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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 have got a great show in store.

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 [BetteHelp](#). Life can get overwhelming, right? And when we don't deal with the things that feel overwhelming, it can cause burnout. Burnout can express itself like a lack of motivation, feeling helpless or trapped and major fatigue.

One of the ways we can guard against burnout is with therapy. I'm so so grateful for the ways my counselor has helped me process overwhelming seasons over the years. It's honestly something I want everyone to get to experience.

BetteHelp 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 in under 48 hours. That Sounds Fun friend get 10% off your first month at betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun. That's betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun.

Intro: Today on the show y'all I'm so excited I get to chat with Tim Schurrer. Tim is a leader that I admire so much. Watching him help build the teams he's been a part of... I mean, he spent almost a decade of his career launching StoryBrand and Business Made Simple as COO, alongside New York Times bestseller Donald Miller.

Before that, Tim worked at TOMS as well as Apple. He is the host of the Build a Winning Team Podcast, where he offers listeners actionable advice as he interviews some of the top leaders in business. It's an awesome show, you guys.

He's such a brilliant leader, a kind friend, and an amazing author now to his new book. *The Secret Society of Success: Stop Chasing the Spotlight and Learn to Enjoy Your Work (and Life) Again* releases this week. So here is my conversation with my buddy Tim Schurrer.

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Annie: Tim, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

Tim: I'm so glad to be here.

Annie: It's hard to stop talking to start talking. But we've had 30 minutes to do this and now we're recording. Thank you for doing this.

Tim: Oh man, my pleasure. Truly been looking forward to this since you and I first started talking.

Annie: Thanks, friend. When people ask who are the guests on the show, the answers are my real-life friends or people I want to be friends with. You are my real-life friend. And the fun thing about real-life friends is as soon as I see someone say, "I'm working on a book," I send a little text, I go, "Give me a date. When do you want to be on?" Let's talk about business.

Tim: Yeah.

Annie: We have so many friends listening who when I talk any little bit about business, they want us to go in because they are entrepreneurs, they are working somewhere where they can go up in the company. There's all sorts of things. In *The Secret Society of Success* you talk about this. Will you give a little bit about your story and how you ended up at StoryBrand and where you are now?

Tim: Yes. So I'll start with this Story because it just really frames up how I've gotten to this point and started to think about some of the things that I have. So I'm sure a lot of people are familiar with the story of Apollo 11,

Annie: Yes.

Tim: ...the man's first trip to the moon. You have Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind. But what a lot of people don't know is there's actually a third astronaut on that mission. And his name was Michael Collins.

So Michael Collins, the guy Uber's Neil invites to the moon, drops them off so that they can do all the various tasks that they have to do on the moon surface while he stays back in the command module, orbits in something like 26 times until these guys are ready to be picked up.

Annie: He's just waiting?

Tim: He's waiting.

Annie: He's just driving around the neighborhood waiting on them?

Tim: Waiting for the text, yeah.

Annie: I had no idea he was circling the man.

Tim: And they called him at one point the loneliest man on the planet because when he went to the dark side of the moon, he loses all connectivity back to Earth.

Annie: Wow.

Tim: So he waits for the text and then picks them up and they all get back to Earth. And what would make this a pretty miserable story is if you were to get back, sit down with the President and say something like, "Well, it sure would have been nice to actually walk on the moon." Acting like a big dumb, tried to take the spotlight from the mission. But what's beautiful is he doesn't do that. He gets back and talks about how content he was to have had one of those three seats.

Annie: Wow.

Tim: So Annie, you knew me back then but there was a period in my life when I wanted to be the next John Mayer. I viewed success as money, fame, power, a platform. But what I'm starting to learn and as I've gone from that, that pursuit of music-

Annie: And you really did. Touring musician, I mean, you really did the staff. Young Life camps.

Tim: And then I transitioned into roles behind the scenes. I worked as a manager for Steve Moakler, worked with our friend Al Andrews. But then for the last decade have worked with Donald Miller and ran his company StoryBrand.

So what's been interesting for me is that as I've gone further and further away from the spotlight, from the thing that I felt like I was supposed to chase, that's when I started feeling the fulfillment that I think I was actually looking for the entire time.

Annie: Wow.

Tim: And for so many of us, we feel this cultural pressure that success only looks like these things. And there's a part of me when I was quiet and honest with myself that I was just thinking, I just don't know if that's it. So I just have to believe that there are more people out there that are wondering the same things for themselves but nobody's saying it.

