

[00:00:00] <music>

**Annie:** Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm really happy to be here with you today. We've got, uh, a great show in store. Happy one week until the That Sounds Fun tour kicks off again. I cannot. I can't. I'm so happy. We're going coast to coast to coast, technically y'all. Philly, Baltimore, Columbus, Greenville we're coming your way on the first weekend.

There are still a few tickets available at almost all the shows. So snag yours today at [Anniefdowns.com/events](http://Anniefdowns.com/events) so you can join in on all the fun, comedy, confetti, fun coaching, a live podcast, your friends. Listen, you don't want to miss this. Come on!

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 talked about BetterHelp a lot on the show and this month we're continuing to discuss some of the stigmas around mental health.

These common misconceptions keep people from seeking out the help they need, and that has got to stop. People have internalized these ideas, like, you only go to therapy when things are completely falling apart or needing the help of a therapist means something's wrong with me. Y'all, that ain't it.

Seeing a counselor can help you prevent getting to that unbearable place mentally and emotionally. And admitting you need help is truly so brave. We heard from amazing counselors who I feel so blessed to call friends, Sissy Goff and David Thomas, just this past Monday, and next week, you'll get to meet another dear wise therapist in my life, Jim Cress. And I want you to have voices like theirs in your own life. And you can find that through BetterHelp.

BetterHelp is 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. 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 have used BetterHelp Online Therapy. This podcast is sponsored by BetterHelp and That Sounds Fun friends get 10% off their first month at [betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun](http://betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun). That's [betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun](http://betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun).

**Intro:** Today on the show I get to talk with my friend Mallory Ervin. She's a former Miss America contestant, she ran the *Amazing Race* with her dad three times, y'all have seen her on TV, and now she hosts the popular podcast *Living Fully*.

Mallory runs a global lifestyle brand and has turned her passion for sharing her love of fashion and beauty and life into her platform for impact. And now she's written her first book, *Living Fully*, that I love. It's Mallory's story of how things came crashing down after she'd spent years striving for perfection.

After hitting rock bottom and spinning months in rehab, she made a choice about the life she truly wanted to live. She's got such hard-earned wisdom to share with us y'all and I can't wait for you to get to know her. So here's my conversation with my friend Mallory Ervin.

[00:03:06] <music>

**Annie:** Mallory, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

**Mallory:** Oh, this is just so exciting, Annie.

**Annie:** This is the best.

**Mallory:** I'm so happy to be here and I'm so excited to see you and your in your nerdy office studio that you've got here, this operation.

**Annie:** I know but your office is so cool too. I lean on the dark side. Yours is all white and airy, and we have like dark panels all over the walls, so it sounds good.

**Mallory:** And brownies laying on the table. As soon as I walked in, I was like, "Are those available?"

**Annie:** Yes. I told you when it happened, "That is real friendship." When you walked in, you were like, "I need some of that," that is... Listen, when Lillian told us she was a baker, like she ran a bakery here in town before she worked for us, I was like, "You're our girl."

**Mallory:** I can tell she was involved in baking before because that was good. Those brownies are good.

**Annie:** Really good. It was really awesome. Okay, you're pregnant.

**Mallory:** I'm pregnant.

**Annie:** Congratulations!

**Mallory:** Thank you. I had to let the cat out of the bag. Annie knows I've had quite the journey to get there this time. I've got two little boys, two and three, and I had a year, just quite the year and I've only told a handful of people that. You were one of the people that I shared that with and you were such a sweet friend to me.

**Annie:** Well, we've just been praying.

**Mallory:** You're so sweet.

**Annie:** It's so great.

**Mallory:** I'm just so excited. So I had to announce it because I'm like, you know, well, I don't know how far along I'll be when this airs, but-

**Annie:** It comes out the same week as your book.

**Mallory:** Okay, perfect. So I'm like halfway through. You can only hide it for so long when you're in front of people. Because then people start looking and you see their eyes go down to your stomach and be like, Huh, is she?"

**Annie:** And you're at the beach, right? That part of it.

**Mallory:** Yeah. I mean, swimsuit. Couldn't hide it anymore. So I was so excited to make that announcement.

**Annie:** Okay, talk about the window of time. So many of our friends listening are in between what they want and getting what they want. Right?

**Mallory:** So the in-between I think is different for so many different people. It's different in\n circumstances, you know, like the one that I was in where your health is involved. So I think a lot of people when they're in the in-between they share everything with everyone. I was a little bit different in that here I was, I had two children kind of right off the bat, and it was pretty easy. And then all of a sudden, I started having these losses and miscarrying these pregnancies. I had four in one year.

**Annie:** That's just unbelievable.

**Mallory:** It was such a bizarre thing to go through because everything can always come so easy. And in the back of my mind, I felt a little bit guilty for feeling bad because I was like, "I'm so grateful that I have two kids. A lot of people experience this before they're even able to have their first child."

**Annie:** Did y'all don't have any miscarriages before?

**Mallory:** None. No. I got pregnant first try every single time.

**Annie:** And then four.

**Mallory:** And then four.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Mallory:** So I didn't know what to think about what was going on with my body or anything. So I couldn't bring anyone else in or anyone else's opinions in. And being a public person, it's really hard to show up when you're going through something like that that's really tough.

The first two were tough, but when it went happened a third time and then especially when it happened the fourth time-

**Annie:** Oh my gosh!

**Mallory:** I was pretty far. It really shook me to where I felt like I couldn't let any outside opinions come in, because I really had to buckle down and figure out like, "What is going on? And what can I control?" Which was my diet. I totally changed my diet. I was pre-diabetic but then I found out I had a blood clotting disorder.

So once we figure that out, then this pregnancy has been totally fine. Thank goodness for modern medicine, and then figuring things out. But when I announced this baby, that was the first time that I shared with people about that I experienced these losses. So the in-between for me was a little bit different because I share every single thing that happens in my life. But this time I kept it private. I don't think it's good or bad but I-

**Annie:** But it was right for you.

**Mallory:** It was right for me. Because I think oversharing sometimes invites so many opinions in. And when you're already confused and you're in here in the middle of seeing like seven doctors, it's just too much. It's a happy ending though.

**Annie:** That fourth one, why didn't you give up? Why didn't y'all just go, "You know what, we're not going to have any more kids. We're done."

**Mallory:** Because I think that whenever you're getting ready to have your first child, they always say like you never feel ready. And I do kind of agree with that. I'm like, "You think you're ready." And you just kind of jumped in the water if you're fortunate enough to be blessed with a pregnancy easily.

And I always think that there's a feeling though in the back of your mind. And I very much felt like I wasn't done. And I was like, "I don't think God would put that on my heart if there wasn't hope in the future for another baby." And too, Annie, right before I had my first miscarriage, I watched my sister lose a full term 40 week, you know, she had Blaze was his name and he lived for 34 days.

And my family had just gone through that. And we never thought in a million years that he wouldn't make it through and he ended up not making it through. So I did what I think a lot of people-

**Annie:** Did they know he was sick?

**Mallory:** They knew he had a heart defect, but it was one that they can usually fix. So it was just the perfect storm. Everything that could go wrong went wrong. And she has a happy ending to her story. She has a five-month-old baby boy now.

