? But how do I let them grow up when they're anxious? How do we do that?

**Sissy:** So statistically, if as a parent you have anxiety, your kids are seven times more likely to have it themselves. And some of that is because we even use more catastrophic language of like "that sounds terrible." But also because we sit with a lot of parents who are doing exactly that kind of holding their kids back because they're in fear.

I came across a question that I loved when I was doing the research for the Worry books. That was, what are two things you're doing for your kids right now that they

can do for themselves? And what are two things you're doing for them that they can almost do for themselves?

**Annie:** Wow.

**Sissy:** And even that thinking about what are some places that I can let go of and let them step into that? Even if it's playing outside for 30 minutes. When you're normally sitting out on the stoop, you know, keeping an eye on them. But what can they do? And where can you really reinforce their courage? Because one of the things we talk about too is how sometimes parents spend more time with them when they're anxious than when they're doing something brave. And whatever we pay the most attention to is what's most reinforced.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Sissy:** So you want to make sure you're connecting with them over time, they're kind of stretching themselves and being courageous as much as times they're scared. I had a high school girl who said to me, "My mom is more nurturing to me during panic attacks than any other time."

**Annie:** Wow.

**Sissy:** And that says a lot right there.

**Annie:** Yes.

**Sissy:** We want to do something different.

**Annie:** Two things that they can be doing that they're not, independent, two things that they can almost do.

**Sissy:** Yes.

**Annie:** Oh, that's brilliant.

[00:22:48] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about another one of our incredible partners, [KiwiCo](#). In my books, *That Sounds Fun* and *What Sounds Fun to You?*, I write about just how important it is to stay engaged in play. It's good for our bodies, for our brains, and our relationships.

And KiwiCo is an amazing partner that helps us keep play engaging and enriching, and most importantly, at least in my opinion, fun. They create super cool hands on projects designed to create lifelong love of learning among kids and grownups alike. Some of my MiniBFFs recently got a paint pouring Kiwi crate as a gift from their grandma, and they were telling me how cool it was to watch the paint colors mix, create new color combinations, and how much they love the works of art that they could actually display when they were done. They were so proud of themselves.

Your child or the MiniBFF in your life can get super cool hands on science, arts, and geography projects delivered to their door every month. You'll be surprised at how high quality materials are too. I've been incredibly impressed with that. These are real engineering, science, and art projects for kids.

I know it can be hard to find creative ways to keep your kids busy and challenged, but KiwiCo does the legwork for you so you can spend quality time tackling projects together. There's something for kids of all ages, from infants and preschoolers all the way to teens and any age people. There's no commitment so you can pause or cancel anytime.

Redefine learning with play, explore hands-on projects that build creative confidence and problem solving skills with KiwiCo. Get 50% off your first month, you guys, five zero, plus free shipping on any create line with the code THATSOUNDSFUN at [kiwico.com](http://kiwico.com). That's 50% off your first month at [kiwico.com](http://kiwico.com), promo code, THATSOUNDSFUN.

**Annie:** And friends, on every episode of That Sounds Fun, you hear me share about various sponsors, who partner with us to support the show. We work hard to collaborate with awesome products and services that you will love. We don't want to waste your time listening to ads that aren't useful or helpful or impactful, so we're asking you for your help.

Y'all were ridiculously helpful when we did our listener survey about the content and direction of the pod at the beginning of January. Well, we have created a five minute survey for you to fill out that will give us great information about making sure our ads serve you well.

And this is fun. One lucky listener will win a \$250 gift card from That Sounds Fun Network when they complete the survey. The same happened for one of our friends

at the end of this survey for That Sounds Fun the show. This one is for the whole network. And it is going to help us so so much.

So simply visit [thatoundsfunnetwork.com](https://thatoundsfunnetwork.com) right now to fill it out and enter to win. The winner will be announced Friday, February 11 over at That Sounds Fun Network Instagram. So be sure you're following them at TSF network. Again, just go to [thatoundsfunnetwork.com](https://thatoundsfunnetwork.com) to enter to win and give us all your ideas about advertising.

So you've got till the end of this week, the end of this week, to fill out that survey and enter to win. So we hope you will do that. It would help us a ton.

And now back to our conversation with Sissy and David.