Annie: Right. I mean, you even write about in the book like every kid right now wants to be famous.

Tim: That's it.

Annie: And the only reason we know they do is they're willing to say it. Our peers aren't willing to say it. But it's what everybody at some level, no matter who you are, wants to feel that thing that they think they're missing.

Tim: I don't think it comes from a wrong place. I think we all just want to feel like we matter. There's a human part of it.

Annie: And we've been told right now that having enough followers online is what makes you matter.

Tim: I talk about trying to put language to this thing that we're up against, this dilemma. And I call this the spotlight mindset, this unhealthy desire for attention and recognition. It's the thing that makes us kind of raise our hand and just demand that people pay attention. But I don't think that we're living and operating in the mindset like that on our healthy days.

Annie: At all?

Tim: No. I just feel like when we are demanding attention, I don't think that's us at our best. So there's a few symptoms of the spotlight mindset. I think it's important to even call these out. Because if we can learn to identify the spotlight mindset in our lives, we actually then can start to see that there's another path. But I just think that a lot of people don't even realize that they're in it.

Annie: I want you to tell us those things. But when we were eating lunch, you said we are all in this. Like everyone. So you're meaning our moms and dads who are stay-at-home feel this, our dentists feel this, our musicians feel this? Like everybody feels the spotlight thing even if you're not building a business or trying to be an influencer?

Tim: So how many times have you thrown a party for a friend-

Annie: Very rarely. I'm not that nice.

Tim: Somebody throws a party for a friend. It's not you. What they really want is for people to tell them how incredible the party was, how amazing they are. They want all of the work to be seen and recognized and talked about. But here's the reality, we will never be recognized for all that we do. There are so many moments, especially in parenting, I know for sure, but also in our work, that people just actually feel invisible.

Annie: Wow.

Tim: And what do we do about that? Like, how do we learn to live in that tension when...? I don't think we necessarily want to just continue leaning into that "I need attention." I don't think that's conscious for most of us. But I think that we all realize and believe that there's a better path. A meaningful life doesn't have to look like us getting into the spotlight. Actually, success can be defined different from money, fame, and power. But I just think a lot of us just don't know what else to do. This just feels like the thing we are supposed to chase. And this is just how we show up and how we operate conscious or not.

Annie: When you're building a team, when you're building a company, when you're building a family maybe, when you're building a church, I mean, for pastors, Tim, every pastor needs to read this book because how do we build this where there is a face? Like at Downs Books, I am the face. My cousin who's a Chick-fil-A operator jokes, he's like, "The problem for you is you're the operator and the chicken sandwich."

So for any of us who are building a thing where someone has to be the most upfront person, how do you not become the spotlight person?

Tim: It's a great question. And for most of us, doing our job with excellence makes us invisible. And here's what I mean. I was at a concert at the Ryman... I love the Ryman so much.

Annie: Oh, best venue. Best venue.

Tim: And in this particular show, the lead singer was playing guitar standing center stage. On the next song, they move back and are playing piano. And for just a minute, the person running this spotlight lost them.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Tim: And we all knew what was going on because this guy's doing figure eights on the stage with the lights.

Annie: Oh, gosh.

Tim: So the lead singer jokingly calls him out, "Gotta stay with me, bro. This show goes on." But I couldn't help but think about the guy running the spotlight. Because if he had been doing his job with excellence to perfection, he becomes invisible. So all of these other roles too that make the show possible is just a bunch of people doing

their part, showing up playing their role, and hopefully doing it with excellence but we become invisible.

So I think it's important to say we need the person on the center of the stage to make the whole thing work. The problem is not our position. It's far more to do with how we show up and how we view ourselves. And if there's a common denominator, a theme, what it looks like to live in the way of the secret society of success is really just this posture of service, helping others win. Because if we can show up with that mindset, everything changes.

I heard Andy Stanley speak at an event in Atlanta. This particular event was around finding our purpose. We live in this consumerism, marketing culture. So as we're considering buying products or services, we're often just asking, what's in it for me? How is whatever it is that I am being marketed going to help make my life better? And then we choose whether or not to buy it. But these kinds of questions, the way that our mindset is, most of the time is very selfish.