But we had just endured that a few months before. And I think like a lot of people do. You look at someone whose situation is so much worse than yours and you say, "Well, at least it's not that," and you kind of discount what you've been through.

And I did that the first couple times because I thought, "Oh my gosh, I just watched my sister go through this." And it was heart-wrenching as a sister too. And I thought, "You know, I would rather I think this happened than carry full term and have to be in the hospital for 34 days." And I discounted it.

And then I remember the day that I told my sister after I'd had two or three miscarriages, and she said, "I can't believe you didn't tell me. I lost a baby too. I know what you're experiencing." And she didn't discount my experience even though she was the one that went through that experience.

And I think it shows the sentiment that a lot of people would have if you shared it with them, even if they've been through something that seems like a bigger thing than you're going through. It's all relative. So I didn't give up after that fourth one because we've been through a lot, you know, with my sister and with me and I just felt like I wasn't done. I trusted that that was on my heart for a reason.

**Annie:** And it's beautiful how you get to share... I think there's really something about sharing from the place... All three matter but sharing from the place of "I didn't get what I wanted," sharing from the place of "I'm in the middle," and sharing from the place of "God did the thing." Like how do we ever know testimonies if we're all ashamed to say, like, "I can't tell you that God did this thing for me because it may make you sad that He didn't do it for you or maybe..." But it's like we've got to share testimonies of what He's actually done to give people hope. Have you already seen, I mean, the comments when you posted the picture?

**Mallory:** Oh my gosh, I know the-

**Annie:** Were unbelievable.

**Mallory:** Well, I posted from the Four Seasons and the Four Seasons marketing reached out to me and we're like, "We were really impressed with the traction that you got on that picture." So I was like, "Oh, well, thanks." I just happened to post it from there but-

**Annie:** Right. Right.

**Mallory:** ...it was just people were so surprised because I hadn't alluded to a pregnancy. I had just lost all this weight because I've made these health changes that Annie knows because we're eating a true food talking about health changes we're both trying to make. So I had just, you know, lost all this way and I didn't even allude to "I have a big announcement." I'd just been posting like Spanx ads and-

**Annie:** And WW.

**Mallory:** WW. So everyone was like, "Wait, what? Where did that come from and how did you have it?" And we're so excited. And people that had experienced pregnancy loss before, you know, the messages flooded in of "I had no idea. I'm so sorry. And thank you for sharing that." And I'll share more probably about the specifics of it, but yeah, I wasn't ready to get into the weeds of it until I felt like I kind of had my answer.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Mallory:** But more power to the people who can trust and share at the same time. I've been that in other instances.

**Annie:** Yes. I was about to say, "Mallory, how did you do that?"

**Mallory:** This one was tough.

**Annie:** Yes. And also in different seasons different things matter. I've had dating relationships that were more public than others. There's not a right answer altogether. There's a "what is right for this situation?" And your book is called *Living Fully*.

**Mallory:** Yes!

**Annie:** It came out this week. Congratulations.

**Mallory:** Thank you.

**Annie:** Talk about what it looks like to live fully and not tell your whole story right in the moment? Because I think you have been doing both?

**Mallory:** Yeah, I have. This whole book, so it's coming out... So they're listening to the podcast the week that it comes out, so you know the story. There's a story that is in *Living Fully* that I never told anyone.

**Annie:** I think there's multiple that I would imagine a lot of people didn't know.

**Mallory:** But a really big revelation that I'd never talked about. And I never had to talk about because it's, you know, treatment centers, you know, I ended up in. So I go on this journey and I did Miss America in *The Amazing Race* when I was in my young 20s, and I was just at the peak of success that I wanted to be at. Everything was so great, and I became really crippled by those accomplishments when I couldn't top them.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Mallory:** So as a young 20 something year old, here I was, I was having all this success and success that people can see because it's a different kind of success. Because not

only are you expecting to do better, and to do more, and to do something greater, but everybody else is too.

**Annie:** Yeah, yeah.

**Mallory:** So I started to spiral after all of that. That's really a nutshell of my story. And a few years later, I developed some issues with prescription medication that I was using to try and continue to play the part. And I ended up in a treatment center for five and a half months of my life. I never told that story, and that was eight or more years ago. And when I became an online personality slowly after I've done all these-

**Annie:** An influencer.

**Mallory:** An influencer. I never know what people want to call it.

**Annie:** I love on my personality. That's great.

**Mallory:** You can call me whatever you want to call me, Annie, because I know it's going to be nice, whatever it is.

**Annie:** That's true.

**Mallory:** I wouldn't say that to everybody. So I started sharing lifestyle content. I started out as a beauty YouTuber and sharing fashion and beauty on the internet. And then I had a blog and it really evolved into more lifestyle stuff. Then I got married and had these kids. It was a lot of lifestyle and living life out.

And the beauty of tools and platforms like Instagram that have stories and that component where you can just let people in on your life, not curated, not in some pretty picture, people started to watch me live my life. And I started getting these DMs from people that were like, "I wish I could wake up and face the day like it seems like you do. It seems like you're so happy. I wish I could be like that," or "I wish I had a relationship like that with my husband," or "I wish I could be that."

And I would always send a message back because I knew what I had been through and that I chose in the life. And I was very intentional about the way that I lived now. I would always send a message back and say, "It wasn't always like this. I really went through this really hard time in my life and I live a different way." And I realized as I got years and years of those messages, that I was doing everyone an injustice that was watching the way that I lived my life with joy by not telling this part of my story.



**Annie:** Wow.

**Mallory:** So I decided to. And I'm so glad that I did. And who knows how it will be received by people because people see a really shiny polished version of my life on the outside. But if I want to be any sort of influencer or public person, I have to share that part of my story. The only reason that I do what I do is to serve people. It's nothing about me. I just really realized that it was time.

**Annie:** I posted on Instagram this weekend about being in New York. And I mentioned that I was like sitting at this building where I dreamed up this program and a company I wanted to build. And we built it and it failed. It failed miserably, cost the company a lot of money-

**Mallory:** Really?

**Annie:** Yeah. It was when I wasn't doing this yet. It was in 2010. This has been my full-time job since 2012. So I had multiple people say back to me, "I had no idea you had businesses fail." Because all we see are today. And I was like, "Oh, it's just hard to figure out how you live fully, how to do this thing where you go like, "Well, yeah, we try things all the time that don't work." They may look like they work to y'all, but we had a goal that was 10,000 and we got 5,000 or whatever. A lot of times it's hard to know how to share failure.

**Mallory:** Yes. Especially when you're in the middle of success like you are or I think that-

**Annie:** And failures. Like we didn't hit the goal yesterday.

**Mallory:** Yeah.

**Annie:** I mean, we have both all the time. How do you know, Yes, I should share this and no, I shouldn't? Because I just haven't even thought about telling some of the stories of what doesn't work because I didn't know that it mattered, I guess.

**Mallory:** So with me, this was like the big thing that I hadn't shared. And I at the time did see it as a failure. Like, when I was in my 20s and I'd had all this success, and... I had a really amazing childhood. I had these parents that believed in me. I was oldest of 23 first cousins. I grew up on this farm in Kentucky. I was a leader, I was an achiever, I was valedictorian in my class...