[00:25:57] <music>

**Annie:** A couple of people are asking, and I think this is a great question, I think about this with my friends and myself in therapy. They're saying, how do I find out what's going on in therapy without being prying? So if we're sending our kids to, even if they're talking to the school counselor, or if they're going to a professional counselor outside of the school setting, or if they're talking to their small group leader at church, how do we kind of get involved in what they're saying?

**David:** That's a great question. And one we get asked a lot by parents.

**Annie:** They are like, "What's just happened in there?"

**David:** Yes. Yes. And I think, you know, there certainly are parents who are wanting more information than maybe is needed or necessary.

**Annie:** Sure.

**David:** And I think a lot of well-intentioned parents who they just want to offer more support.

**Annie:** They want to partner.

**David:** Absolutely.

**Annie:** I bet that is what it is most of the time.



**David:** And I love that and welcome that. And we talk a lot with parents on the front side of the journey about how, you know, we can't quote things to you that your kids have been saying. Obviously if they're in a place of harm, we're ethically, responsibly going to be doing that. But to say in the everyday of walking with your kids, we can't do that. But there are certainly ways that we can sit down and I love your work, partner with you, collaborate and talk about how you can offer the most support in this season and lean in farther.

And we even talk with kids about that on the front side. Because we meet with parents, our rhythm is every third appointment we're going to have a check in moment with parents where we just come together. And we talk with kids about that.

**Annie:** In front of the kids? The kid's in there too?

**Sissy:** No.

**David:** We don't typically.

**Sissy:** We review what we're going to tell the parent to the kid so they know this is exactly the information we're giving.

**David:** And I think that rhythm really allows them to see that collaboration. And I say to a ton of kids, you know, like, "The reason I do that is because your mom and dad want to be the best mom and dad they can be." I talk a lot with adolescents to say like, You didn't come with a manual. They maybe felt more attuned to how to parent you when you were little and it feels more foreign right now. So I see a lot of parents who just want to ask questions about how to be a better mom, how to be a better dad. And I think you'd benefit from that.

So there are ways we frame that with kids where they don't have to operate out of fear and wondering like, "Are they sharing stuff I've been sharing." So we're super clear on that on the front side. But I love and welcome when parents want to be a part of collaborating.

**Annie:** Also if you're wondering if kids are saying in counseling what you don't want them to say, totally they are. Sorry. Of course they are. Just like swallow that pill on day one. They are going to say the stuff that you wish people didn't know. Okay. Counselors are safe. It is going to be fine.

**Sissy:** Exactly. Yeah.

**Annie:** It's going to be fine.

**Sissy:** And I think practical questions like, "How did it go?" And then if they say something, great. And if they don't, then let it drop. The only other thing I would add to what you said, and it comes to my mind, because we had this mom that we both worked with for years, we have a lot of families will work into here, which is always fun.

And this mom had been seeing you, bringing her son to see you for probably two years when she decided she wanted her daughter to come in. And she sat down on my couch and she said, "So here's the deal. I've been seeing David Thomas for my son for a long time because my ex-husband does not know how to have conversations that have anything to do with emotions." And she said, "I'm bringing my daughter to see you because I know she needs another voice but I need to tell you that you threaten me."

**Annie:** Wow.

**Sissy:** Which I had never had a parent say that so directly. And then she went on and she said, because her daughter was 13, she said, "Right at the age that my daughter is going to stop talking to me, I'm bringing her to you for her to talk to you and I'm paying you."

**Annie:** Right. Right. Right.

**Sissy:** I think sometimes there's that fear of not only are they talking negatively about me, but... I have a new step mom that I had a Zoom with recently and she said that she tried to get her stepdaughter to talk to her about something and then the girl said, "I want to talk to Sissy first." Which of course.

And what we say to parents all the time is you want other voices like we've talked about and we're temporary. And you're permanent as a parent. So you want those people, even though it's going to trigger your stuff. You know, there's going to be some mom, who's the coolest mom that your child has ever met in the whole world, and that mom is going to be temporary too. So hang in there, keep loving them, keep being patient with them, asking them questions, giving them grace, all those things.

**David:** I will even challenge parents like think back in your own life when you were in middle school, when you were in high school, when you were in college, who were

the other adults, teachers, coaches, youth pastors, group leaders who had your ear? And to say you remember what that felt like, you know, you want that in your kids' lives? Even when it feels unfamiliar, or threatening or like they know a lot of what's going on, I don't know a lot of what's going on, we all needed it, our kids needs it too.

**Annie:** And you never suddenly were like, "My youth pastor is my father." No! Your dad is your dad, and he's still a youth pastor. And when I graduate high school, I do not go to those Wednesday nights anymore. Like I'm out.

One of our friends is asking, it's interesting as we're having this parent conversation. She said, I feel guilty that I struggle with anxiety because I know it's affecting my kids. And so her question is like, What are practical steps for me as a grown up? I think it's can be true for anyone for a parent who has ever had suicidal ideation or for a parent who has eating disorders, or for a parent who has an anger thing or anxiety. Like we are bringing our full selves into our families as grownups.

What are some tools for us as grownups? I think about this with my MiniBFFs too. I'm bringing my stuff into those relationships. What are our tools to not feel guilty and not hold back ourselves because we don't want to spill out onto them?

**Sissy:** Well, I'm working on a book on that right now-

**Annie:** Good news. Great news. Okay.

**Sissy:** ...called *The Worry-free Parent*. That is for the parent about themselves when their anxieties being triggered.

**Annie:** That will be number 13, David. So you better get to write, my guy.

**David:** I know. Always behind. Always.

**Sissy:** I think just what we're talking about with kids, for adults, it's so important too that you have another voice that you can say, "Hey, let me tell you about my reaction because I thought maybe bigger than the situation warranted. Do you think that could have been about me and not about them? And then being willing to reach out for therapy yourself.

**David:** I was thinking that very thing. We even talk in the introduction of our book, *Are My Kids on Track?*, about how we can only take the kids we love as far as we've gone ourselves. And so I think it is an invitation back to even our earlier question about

counseling to do our own work so that we can bring the most of who we are to the equation that hopefully is more the best than the worst, that we're operating more out of those strengths and struggles, knowing that we're all going to blow it. Like we just are. It's the reality of being fallible people.

But this reality that if I have more awareness, if I'm operating out of that place, you know, I'm bringing all the strengths of knowing the things that trigger me a little bit more and having worked through a lot of my anger so that the kids we love get to sit front row and see the grownups they trust the most in this world regulating themselves, attending to their own anxiety.

We talk all the time with parents in our office, like, talk openly with your kids about... this feels so foreign, I think probably potentially to a lot of parents listening. Like, talk openly about going to counseling. I think it's so great when kids hear it, normalizes it. We laugh. We even had kids in our office who will be like, "Will you tell my mom and dad to go back to their marriage counselor?" I think that's awesome they feel that freedom and they know that person is in the mix.

And I think it gives them a sense of security. Like there's another grown up in my parents life who helps them figure things out when they get stuck. And so I think it's a gift when... We even talk about parents posting their own list of coping skills like hang in on your marriage so kids can see this as human work, not just kid work, this is grown up work as well. We're all working toward healthy coping and learning to regulate when we're really angry, learning to manage anxiety when it rears its head.

**Annie:** How do you know when your kid is, quote, done with counseling?

**Sissy:** Hopefully, the counselor is going to give you cues to that.

**Annie:** Okay.

**Sissy:** That's what we would do. We would typically taper off from once a week to every other week to once a month. I mean, we do have families who will say they would come every week for the rest of their lives.

**Annie:** Listen, if I ever have children you're going to see them... Whatever the day is, they can start, they're starting. They are starting. There is no hesitation to me.

**Sissy:** Well, and I had a conversation with a mom that I love that she said this. She brought her daughter and there was no crisis going on. And she said, "You know,

when I was explaining to her why we are coming, I said to her, 'Our job as parents is to grow your team. And so we've got here for your medical world and your doctors are going to help you. We've got people here for your academic life, your teachers. Of course, we would have someone here for your emotional life. And so these people are going to be in and out of your life when we need them for the long haul, through when you're 18.'

**Annie:** Wow.

**Sissy:** Ain't that beautiful?

**Annie:** That's brilliant. Growing your team. Because we definitely want Sunday school teachers.

**Sissy:** Yes.

**Annie:** And we want youth pastors, and we want PE teachers and we want academic teachers. So, of course. That is a language I use a lot when I'm explaining why counseling matters to me. Because I'm like, "I put my money toward my peloton and I put my money at the church. I tithe at my church. So of course, I'm going to put some of my budget toward my emotional mental health too. Because y'all know me, someone's got to help me keep this between the lines. But my counselor has... I think I bought her a boat, and she deserves it.