**Annie:** 23.

**Mallory:** ...and all of these I never let anyone down. And I really felt like I was letting everyone down when I went through this. And even as I was spiraling, I was always spiraling and thinking in the back of my mind, "I'm not doing anything wrong. I'm just trying. I'm just trying to do more. I'm taking what a doctor told me to take. I was taking a lot more than what the doctor told me to take." But still, I thought I was still moving in the direction that was good until it wasn't.

At the end of this kind of spiral... I did a lot of this in isolation. I lived in Nashville, my family lived in Kentucky, nobody really saw me spiraling till the very end. And I had doctors look at me and say, "I don't know what you're doing but based on all of my vitals that they'd taken in there, and based on, you know, I was having like many strokes, and so I was just... my body was falling apart, they were like, "You're going to die."

And I had these doctors telling me this, and I would think in the back of my mind, you know, "I've lived a great life and I would rather go out like this than tell people what's going on." Because I didn't want to disappoint people.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh. That gives me goosebumps. Oh my gosh.

**Mallory:** And that was how crippling my need to have these accomplishments and be seen as this person that was perfect on the outside was that I was willing to lose my life to my addiction. And thank goodness, my parents stepped in and they sent me to this place that I thought, "As soon as I go here and check in the front door, they're going to say, 'You can take her home because she doesn't do drug. She doesn't have a problem. She had never done drug in her life.'"

**Annie:** Right, right.

**Mallory:** And I remember, you know, you go in there and then they take your blood, because you're not going to walk into a place like that and say, "Here are the things that I'm on. Here are the amounts that I'm taking."

**Annie:** Yes, yes, yes.

**Mallory:** You're in denial and you're in psychosis. You're kind of a little bit crazy. And I was waiting for them to just tell my parents, "Take her back home." And my parents left while I was back there. And I was admitted and I stayed for 30 days. And so that choice was made for me.

But at the end of 30 days, they assess you and they say either you can go home or they can say you go to... they call it like sober living or you need more treatment. Extended care, they call it. I was 100% sure they were going to send me home. I thought, "I'm not even as bad. I'm not even doing the heavy stuff. I really

**Annie:** You're probably in group counseling and you're like, "Not me. Not me. Not me."

**Mallory:** Exactly, because that's what you do. I was just like everybody else. I belonged there. And they said, "We are recommending three more months for you here at least."

**Annie:** Wow.

**Mallory:** And that was when I made the decision to stay. And I think that's where *Living Fully* was truly born for me. Because the substances and all that stuff, that was the surface problem. But there was something underneath that that I hadn't even gotten to the bottom of. I fought it for a little while and I was like, "I'm not saying I'm fine. I have rid myself of all these substances. I'm so happy to feel my spirit come alive again and my soul is back." I just felt so much better than bad that I didn't even want to reach for more. And that is living fully I feel like.

**Annie:** That feels so much better than bad that that was enough.

**Mallory:** And I stayed.

**Annie:** Okay, there have got to be... I put actual dollars on it that some of our friends listening are taking some medicine that may be more than they're supposed to be taking.

**Mallory:** Or drinking and shopping, or obsessively spending time on social media. There's so many numbers that you can be addicted to.

**Annie:** How do you know when you're addicted? If I had surgery a year ago and the doctor prescribed me medicine, so I have medicine in my life, how do I know when it's an addiction? How did you know?

**Mallory:** I think that in the back of your mind, there is always a voice that is saying, "I know this is too much." But addiction is you know it and you can't stop it. There was nothing, Annie, that I could do to stop putting that pill into my mouth. You would think like I felt awful at the end, I felt terrible.

A lot of people listening to this are probably like, "I can remember my life 10 years ago and it was so much better than it is now" with the absence of whatever it is that they're overusing. And even though you rationally know that in your mind, you cannot sometimes pull yourself out of it. Which is why programs are amazing. But programs really scare people. And if you have children and a husband and a full-time job-

**Annie:** How could you ever? Yes.

**Mallory:** ...or a studio with 95,000 employees like you do, how can you leave? You've got to be like on the streets with a needle, like you think to live. You've got to be close to losing your life, you think in your mind. But there are amazing resources and programs.

So if you have that thought in the back of your mind, there are even books. I'm not typical person in recovery. Recovery is a part of my story. This is not a recovery book at all. I'm not a speaker-

**Annie:** I think it's in there beautifully so that someone reading it can go, "Oh, that might be me too."

**Mallory:** Because if you're a person that has a red flag in your life, which an addiction is red flag or an affair or a something that needs to be talked about desperately between you and a spouse or someone that's very close and influential in your life, if there's a red flag, it's almost easier sometimes to take care of, to remove that because you cannot live fully if you have the red flag.

If you are a person that thinks, "I can't stop taking this medication," I promise you, if you stop taking that, if you are not a person that needs that... Let me just go ahead and clarify. Medication and prescriptions, absolutely life-changing. Some people need them.

**Annie:** Not a problem.

**Mallory:** I did not have ADHD. I did not need to be taking the medication I was taking. And then I was prescribed sleeping pills because I couldn't sleep from the medication they gave me that I should have been taking in the first place.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Mallory:** Then I drank a whole bottle of wine because my mind just felt like woaaaa all the time. So you have to remove the red flag situation. And whether it's seeing a therapist, whether it's reading a book, whether it's a 12 Step program, or whether it's all the way like I did and you're going to a treatment program.

When you're on the other side of that, the vibrance that comes back into your life is so overwhelming. I remember when I stopped taking it and I just thought to myself, "Why in the world did I even start taking this in the first place?" Because I felt so much better without it.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Mallory:** But it happens so slowly and you get so stuck in it. And then there's just this delusional thinking in your mind that you think, "Oh, it's not that bad," or "I'm still able to function in my life." I was still functioning in my life. I was still speaking and emceeing things and doing all of these things in the public realm but my life was falling apart. I was about to literally lose my life.

**Annie:** Gosh.

**Mallory:** So it's the people without the red flags. So I wrote that in there because I think there are a lot of people here and maybe people listening that have the red flags that know they need to face the red flags. And I think a therapist is an amazing or a counselor or a person that your church is an amazing place to start because they know the next place to go. Or maybe they can help you take care of the problem, you know, just talking to them.

But it's the people that don't have the red flag that I wrote the rest of the book to because I'm that person now. I'm a mom of two, soon to be 3-

**Annie:** Two point five.

**Mallory:** Two point five.

**Annie:** You are the American statistics. 2.5 kids.

**Mallory:** That is awesome. I am the American statistic. And then I go about to tip the scale.

**Annie:** That's right. You're breaking us up.

**Mallory:** So the person that is just the me, where you just get busy and you're just living your life and you don't have a red flag that you're like, "Oh, this is the reason I'm not living a full life," it's really hard because you have to make the choice to choose a bigger life over what's comfortable and easy and just fine.

**Annie:** I know.

**Mallory:** And that is such a hard decision to make for people. So I wrote the rest of the book to that person.

[00:24:47] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about another one of our incredible partners, [Raycon](#). Raycon, co-founded by Ray J, provides innovative earbud designs that don't break the bank. They're the next wave in wireless audio technology.

Raycon offers their wireless earbuds in a range of fun colors and patterns. They're super comfortable and come with a variety of fit options. Unlike some of your other wireless options, Raycon earbuds come with a bunch of gel tips for your comfort that are both stylish and discreet and they don't stick out of your ears with dangling wires or stems.