Okay, I have a weird question that we can cut if y'all hate it. When I think about teachers in school, and we have a couple of people who have written in questions that are not parents, but they're really involved in kids' lives. They're teachers, they're counselors themselves. Sometimes I wonder if emotional health is a privileged thing? That if you're hungry, if you're cold in the winter, are you able to think about your emotional health when your physical needs are not being met?

So for our friends that are low income, that is their community, for our friends that are teaching in low income areas in racially divided areas that are not as able to use their finances towards this? Am I wrong, is this not a privilege thing? Am I right, and what can we do?

**David:** Hmm, it's a great question. I don't think you're wrong. I don't. I think this, like many things, is more available to some people and less available to others. And I wish it were available to everyone equally. And when it's not, I think I am never more... I'm always grateful for teachers and school counselors. I don't think I'm ever more grateful than I have been through this pandemic.

And every parent who got to become both a parent, a full time employee and a virtual educator during the pandemic learned teachers are some of our most valuable resources. And I think teachers in this day and age are also operating as pediatric nurses, therapists. They're doing so many things. And so I'm thankful for those resources that exist in every school where kids can get some support, some amazing support in that space. And then obviously when other support is available, I believe in it.

I think the pandemic has reminded us of a lot of things. I think the importance of mental health as much as anything. We've no option, we've learned, but to pay attention to that, to attend to that. And I hope that's something we carry on the other side of the pandemic.

**Sissy:** And I would add to that, podcasts. I mean, I think podcasts where folks have different experts on in the mental health world, I mean, anytime, because those are free. You can listen. I mean, I've learned so much through podcasts and I've learned so much through social media for people that I trust. Just a little graphic sometimes that I see.

And so I think outside of the bounds of being able to go and hire a counselor, you've got a lot of counselors here bringing information to you at no cost.

**Annie:** Yeah, y'all are both on social media and Daystar and Raising Boys & Girls?

**Sissy:** Yes. David is not personally. He is-

**David:** I'm not that savvy.

**Sissy:** No, he's so smart.

**David:** I'm both behind in that space and the writing space. But if you show up on Raising Boys & Girls-

**Sissy:** Raising Boys & Girls, yes.

**Annie:** I was like, "I see you all the time." I thought it was you. No, it's not.

**Sissy:** Yes, yes, on Raising Boys & Girls. I mean, we're trying to put out as much helpful information as we can on social media and obviously the podcast. And there are a

lot of great places to find that. It can make a difference. And get a journal. Any of us can journal. I mean, that helps our processing as much as anything.

**Annie:** And it sounds like *Are My Kids on Track?* is a book that if I was a superintendent, every teacher would have that in their classroom. Just like, Am I seeing this in the kid? Am I seeing this? Can I put a book in the hands of a kid from the library that will help with one of these markers? I just want to be thoughtful that some of our friends listening are in environments that this is not as easy to access as some others.

**Sissy:** Thank you.

**Annie:** So as we look into 2022, what do you want kids to get this year from the grownups in their lives? Like what do we need to instill in kids this year that's new, or as you said, your book *Modern Parents, Vintage Values*, like when you think about 2022, what do we need to instill in kids this year that's new but old?

**Sissy:** You know, I feel like right now, more than anything, kids need a lot of grace. This has been so hard on us. And we have talked a lot about the shifting we've seen in parents over the last year and a half in our offices.

**Annie:** Really?

**Sissy:** And I think initially we were seeing so much motivation in parents, obviously the how and what can we do? And then we saw this weariness kind of bleed in and discouragement and exhaustion.

**Annie:** I feel it in me.

**Sissy:** Yeah. And we were both talking about how we had never felt like as many parents felt like they were failures, just sitting in our offices in tears.

**Annie:** Really?

**Sissy:** And then at some point, late spring was when I started to pick up on more anger.

**Annie:** Of '21?

**Sissy:** Of '21. Yes. And I think that sense of we're just done.

**Annie:** Anger in parents, anger in kids?

**Sissy:** Anger in parents.

**Annie:** Oh, in parents.

**Sissy:** Yes. Yes. And I think going back to expecting more from them, I think we gave them a lot of grace initially. Like we were saying, it's been so hard on us and our brains to develop. And there aren't. And so to give kids a lot of room and even to ask questions, like, tell me what these last two years has been like for you? What do you think you've lost? And what do you think you've gained?

Always we would say we want to give, especially adolescents, room to have teenage moments. But right now, particularly they're missing so much. And so many of the milestones that they need to pass. And so they're behind. They're behind socially, they're behind emotionally. And so we have to adjust our expectations in light of that. And so earthly grace, certainly. What would you add?

**David:** I love that. I think if I were going to add something, it would be opportunity. And it maybe connects back to what we were talking about a few minutes ago. For all the hard things we've experienced with a pandemic, one of the gifts that I think has come is that there's never been a time in history when we've been more focused on mental health. And I'm grateful. And I wish it hadn't taken this for that to happen but I'm grateful we're in that moment.

Part of writing this newest book on boys for me was it was interesting doing the research. There is all kinds of data, interesting data I found when I was researching the book about the percentage of women who just go every year for your well visit with your doctor versus men.

**Annie:** Gosh.

**David:** And you know, all the different ways that I think you as females attend to your health, your physical health, your emotional health, your spiritual health, and where men don't. And part of that being that men lead some of the scariest statistics out there for substance abuse, sex addiction, suicide. The current stat I found when researching that is that one man dies globally by suicide every minute.

**Annie:** Wow.

**David:** Every minute. I was so jolted by finding that and that reality that men don't attend to their health in ways... we don't reach out for help when we're struggling and all



the things underneath that that were part of why I felt so passionate about writing this book. And I think I'm grateful for the attention on mental health that came from the pandemic in ways that we're talking more about that, for not just boys, but for kids in general.

Like, how can we be figuring out more of what we feel and what to do with it? And so I feel so passionate about that. And praying we carry that forward in this next year.

**Annie:** What should men be doing right now? Dads are not dads. We don't like to shoot people around here very much, but I know that I have friends listening that are dudes that are raising kids, there are dudes that are not, that are not married yet, but want to be and kind of can't figure it out for some reason for themselves. And what is it that men need right now?

**David:** I would say let's laugh together this. If anyone listening would just throw out the word "fine" from your vocabulary. We laugh about how "fine" is an acronym for feelings in need of expression. When someone asks, "How are you doing?" "I'm fine." "How are things?" "We're good."

Even not asking the question, I talked about this in the new book, of don't ask boys the question of like, "What do you do? What sport do you play?" the way we ask man, like, what do you do? So much of our identity I think as males is tied to our work, not who we are as people.

And so I think it brings us back to this sense of let's talk about who we are, let's talk about where we are, and be honest in that and name what we feel, figure out what to do with that and attend to our health. Develop some rhythms and habits and practices around attending to our health that I think just bleeds out all over the place in our relationships, at home at work, all the people we intersect with. So thanks for letting me preach for men.

**Annie:** No, that's not preaching. That's just telling us what we don't know. That matters a ton to me.

[00:44:22] <music>

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And now back to finish up our conversation with David and Sissy.

[00:47:01] <music>

**Annie:** Sissy, what—and David you can answer this too—what do counselors need right now?

**Sissy:** That is such a hard question. We're never asked that kind of question. That is really kind.

**David:** Great question.

**Sissy:** Yes, yes. You know, I think it's probably part of because of the Raising Boys & Girls podcast, but I have never gotten as many encouraging notes as I did this Christmas. Cards from people everywhere.

**Annie:** Really?

**Sissy:** Yes. It just surprised me. We both did. And we got some presence along the way too, which was really neat. And I think just people, whatever it looks like, we're saying we're grateful for what you do. We know you're caring a lot. I think just that simple means so much to us. What would you say?

**David:** I love that. I think I'm reminded of all the articles that have come out lately about how many doctors and nurses have left the field, how many pastors have left churches, how many people in the helping profession about out because the work has never been harder. The work has always been hard-

**Annie:** Yes. Nobody signed up for this. Nobody signed up for this.

**David:** Exactly. I was at the doctor just this morning, and I wanted the first words out of my mouth to be to every nurse who walked in the room every day, like thanks for coming to work today. Thanks for doing what's always been a hard job in the hardest of times. And so I think it speaks to what you said too. Like just that sense of gratitude.