Raycon are a great way to shake things up this new year because their wireless earbuds are the best way to bring audio with you. And no matter how much you shake things up, like literally no matter how much you shake, like dancing around the kitchen, or making dinner or jogging in your neighborhood, you know they won't fall out of your ears.

Raycon have never, not once, not a single time, you guys, fallen out of my ears no matter what I do or where I go. You know why, right? They've got optimized gel tips and a bunch of different sizes so you can get that perfect in ear fit. Raycon's everyday earbuds look, feel, and sound better than ever.

One of their newest features is called awareness mode. This is so smart. It's for when you need to listen to your surroundings so you can take them with you wherever you go and stay safe too. I love that.

And y'all these earbuds offer eight hours of playtime and 32 hours of battery life. I go so long before I need to charge them, and then sometimes I can't find the cord. It's annoying. It's true. Raycon started half the price of other premium audio brands,

but they sound just as good. And it's no wonder Raycon's everyday earbuds have over 48,000 5-star reviews.

So go to [buyraycon.com/thatsoundsfun](https://buyraycon.com/thatsoundsfun) to get 50% off your order. That's [buyraycon.com/thatsoundsfun](https://buyraycon.com/thatsoundsfun) for 15% off your order.

**Sponsor:** And I've got one more amazing partner to tell you about, [Ritual](#). This stat always blows me away, you guys. Over 97% of women aged 19 to 50 are not getting enough vitamin D from their diet and 95% are not getting the recommended daily intake of key Omega 3s. We can't just ignore these gaps, you guys.

And that's exactly why Ritual's Essential for Women 18+ multivitamin was created. These vitamins are formulated with exhaustive research to help fill nutrient gaps in the diets of women aged 18+. And listen to what they help with. Brain health, check; bone health check; blood health, check. And they provide antioxidant support.

As if that isn't enough, Ritual also invested in gold standard university-led clinical trials to prove the impact of Essential for Women 18+ multivitamin. And the results are in the numbers of 43% increase in vitamin D levels and a 41% increase in Omega 3 DHA levels in just 12 weeks.

Ritual is committed to third party testing from USP and the Non-GMO Project, traceable and vegan-friendly ingredients, and always clear communication. No shady stuff. I take my Ritual vitamin faithfully because I know I need their help to make sure I'm getting as many of the nutrients I need as possible.

And they show up like clockwork right at my doorstep. So I never have to worry about running out or missing a day. The little minty tab they include in every bottle means I don't have to deal with an icky aftertaste and they are so easy on my stomach, which I'm a fan of.

Right now Ritual is offering my friends 10% off your first three months. Just visit [ritual.com/thatsoundsfun](https://ritual.com/thatsoundsfun) and turn healthy habits into a ritual. That's 10% off at [ritual.com/thatsoundsfun](https://ritual.com/thatsoundsfun).

And now back to our conversation with Mallory.

[00:28:22] <music>

**Annie:** So we've gotten *Living Fully*, we're reading it, we're hearing you and we're going like, "I like my life in this town that I live in, I like my job." What does it look like to live more fully if we live our lives?

**Mallory:** So if you love your lives, then you are already a huge step ahead. And I would say you're pretty close to living fully. However, we know that life is not a flat line. It's all around. So I wrote there breakthroughs that I had in the book. And every one of them is what I believe is a key to living fully.

So if you're a person that's like, "I don't even know. I don't even know what it is that I would need to do to have this breakthrough to more vibrant life." When you read this book, you're going to see... we talk about so many things. One thing in there that I talk about that was like a huge breakthrough to me was these attachments that I had. So I open the whole book, Annie, with the story... I think you've read some of it.

**Annie:** Oh, I read the whole thing. I endorsed it.

**Mallory:** Oh, yeah, you did. Yes.

**Annie:** Girl, I was with you. You start the book talking about your hair.

**Mallory:** Duh. And you saw all these people that don't even read my books that are too-

**Annie:** Girl, I'm with you.

**Mallory:** Annie is the real deal. So I opened this book with this story about them pulling these hair extensions out of my head. And the biggest breakthroughs that happened to me in my life were these random things. And this was one of the most pivotal experiences in my life.

I'd had blonde hair extensions in my hair permanent for 10 years. And when they started taking that hair out... And I was in treatment, so they weren't letting me get re-extended. They knew what they were doing with it. They knew that I had an issue with being attached to the way that I looked, to this old person even though old person almost killed me.

**Annie:** That is fascinating. You were in abusive relationship with yourself.

**Mallory:** I was in an abusive relationship with myself; I couldn't leave. She was always around and she was easier-



**Annie:** And then they took out your extensions.

**Mallory:** And they took out my extensions-

**Annie:** Wow.

**Mallory:** ...and I hit a low that I had not hit before. I started doing a lot of work around attachment to this person that I was and this appearance. And I think if you're a person that loves your life and that maybe loves being perceived as a great mom, or like you love the success in your business, I would love for you to look at your attachment to that.

Because a lot of times attachments don't have to be bad things. But if the attachment becomes more of this is how I introduce myself, and this is the person that I am, and this is how I define myself and this is how I feel good about myself, then that becomes unhealthy eventually. It did for me.

**Annie:** Yeah, me too. I've had a real funny experience. I haven't talked about this at all hardly with anybody. This is where friend talk and podcast talk maybe shouldn't overlap. But here we go. I've been having all these conversations. And there is not a right or wrong answer. Let me say that before I say this to you. If we were sitting at true food, you would know.

But I've been having all these conversations about hair color Botox, different things you can do to your body that a lot of my peers and I are talking about. And I'm having this realization that suddenly a lot of these conversations are popping up around me, which is making me ask, "Do I have an attachment I didn't realize I had. Do you know what I mean? Tell me if this is true or false about living fully. I'm wondering if living fully involves just being very curious about yourself.

**Mallory:** Yes, absolutely.

**Annie:** Because all of a sudden I'm finding myself being very like, "Hey, you care about a lot of this one lane of things right now. I wonder why." Is that a step toward this?

**Mallory:** And if you feel like, "Oh, am I attached... Whether you do it or not, like are you having that thought in the back of your mind like, "Oh, do I need one? Would it be that bad if I just, you know...?" I think that that's the first step because awareness, which starts with curiosity, is definitely the first step.

We're moving 100 miles an hour so a lot of people don't even have that thought, Annie, that you even have of "Ah, I wonder if I have some attachments to some things that I know do not align with my values." I mean, I don't care if people get... Botox is f... I mean, I've had hair colored in Botox. It's not a big deal to me.

But if I felt like when my forehead started moving like it does now because I can't get Botox, when my forehead starts moving, I can't go to the grocery store because no one can see me, because I look old or look uuh, or people don't know, then that is when it is an attachment. It's when the good thing turns bad.

**Annie:** Yes.

**Mallory:** Or maybe you think Botox is bad, so the bad thing gets worse. I used to think Botox was bad. I came from a small town. I didn't get it till I was in my 30s. I've got like six times. I act like I'm the Botox queen. I'm really not.

**Annie:** Listen, don't even shame yourself. I was even saying to my mentor, I was like, "There is not a... she said to me, "This is not a sin conversation." Right? None of these things are sin or not sin? They are why. What's your why? What's your why? And my why have been incredibly off balance.