I'd say on another note, I think not bowing out of the work but stepping out of the work temporarily. We had this fun conversation, the three of us before we got

started about TV shows. And it's like, we've got to be doing things to take care of ourselves too. We need to be having fun. And you're reminding us of the importance of that.

And even scheduling that in when we're not getting around to it in ways that we're refueling ourselves. So that, back to that statement we're talking about with kids, so that we can offer more of who we are to the people we love, because we give out of an overflow. If I'm empty, empty is what I have to give.

**Annie:** I just wonder if counseling is one of the professions... Well, the way our world works, now you can work from home or the office anytime. So we actually can work 24 hours a day, seven days a week if we so choose. But I would imagine that counseling it's hard to stop because you could get a text at 8. p.m. You're on call. Doctors are on call twice a week or once a week. You're on call all the time. Right?

**Sissy:** We are very fortunate at Daystar that we're not. Our board of directors has said, "Don't give out your cell phone number. Don't give out your email address." And there's some HIPAA violations included in that anyway. And so we have kind of a built-in boundary there.

I would encourage any therapists who are listening to figure out how you can do that. Because I'm like you—I worry about therapists who give out their cell phone number and then they are 24 hours a day, seven days a week available for someone, not just who, you know, has a sore throat but someone who's suicidal. So I think boundaries are so important in that space.

**David:** I agree.

**Annie:** I have two phones. One of my phones is like a tiny computer. It has all the social media, all the things, all the people who talk to me about work are on that phone. And it turns off at the end of my workday. It's been two years and it has been the most life giving separation. I mean, it's not even really a phone to me. My phone, all my people talk to me on it. Always have.

But having like a social media little computer, it's a little computer. And it was this one wild boundary that I saw someone else draw to be able to separate work and life, that I thought, "That is incredible."

**Sissy:** That's incredible.

**David:** That's brilliant.

**Annie:** Because we have a mutual friend who used to be a counselor but isn't practicing right now. And recently, when I said, "Do you miss anything?" She said, "I don't miss the middle of the night phone calls." And I thought-

**Sissy:** Wow.

**Annie:** Yeah. What? Why?

**Sissy:** Right. Right. Why?

**Annie:** How? How? And if we want to do the thing, we're called to long term, we have to have really high boundaries for health today.

**David:** Yes.

**Annie:** John Mark Comer who I know y'all love, John Mark Comer says you don't become who you want to be at 80 when you're 80. You're becoming who you want to be at 80 right now.

**Sissy:** Yes.

**Annie:** And so I just think, man, we got to have those on. I'm glad y'all have those boundaries..

**Sissy:** And as we're saying that, that just makes me think kind of PSA here for parents. So we sometimes... maybe I shouldn't even say this out loud. But there are times that parents will call us in a total crisis and we purposefully don't call them back for hours. Because we want the parents to feel like they're capable.

So if you have a tendency to want to text your counselor at midnight, unless it's... I mean, take them to the hospital if you feel like they're suicidal. But for other things, God has equipped you as parents. You can do it. You can handle it. And then if you can't, if you really get to the place that you can't, after a few hours, and you've had some space to think, then maybe reach out to your counselor. But we sure believe you're capable.

**Annie:** Yes. I have had to work through that with my counselor of like, "When can I text you? And when can I not? And what if I think I can and you said I can't. What does that mean if we reach there?"

**Sissy:** It means we believe in you.

**Annie:** Right. That's it. Right. That means that y'all are saying to your clients and their families, we've given you tools. Use the tools.

**Sissy:** Yes.

**Annie:** Use the tools first.

**Sissy:** And God has given you a million more tools than we could ever imagine.

**Annie:** When I did my weekend on site, the counseling center here, when I left, I thought, "I have language and tools. I don't have a hero that I need to call every time, but I have language and tools I didn't have before. That helps so much. What do we not say about life today that we need to say?"

**David:** The other thing I was thinking of just then, I think we not only have tools and language, we have relationships. We have this quote that we love that Larry Crabb, a psychologist whose work we admire and respect so much, who says, "If the body of Christ was being who the body of Christ was designed to be, we wouldn't need counselors."