And part of it is things going on in my life that are shifting that make, you know, you know

**Mallory:** Yes, yes. And they make me go, "Do I need to do this? Do I need to do that? Do I need to do this? Do I need to do that?" And so then when you listen to your why you're like, "Oh my why is out of pain." My why is not out of "This will be fun" or "Why not?" And so I was talking to someone else about Botox and she was like, "Oh, I love the way it makes me feel. It helps my headaches." And I went, "Oh, those are none of my whys."

**Mallory:** Yeah, yeah. That awareness, Annie, is huge. You're the person that I want people to be at the end of the book. When you realize-

**Annie:** No, I'm not. Well, because I read it. So I'm hoping I'm the person at the end of the book because I did the work. I worked through it.

**Mallory:** Because I want it to be people's wakeup call. Like, "Oh, I'm attached to this," or "The voice of fear is guiding all my decisions" or "When life throws me a curveball, I make these fast decisions and it's turning my life in the wrong direction

instead of decisions based on my values," or "I'm not even thinking about my legacy. I'm just like living my life and busy, busy, busy."

You know, I want them to have the wakeup call but then I want them to have this like stay awake kind of thing. And that staying awake, you noticing before you start getting pumped up with whatever or dying your hair a certain color-

**Annie:** Which I still can do once I get it right.

**Mallory:** Yes. I mean hey, you go next door.

**Annie:** That's right. I live literally next door to the people.

**Mallory:** Yeah.

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

**Mallory:** So you notice the problem... not the problem, but you notice the potential attachment before you even get involved. And then you can be much more cognizant of the way that you're feeling when you're in the midst of this thing that you could become attached to. That is absolutely living fully. Absolutely. It took me 10 years to realize I was attached to my dang hair extensions and thousands of dollars. I wish I'd figured out that before. It was expensive.

**Annie:** You figured it out right on time. That's the truth we have to tell ourselves is that we are learning and growing at the pace we are meant to learn and grow. And to cross any bridge before we're meant to cross, it is not going to work anyway.

**Mallory:** That's true.

**Annie:** In your staying awake section, which I love, will you talk about don't let your blessings become burdens? Will you talk about that for a minute? Because I think a lot of us get the thing we wanted, husband, kids, job, blah, blah, blah, you know, all the things that we could make a list of, the size pants we want, we get into the career we want, we get the Miss America, we get the *Amazing Race*, and then we go, "I'm exhausted," or "it's a burden." So how do you do that?

**Mallory:** Exactly. So I think just like we talked about with the attachment, it first takes awareness. So if you are constantly a chicken with your head cut off, say, parent, and you are snapping at your kids all the time, and you are parenting at a place of total exhaustion and desperation... Because I've been there before. I have to take a

step back, after realizing I'm doing it, take a step back and look at those kids and think, "That is what I wanted in the first place."

I can remember going to church and bars and coffee shops, all these places and looking at guys and being like, "Oh, if I start talking to him like what? Or dating a guy and I wanted so badly to find that person that was going to be my person. And then some days when I'm like, "My husband gets on my last nerve," I have to take a step back-

**Annie:** And now you're stuck with him.

**Mallory:** And now I'm stuck because I got married for one time. I know that everybody gets married thinking that.

**Annie:** True.

**Mallory:** So I have to take a step back. And I think that you can do it in a lot of different ways. But it's the awareness of what you're doing. It's the reminder that that's the gift that you ask for and you prayed for and God handed to you. And the commitment to, you know, looking at the things that they do well and looking at their attributes that you love.

It's so easy to point out and notice the things that people are doing wrong or the way that things aren't going your way. It takes more effort to look at someone and say, "You know what, I remember the things that I loved about you five years ago, and they're still here even though you left your underwear in the corner of the room and not in the hamper that I bought for you to put it in and it's right beside it.

**Annie:** Right beside it.

**Mallory:** Right there. It's harder to put it on the ground. It's further than the-

**Annie:** It's harder. You're actually doing more work in not doing the right work.

**Mallory:** And then I wrote this story. You know, Jessica Turner, our mutual friend, when I started my podcast-

**Annie:** I loved the story by the way.

**Mallory:** ...she told me this story. So she comes into my house, I'd just gotten a new house, and she comes into my house... And Jessica is such an honest person too. And she

comes into my house and she sits down and she's like, "Your house is so clean." I'm like, "Thank you. I keep it like this" because I did keep it like this, the house. Things being an order, that was very important to me.

But I had made my husband and my son play upstairs the whole time. The house cleaners had just come, I had karate-chopped all the pillows, I had a bouquet of flowers. That was important to me.

**Annie:** I bet your office.

**Mallory:** We recorded downstairs at my dining room table.

**Annie:** Okay, okay.

**Mallory:** April did my house and she hadn't done my studio yet. So we were recording at the dining table at that time.

**Annie:** And people know April from the Lauren Akins podcast, Live in Love because April was on with us.

**Mallory:** She is amazing.

**Annie:** She's amazing.

**Mallory:** So I said, "You know, yeah, my house cleaners just left or whatever." And she's like, "My house is a mess always." And I was like, "No way! Really?" She said, "Yeah, you know, I'd rather be spending time with my kids. It's not a priority for me." I just looked at her and I was like, "Wait, what? Could you tell me more about that? Because I definitely think that I'm prioritizing this over the things that really matter to me."

And so we started talking and she told me this analogy of in life you're juggling these balls. Some of them are glass balls, some of them are rubber balls. And the things that matter to you should be the glass balls.

You know what happens, Annie, if you drop a glass ball. It's going to crack. If you drop a glass ball, it's going to crack again. Eventually, it's going to shatter. If you drop a rubber ball, it doesn't matter. It bounces back, put it back in juggling rotation. And it dawned on me that I was mislabeling the glass balls and the rubber balls.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Mallory:** And if I continue to draw the glass balls, which was my relationship with my husband, or spending time with my kids, then you can't go out and buy another one. So I decided to correctly label and then fiercely protect that label of the things that I valued in my life in this juggling rotation that we all have.

And I was treating the house like the glass ball and being, "Kyle, take this child upstairs. I got a podcast in an hour. Like I got to karate-chop the pillows and do the flower arrangement." And that's stuff I still do love. Ordinary joys in life is something I wrote about too. I love flowers and I love a clean house. However-

**Annie:** And those can still be balls.

**Mallory:** Yes. Not at the expense of my family and being the mom that I want to be and being present for that hour that I spent obsessively cleaning. And that really helped me. And it helped me so much that I included in my definition of living fully.

**Annie:** How many glass balls you think we can hold at a time?

**Mallory:** I think at different times in our life we definitely had the capacity to hold more. And at certain times in our life, we certainly need to be juggling very carefully a few glass balls. If you are taking care of an ill elderly parent, that is a very sacred glass ball—or grandparent—that you need to pay attention to. And truly ensure that you continue to label that correctly. And you don't need to be juggling 100 rubber balls as well. You know, that's so important. Young children, that is a season where I think they're very impressionable and it goes so fast.

**Annie:** Was it they say the days are long, but the years are short?

**Mallory:** That is so true. Or I think as a young person, you can juggle a lot of balls in general. As a post-college person, before I'd spiraled out of control when I was Miss Kentucky and doing Miss American, all these reality shows, I could juggle ten glass balls, ten rubber balls, because I was high energy and because I had less responsibility, I think.

When you have more responsibility, those glass balls, the weight of those glass balls is heavier, they are easier to drop. So it's definitely different. Right now I'm just really keeping my eye on... I like to do a word at the beginning of every year. I did not think this year's word would be family. But I was like, "I think it's family to

me." In the year that my book comes out, my merch business is growing more than ever it ever had.

**Annie:** All the sweatshirts. I am dying.

**Mallory:** I would have brought you 100 sweatshirts, Annie. You should have told me.

**Annie:** Girl, no, I'm going to get one this Valentine's. Don't you worry. I'm just going to get one.

**Mallory:** Which one do you want? The charcoal or the green?

**Annie:** I like the green.

**Mallory:** Okay.

**Annie:** I'll buy it. Don't worry.

**Mallory:** No, you're not buying it. They're already sold out. They sold out like-

**Annie:** Oh, shoot! They always do. Your Christmas ones were gone in a heartbeat.

**Mallory:** Annie, but you're my friend. You can text me, and you can say, "Mallory, do you have this shirt in there this size?"

**Annie:** Okay, I'll just be faster on it. I'll just ask you. But is that fun? I mean, that's got to be a fun... So does that fit as glass or rubber, Mal?

**Mallory:** That's a great question. Technically, it's a rubber ball but it is the most lucrative part of my business. It supports my family.

**Annie:** Therefore.

**Mallory:** Therefore, it is glass sometimes.

**Annie:** Yes, I think so. I think that's right.

**Mallory:** But I think that there are certain glass balls that certainly mean more at different times.

**Annie:** Certainly.

**Mallory:** And I think that a job is a glass ball that is almost it can go back and forth between a glass ball and a rubber ball. Because we have to work to survive. We have to. So it makes it a little bit tough because is a job as important as a family? No. But you do have to have a job to support your family unless you've won the lottery or somebody gave you some money. And that is rare.

**Annie:** Right.

**Mallory:** If someone gave it to you, then you can juggle as many balls. You can hire somebody else to juggle the balls for you.

**Annie:** That's right. One of the reasons I wonder if this is—and you write about this on *Living Fully*, too, but the importance of rest and the importance of downtime. Because as we're sitting here I'm thinking about what's glass and what's rubber for me. And I'm like, "Well, from nine to five, my job has a lot of balls that I juggle. But when I walk out of here, this glass ball of my job becomes a rubber ball."

**Mallory:** And I know that for a fact because I've seen you with your work... You have your work and you have your personal phone.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Mallory:** And you have your rest day that you do not work. I learned a lot of that from you actually. You taught me how. But I think you and I are also alike in that we would run 100 miles an hour 24 hours a day-

**Annie:** 100% I would.

**Mallory:** That is just how we are one wired.

**Annie:** Because it's fun.

**Mallory:** It's fun.

**Annie:** Yeah, I'd love it. I would love to work all day. I would love to work every day and I would love to work in the eve...

**Mallory:** All day.

**Annie:** I think it'd be fun to like keep doing. And we get a lot more done.



**Mallory:** Till you go to sleep.

**Annie:** But I can't.

**Mallory:** Uh, huh, you got to have more podcasts.

**Annie:** Yeah.

[00:44:40] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation one more time to tell you about one of our amazing partners, [StitchFix](#). Style icons don't do it alone, neither do I and neither should you. Now, I'm not calling myself a style icon or anything but the real real is that Amber Lehman, who y'all know and love, bosses me around and tells what I should wear when I'm going to be on stage.

If you need a hand finding pieces that make you look and feel great, then StitchFix has got you covered. Whether you need date night dresses or cosy loungewear, StitchFix can help refresh your look. You can schedule a fix and the stylists will send you five pieces that fit your style, size, and price range with no subscription required. Keep what you like and return the rest.

Or if you'd like to shop but don't want to browse forever and ever, then check out StitchFix freestyle. It's so cool, y'all. It's an online shop built just for you. It's like having your very own clothing store. To get started, you take a style quiz so StitchFix can learn your preferences, from favorite colors to preferred fits and price ranges.

It's the easy way to get items that are just right for you from brands you know and trust like Madewell and Sanctuary. It's time to get looks that are so very you, you guys. So get started today by filling out your freestyle quiz. You'll know we love a quiz. Just go to [stitchfix.com/thatsoundsfun](https://stitchfix.com/thatsoundsfun) and take advantage of free shipping and returns. That's [stitchfix.com/thatsoundsfun](https://stitchfix.com/thatsoundsfun) to try StitchFix. [Stitchfix.com/thatsoundsfun](https://stitchfix.com/thatsoundsfun).

**Sponsor:** And I've got one more amazing partner to share with you, [Thistle Farms](#). Our friends at Thistle Farms have a saying: love is the most powerful force for change in the world. I think that is so true.

So since Valentine's Day is coming up, my challenge for you is to show a little extra love by giving one of Thistle Farms' amazing candles, body scrubs, or their luxurious body butter to someone that you love. These items smell incredible and make perfect gifts for your mom, your sister, your best friend, or treat yourself.

One of the reasons I love recommending Thistle Farms beautiful products you is that all the sales help fund their mission of creating a safe place for women survivors to heal from prostitution and exploitation. Through their amazing program, women receive housing, trauma therapy, and meaningful employment.

I can't even tell you how significantly lives are changed through this program, y'all. I've seen it. It's remarkable and so fun that we can be a small part of it. Show a little love with handmade gifts from [thistlefarms.org](http://thistlefarms.org). And when you use the code "thatsoundsfun" you'll get 15% off your purchase. You guys, 15% off gets you some things. Again, that's [thistlefarms.org](http://thistlefarms.org) and the code is thatsoundsfun for 15% off.

And now back to finish up our conversation with Mallory.

[00:47:24] <music>

**Annie:** I don't know if we've ever talked about this, but my brain kind of broke in 2018.

**Mallory:** Is that when you got two phones?

**Annie:** No, that's only been about a year and a half.

**Mallory:** Okay.

**Annie:** But my doctor put me on bed rest for two weeks, and just was like, "I'm either putting you in the hospital or you have to get in bed for two weeks" because my brain just totally malfunctioned. And that's when I had this like, "Oh, it's not just about taking a day off on the weekend. It's that I have to be a person outside of my job."

And so as you're talking about the glass and rubber balls, I'm like, "Man, what I need to do is in my working life, in my working hours, I need to better define glass and rubber."

**Mallory:** Yes. And it's really hard too for you and I because you are... I know just because I know you off the mic. You are this person. You are yourself in your job. Like you

show up exactly like you do to me if I saw you at my house that you do here. So it's really hard I think to differentiate when at your job you're like, "Well, I'm just being myself." Like you know me. I wanted to show the things I would cook anyway and the things that I bought at Target.

**Annie:** Your nail color anyway.

**Mallory:** Exactly.

**Annie:** Ah, your nails! You have my favorite nails on the internet.

**Mallory:** You're so sweet.

**Annie:** I love them so much.

**Mallory:** This cost me a mint, the color I have on right now. The color of the sweatshirt I'm going to bring Annie after this.