**Annie:** Wow.

**David:** And I love the wisdom of those words. And I think, you know, sometimes we need to create more space and opportunity for the people around us to be the body of Christ in a way to care for us-

**Annie:** That's good.

**Sissy:** ...in ways that they can and need to and we need for them to.

**Annie:** Yes. Don't you imagine the Lord just like celebrating when Larry Crabb got there.

**Sissy:** Aw.

**Annie:** I mean just like, "Come on. Get up here." I think when I get to heaven, the Lord's going to be like, "I need another Sabbath. I've done dealing with her. She probably got here. We're done." But with Larry Crabb, he's like, "Hurry." I bet he was so celebrated when he got there.

**Sissy:** Deep soul. What a gift! He just helped so many find language and tools in relationship.

**David:** Sure did.

**Annie:** Yeah. I'm thankful for his work too as I feel about y'all. I'm so thankful for your work. There just won't be a way this side of heaven for y'all to see what you've done. It's just not possible. But it'll be fun to see. When we get to the long part of the story, it'll be fun to see. For y'all to be like, "Oh, man." I see it in teenagers that I know that, I think, "Man, y'all are thriving." Because when your family fell apart when you were eight, you sat with Sissy and David. Right?

I mean, you probably know the family I'm thinking of. I just think, Man, those teenagers are incredible because of y'all. And because of God. And because the parents were able to make a way for this to be a resource.

**Sissy:** And they have an amazing MiniBFF.

**Annie:** Well, yeah. I'm not going anywhere.

**Sissy:** No.

**Sissy:** I'm not going anywhere. I'm living in their lives. But man, I'm just so thankful. Okay, the last question we always ask. Easy turn from me being teary about how thankful I am for y'all in this town and in our ears. I just want my friends listening to know that I don't know better resources for parenting than y'all. And so I'm thinking for the things that you give in Nashville, but globally. We can get your books and your podcast and-

**Sissy:** Annie, thank you.

**Annie:** I'm very thankful. Okay, so because the show is called That Sounds Fun, you each gotta tell me what sounds fun to you.

**David:** You go first.

**Sissy:** We were laughing about both being ones. So it's a little harder now to us.

**Annie:** I know you two are enneagram ones.

**Sissy:** But it's so important.

**Annie:** It is. We were talking about Sabbath the other day and someone asked me a question on Instagram. I was like, "You got to be a one." She's like, "What if I was sick on a Tuesday, Wednesday?" I'm like, "Sister!"

**Sissy:** We can tell when they walk through our doors of Daystar. You would really be able to tell if you saw us moving through the airport on a weekend when we're speaking somewhere.

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**David:** No question.

**Annie:** Oh, yeah, y'all speak around the country too. So people can find all that on raisingboysandgirls.com as well?

**Sissy:** Yes.

**David:** They can.

**Annie:** Great. And how to bring you in to their environment. Okay, great. Good, good, good. Okay, but what sounds fun to you? That's what we're here for.

**David:** I thought of it when you said that just a minute ago when we were talking about all of us being ones. And it's [unintelligible 00:55:58] said that ones are their best selves when they're on vacation. And I couldn't agree more. And I have my oldest daughter is a junior in college and she's about to study abroad in Spain. And she's leaving in a couple of days, which could make me cry right now thinking about it.

So I got this rare small opportunity to take her to the beach, just the two of us, and just had some time with her before I'm not going to see her for several months. And I purposely took her away because I thought, "I'm a different dad. I'm a different person. I'm a different dad."

And what sounds fun to me always is just sitting on the beach, eat some great Mexican food, reading a book, being in the company of people I love. And I just got this huge dose of it over the last 48 hours. It was so rich and awesome.

**Annie:** That's awesome. What beach did y'all go to? w

**David:** We went to Miami actually.



**Annie:** Okay

**David:** Yes, we were a little nervous to go at 38 because, you know, it could be like 40 degrees this time of year. And we wanted like hot hot.

**Annie:** And it's like thousands of people who know who you are.

**Sissy:** Yes.

**David:** So we're just like tucked away in some hot, hot weather. It was a gift.

**Annie:** And what a gift you're giving her the study abroad! Only in college do you get an experience like that. You never again get to just see the world through those eyes.