**Annie:** Yes!

**Mallory:** But yeah, that's a really good-

**Annie:** So, if our friends are listening are like okay, in parenting, you need to determine some glass and some rubber?

**Mallory:** It's a very important one. It goes very fast.

**Annie:** And because like do they have to always tie their shoes? Like stop?

**Mallory:** Oh, don't even come to my house. They are a wreck.

**Annie:** Right. And so I'm like, if that is a glass ball to you, fine. But could it be a rubber ball if it doesn't matter as much?

**Mallory:** Absolutely. Absolutely.

**Annie:** Yeah. I just wonder if. Because one of the things I do on my day of rest is I do a lot of processing of what went on that week. And I'm like, "Man, I think on Saturday I'm going to really process in every area of my life. Am I paying attention to which are actually glass balls? Because sometimes I act like everything's a glass ball.

**Mallory:** Exactly. That's a whole nother thing too. Or some people might act like everything's rubber ball and nothing matters. And like everything's always going to be there.

**Annie:** Right. Right.

**Mallory:** And then all of a sudden something's not-

**Annie:** It's not.

**Mallory:** ...and you realize it when it's too late. So I want to catch people with this chapter that all of these blessings that we've been given. I like you. I'm a very, very like faith-based person. I truly believe that these things are blessings and gifts that I was handed, and it's such an injustice not to treat them like blessings.

I'm not saying little Pollyanna life where you just look at your husband and you smile like when he does something wrong, or your kids, or you walk into a job that you hate, and you go, "Oh, I love being at this job."

**Annie:** Right.

**Mallory:** That is certainly not what I'm saying. I'm saying to look at the things that you've got, especially the things that you want and you pant for and you really tried to get and notice the good things in them. And a lot of it is about a perspective shift.

One of the chapters after that is this whole thing about perspective. And I think perspective is something that's slung around a lot but it's really important. My perspective is so much different now post what happened to me eight years ago than it was before.

And my grandma used to say, like, "You have two choices when you wake up in the morning. You can say, "Good morning, Lord," or you can say, "Good, Lord, it's morning."

**Annie:** That's so good.

**Mallory:** She would tell all these coal miners, they had this little country store, and she'd be flipping these biscuits and she would tell them, they come in with a scowl on their face, they walk in and it's 4:30 in the morning, they had this drudgery of a job ahead of them, and she'd say, "You got two choices. Which one's it going to be?" And we all worked in this country store like stocking cigarettes and alcohol at like six, which was definitely illegal.

**Annie:** My gosh!

**Mallory:** We're past those types of limitations.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Mallory:** It was fun. But I think perspective is huge. If you can focus on the good things versus the bad things, it can really make for a more joyful life. And that's what we all want.

**Annie:** Yes. That's it. Living fully is finding the joy in the life that you already have. You're not telling us to get a brand new life; you're telling us to look at the life you already have.

**Mallory:** Exactly. And in fact, I'm not even saying that it's that hard. I did have parts of this book that you'll read where it was really hard. Going to treatment for five and a half months after you just walked off Miss America stage, that's hard.

**Annie:** Right.

**Mallory:** That was hard. Almost dying, that was hard. But you know, there are parts of living fully that are very easy to shift alongside living your everyday life. And those things are the chapter. I wrote a chapter on fears. The last chapter that I wrote, and I had one chapter left to right and I kept scratching the subject, scratch, scratch, scratch. I just couldn't find it. So I polled my audience. Like you have a big Instagram audience like I do, and I was like, "What is the thing that you feel holds you back from living fully?"

And one in every three answers was fear. "I'm afraid of this." Fear. Fear. Fear. And I was like, "I gotta write a chapter on this because fear is big for me, too." And that's an easy one to change if you can really wrangle fear. And it's one that can really, really keep you from living fully if you're making every decision based on "Oh, I'm afraid of this" or if you're not taking a risk or doing something that you really are being called to do.

Because of a legitimate fear, maybe. Maybe you want to start a podcast and you're like, "Well, I'm afraid that I won't have the time that I need because I need to work my job to support my family." That's a legitimate fear. So you need to really assess that fear and then hopefully move past it. But a fear that is not legitimate that maybe is controlling you is, "What will my friends think because I've never done

anything like? Are they going to make fun of me when they see me post something about it on Instagram?"

And fear will cause you to choose a totally different life if you let it. And that is a very simple shift in living fully. So there's easy stuff. Hugely easy stuff. It's easy to shift your perspective. You just gotta become aware and do it. It's easy to quiet that voice of fear.

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

**Mallory:** It is.

**Annie:** So the book comes out this week. And what next? Are you going back to TV? Are you going to keep writing?

**Mallory:** Oh my gosh! I've had an opportunity on the table for about a year now...

**Annie:** Oh, wow.

**Mallory:** ...that would be huge on TV, but I don't know. I have to look at my glass balls and rubber balls and decide if it would be a good choice for my family.

**Annie:** Because you did *Amazing Race*.

**Mallory:** Three times.

**Annie:** That's right, you did three times. I forgot you went back. You're crazy.

**Mallory:** I know we were talking about *Amazing Race* before this and how the season that's airing right now they started filming then COVID happened. Then they stopped filming for a year and a half, then they brought them back.

**Annie:** And you said, "I don't know how to do that." But literally, you've left and come back twice. So I can tell you exactly how you do that.

**Mallory:** I just do it. But you know, my dad was my partner. He watched the show for like 10 years. He'd come to Mount Everest. He is like this amazing guy. There's a lot of lessons I learned from him too because he lives a big life. He lives fully. I've watched him do it for years and years.

He's decided now over 60 to join the 7 Summit Club, which is climb summitting the seven highest peaks on the seven continents. So he's done all of them but one.

**Annie:** What's he got left? Antarctica?

**Mallory:** Denali. No, he's done Everest like three times.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh!

**Mallory:** He's a lunatic.

**Annie:** Where's Denali?

**Mallory:** Denali... I think it's in Alaska.

**Annie:** I think you're right. I'm going to Google it.

**Mallory:** Google it so that I can know that too. So he has Denali. He actually already climbed Denali, and he made it to the base of the summit. Is it Alaska?

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Mallory:** So he had like seven or eight people on his climb team, they're all younger than him, they always are, and like three or four fell off, and they're at the base of the summit. He's a slower climber, obviously, than a 20-year-old.

**Annie:** Three or four literally fell off the mountain or just quit?

**Mallory:** Fell off like it can be an stream of like, "I'm about to die," or like, "I'm sick," or like, "I cannot."

**Annie:** Listen, I'm already saying I cannot, so your dad wins on that. Yeah, you set it at the bottom? I did, too.

**Mallory:** So he got to the base of the summit and he... he's a really safe climber in that there are instances in mountain climbing where if you take 10 more steps, you very, very well could die. It is, oftentimes, a life or death decision. And he's a smart climber. He knows he's got a lot of family at home there. He doesn't make decisions that are life or death like a lot of climbers do.

And so at the base of Denali, he's sitting on his team with a couple 20-year-olds, and maybe a 30-year-old or whatever, they climbed a lot faster. And he said, "I don't want to slow you guys down, push for the summit, I'll turn around. I'll do it again next year." These windows to climb these mountains are very short. You get a perfect weather, perfect window. So he'll have to do it again. Hopefully, he can. My mom's like, "I can't take it anymore. This is it. It is over."

**Annie:** "Finish it." Yeah, that's right.

**Mallory:** But that is his joy.

**Annie:** That's amazing.

**Mallory:** He always says, like, "Don't let the world define what joy is for you. If somebody told me all the horror stories of being on the side of the mountain, and it's freezing cold, you have to have oxygen to live. You are bundled up against this other climber with like hot water bottles that you've boiled like between you just to not die.

He's like, "I would never step foot on a mountain. But I felt compelled to do that," he says. So he did it and he brings him so much joy. And he loves it. So he does not let the world define what brings happiness to him. And he's always taught us not to do that. Because if you don't define what makes you happy, the world will certainly define what makes you happy.

**Annie:** Ah, that's it. If you don't decide, someone else will. Someone's deciding for you what makes you happy.

**Mallory:** It just happens upon you.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Mallory:** And you'll never be living fully if you didn't choose that. That's really important.

**Annie:** That's really important. We talk a lot about people not judging your fun around here. That you get to decide your fun. That is really smart because you're hearing a message right now about what is fun and what is joy in your life. We just don't know if you've picked it or if someone else picked it.

**Mallory:** Exactly.



**Annie:** Wow. Okay. The book's out this week. Mallory, that went by so fast. That went by so fast. I'm like, "We are just getting started." Is there anything we didn't talk about that you want to talk about?"

**Mallory:** Actually, I'll mention one thing.

**Annie:** Okay, good.

**Mallory:** I think it's really important. And I could be facing it becoming a more public person. Who knows? So I think it's very important to obviously choose living fully over comfortable and easy. But I also think it's really important not to fear adversity, and not to be afraid of these hard things that maybe you notice as you're reading this book, not being afraid to walk through those things.

If I hadn't experienced what I did eight years ago, a, I probably wouldn't be here. But b, I know living fully so much more than I did when I lived just a happy life. I don't want people to think that the absence of bad in their life is a qualifier for good.

**Annie:** That's never going to happen. Jesus promised that. Life is going to be hard.

**Mallory:** Life is going to be hard.

**Annie:** So I think that our generation, you know, you and I are kind of close to the same age, we tend to value easy and comfortable. Like, wow, open door number two, door number one's familiar. And I want to encourage people not to be afraid of walking through hard things, maybe they're extremely hard. Or maybe they're not that hard once you start walking through them. Don't make your decisions based on just wanting this comfortable and easy life because living fully is a whole nother layer of living that I just want everyone to experience.

**Annie:** I do, too. I can't wait for our friends to get this book this week. It will launch you into something. It may launch you two feet off the ground or may launch you into space. Either way, it's the right thing for you as you're reading it.

**Mallory:** Exactly.

**Annie:** Oh, it's beautiful. Okay, you know, the last question we always ask, Mal. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

**Mallory:** I'm drinking my Razz-Cranberry-

**Annie:** Yeah, girl.

**Mallory:** ...that Annie gave me before.

**Annie:** We believe in La Croix around here.

**Mallory:** I love so many things right now. But you know what I really do love is cooking. Cooking is very fun for me. And it's something that falls by the wayside when I get busy. And so this week we're in the middle of all of this press and books getting ready to come out and I have started to cook lunch in the middle of the day for the people at my house.

My sister-in-law works for me, this other girl named Madison that I just love and Kyle. And I will sit and I will make these gourmet sandwiches.

**Annie:** Oh my gosh, what a great thing!

**Mallory:** Because it's really fun to me.

**Annie:** Yes, it's a 20-minute break, and you're making a really bougie lunch for everybody.

**Mallory:** And I love it. And that's fun.

**Annie:** That's great.

**Mallory:** That's fun. Also doing press around a book that took me three dang years to write is really fun because I'm like, "Lord, finally, here we are. We are here." So it's been really fun speaking my message. I did not love writing. The writing process almost killed me.

**Annie:** You had to work hard. I know.

**Mallory:** And this has been fun.

**Annie:** Yeah, this is it. I mean, before you even know how this book is going to do or who's going to read it or the response from everybody, you already have the spoils of your hard work because you're on the other side of what a lot of people say they're going to do and they don't do:

**Mallory:** True.

**Annie:** They're going to write a book, They're going to write a book. And you actually did it.

**Mallory:** It's true. Thank you. Thank you.

**Annie:** And it is very good.

**Mallory:** Annie, that means a lot coming from you.

**Annie:** Our friends listening know that I don't endorse books I don't read and I don't bring people on here that I don't think my friends on the other side really will love.

**Mallory:** Thank you.

**Annie:** And so I cannot wait for people to read the book. Oh, I just love you. I'm so proud of you. I'm going to tell you the same thing I tell all of our friends. They're hearing this on Thursday, the book came out Tuesday, but we're recording it a week before. The night before on that Monday night before the book comes out on Tuesday, you got to celebrate because the work is done. The work's done. We cannot control-

**Mallory:** You told me that truthfully one time.

**Annie:** Yes. Christine Caine says, "God puts books in hands. You can't control anything." So Monday night I want you to celebrate because you did it. You did it.

**Mallory:** Okay, I will.

**Annie:** And then the book goes from being yours to being ours. By the time everybody hears this, it's our book, it's not just your book anymore. And so you need to celebrate that transition.

**Mallory:** That's such a beautiful reminder. Thank you.

**Annie:** Hope you will.

**Mallory:** I will. I will.

**Annie:** Okay, good. All right. Love you. Thanks for doing this. Come back anytime.

**Mallory:** Oh, I will.

**Annie:** Okay, I want you to.

**Mallory:** Especially to get those brownies.

**Annie:** Yeah, girl, listen, Lilly is not going anywhere. So I hope so.

[01:01:38] <music>

**Outro:** Oh, you guys, don't you love her? I know. She's wonderful. And her book is wonderful too. Be sure to grab a copy of *Living Fully* out this week. Follow Mallory on social media if you don't already, tell her thanks so much for being on the show, and get ready for those sweatshirt drops. Man, she designed some super cute stuff.

And don't forget, there's still time to jump into our group that's going through *100 Days to Brave* and *100 Days to Brave for Kids*, which just released this week as well. Be sure to grab your copy and one for your kids. Because here's the thing. We can all use a little more courage as we walk through the challenges of our everyday lives.

*A 100 Days to Brave* helps you find that bravery and use it to make a difference in your own life and in the lives of those around you. We would love for you to join us as we take this 100-day journey together. Just sign up at the link in the show notes and you'll get email reminders and other fun encouragement throughout the process.

And then at the end, when we've helped each other become braver every day, we'll all shoot off confetti poppers and celebrate together. I'm especially excited for my MiniBFF who will reach that goal with us.

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

Today what sounds fun to me is continuing to celebrate our new Snack Show on the That Sounds Fun Network. Y'all, we have snackcoterie in the office today, a charcuterie board just made of snacks. It's the best.

Y'all have a great weekend. We'll see you back here on Monday with a dear friend of mine that I cannot wait for y'all to get to know, a very important Valentine's Day conversation for all of us with one of my favorite therapists, Jim Cress. We'll see you guys then. Y'all have a great weekend.