**David:** Agree.

**Annie:** So thank you for giving that to her.

**David:** I'm so excited for it.

**Annie:** That is really cool. Spain. Are y'all going to go visit?

**David:** We don't think we're going to get to soon. So it's going to be like this long stretch of not seeing her which is why we're so excited to get this rich quality time with her.

**Annie:** That's awesome.

**David:** It's awesome.

**Sissy:** You're still tan.

**David:** Thank you.

**Annie:** Yeah, well done.

**Sissy:** So you know this about me. But I have kind of a funny family story. I was an only child till I was 16 when my parents had a little girl. And evidently, my first response to my mom was, "I didn't know y'all did that anymore." So, as a 16 year old growing up, I was always finding ways to connect with her. And one of our

historically favorite things ever to do together has been to play Super Mario Brothers.

**Annie:** Ah, ah.

**Sissy:** Yes. And so I have owned every Nintendo system that has come out. I still do.

**Annie:** I did not know this.

**Sissy:** Have a switch. Not many people. I don't think I have ever said this vocally. And so now Kathleen is married and has a three year old and we still at times. Now it's like two or three times a year but I love to play some Mario.

**Annie:** I mean, that little boy seems like the light of your life.

**Sissy:** Oh, gosh. He's a blast. But let me tell you my Mario secret is we were playing in the snow this past week and Kathleen and Aaron that I all equally love... This is really fun because we can all play. And Henry now is interested in it so we give him a controller that doesn't work.

**Annie:** No batteries.

**Sissy:** We are all the grownups in the room. We play Mario and he thinks he is.

**David:** Rocking the game.

**Sissy:** But he is the light of my life. And there's another one coming.

**Annie:** Yes. So yeah.

**Annie:** I just had my first nephew... I didn't have. My sister had my first nephew a year and a half ago. I was like, "Oh, now I get it. Can we FaceTime right now?" He doesn't say words but he loves it... I just got lights that turn on with Alexa. So he'll just put up when we're FaceTiming. It just turns my lights on and off.

**Sissy:** It's going to get better and better.

**Annie:** I can't wait till he talks.

**Sissy:** We went to Lion King last night and it was so fun.

**Annie:** Was it great?

**Sissy:** Oh, it was amazing. Yes.

**Annie:** Are they still here? I didn't realize they were still here.

**David:** They are.

**Annie:** I had a snow ticket. My season ticket was a snow night. And then they rescheduled for like two o'clock on a Wednesday. I was like, "What's it like to go to a show at two o'clock on a Wednesday. Tell me more. Everyone doesn't have jobs? I would love to know who got to go to that." It was not me. Oh, y'all. Okay, well, I'm just thankful for you. Please come back.

**Sissy:** Any time.

**David:** Any time.

**Annie:** I would love it. I'm so thankful for your work and I'm glad for people to get to meet you all today. Well, they know you Sissy. You are back. You've already been on this with us. But what a gift you are! Thank you.

**David:** Thank you for having us.

[00:59:55] <music>

**Outro:** Oh, friends, don't you love them? Oh my gosh! Okay, so be sure to go now and subscribe to the Raising Boys & Girls Podcast because I am on it tomorrow. We have a totally different conversation. It's really interesting how these two go together. But I think you're really going to enjoy it.

So Sissy and David are with me today, I'm with them tomorrow. Hey, also visit our websites, pick up their books as they pertain to the season you are in. Follow David and Sissy on social media, follow Raising Boys & Girls and tell them thanks for being on the show.

Go ahead and make sure you've got your copy of *100 Days to Brave For Kids* that comes out tomorrow, and *100 Days to Brave* for that matter if you don't have it, so you and the kids in your life are ready to get started on that special 100 day journey that starts on February 17.

If you need anything else for me, y'all know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, all the places you may need me, that's how you can find me. And I think that's it for me today friends. Go out or stay home and do something that sounds fun to you. I will do the same. Today what sounds fun to me is I have an orthodontist appointment because we're almost done with Invisalign. It sounds fun to me to go see my orthodontist.

So you guys have a great week. We'll see you back here on Thursday with my firecracker of a friend Mallory Ervin. Y'all are ready for this conversation. It's so good. We'll see you guys then.