And Andy says, if we want to find our purpose, live meaningful lives, the what's in it for me, the why am I here, these are the wrong questions. He says the question we need to ask is this. "Who am I here for?" And what I love about that question is it requires us to bring our thing, whether we're the CEO standing center stage, or whether we are the person running the spotlight in the supporting band, whatever it is, that question, "Who am I here for?" we do and bring our thing, but we approach everything... our mindset is one of helping somebody else when.

Annie: Will you talk about this quote? You brought a gift. You always. As soon as I saw you walk in, I was like, "He has a gift. He always does." You're just very thoughtful. This is quote, and it is "there is no limit to what a man can do, or a woman, or where he or she can go if he doesn't mind who gets the credit."

Tim: The spotlight mindset wants us to get the credit. Always. And it's all this tells us... it whispers in our ear, "You deserve the credit." But I just don't know that's us on our healthiest days. I think on our healthiest days, we don't mind who gets the credit. We don't need to be recognized. We don't need that validation.

Annie: In the book you talk about the difference, though, between deflecting and sharing credit. Because I think a thing, maybe men do this too, but a thing I see particularly women in leadership do often is go, No, no, no, no, dah, dah, dah. Like they deflect versus sharing credit. Where you go like, "Well, yeah, had I not had the idea, we wouldn't have had anything to execute. But I couldn't have executed it without the people." But it feels like there's the thing in us, especially faith people that says, "Don't take any credit."

Tim: There is definitely a link for a lot of people. It's almost their value, how they think about themselves is wrapped up in whether or not people notice them. So there is almost this insecurity. Like you need to notice me to tell me that I matter. So that is probably true in all of us to some degree.

Annie: It is in me.

Tim: This is evolution that I do think that we have to go on. And it's the struggle that I feel like we're always going to be in. I don't think one day you all of a sudden overcome it. In the same way that you never show up and like, "Guys, I'm like Jesus now." It's like no, no, we have to learn to live in the tension between getting credit, wanting credit. This is just how we have to operate. This is how we have to live.

So I do think that to get a little bit of credit and to realize what you had done and contributed is fine. But I also think that it's really more the thoughts behind all of that, the intentions, the motivation - why we need the thing that is as telling us anything.

One of my favorite stories is Tim Cook who's the CEO of Apple, but before that he was COO under Steve Jobs. When Steve Jobs passes away, the person who had been groomed to take over the business is Tim Cook. So we're at the release of the Apple Watch, which was a huge moment for Apple-

Annie: We? You were there?

Tim: Well, I'm taking us into the moment-

Annie: Thank you.

Tim: ...where we are all now.

Annie: I was like, "Are you burying the lede? You're like sitting in the room when they released the Apple Watch?" Okay, we're there. Come with us.

Tim: Tim Cook was releasing the Apple Watch at a big announcement.

Annie: I was like, "Tim, what are you telling me?"

Tim: I wish.

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Tim: I would not have buried that lede.

Annie: No, thank you. I hope not.

Tim: Or would I?

Annie: Well, let's see how the story pans out. I don't know what's gonna happen.

Tim: So at the release of the Apple Watch is a big, big moment for not only Tim but the company as a whole, because this is the first new product in a new category since Steve had passed. This needs to go well. So after the big announcement, Tim is being interviewed on national television, David Muir asked him, "Is this the moment for you, the moment of your career at Apple?" So just think, if you're Tim Cook in that moment, how do you respond?

Annie: Right.

Tim: Here you'd been for the past several decades under the radar. People have no idea what you contributed. You'd probably want to use it as an opportunity to let people know how much you've done.

Annie: Kind of like, "I mean, I designed the iPhone, but no one knew. But now the watch is the second iteration of what I designed."

Tim: So that's what the spotlight mindset is to take the credit. But Tim doesn't take the bait. "Is this the moment for you, the moment of your career at Apple? He says, "It's a moment for Apple. I don't really think about myself that much."

Annie: Wow.

Tim: And those two sentences tell me everything that I need to know about how he shows up, the shadow that he casts as a leader. The example he is setting for his organization is one that is saying in a moment like this when everything that you want is to take the credit, he shows a very different path, which I think responds with what I would call humble confidence.

It's confidence in the value, the contribution that he brings. He's confident that he doesn't need to remind us about it. But there's also a humility there, which is for him to try to take the credit for an Apple Watch, which had taken hundreds if not thousands of employees would have been ridiculous. He doesn't take the bait.

So I think for so many of us, back to your original question, what do we do about this? I think if we're looking at Tim Cook as a model, it is to know the value that

we bring, find our contentment with that alone, and don't base that off of what you're hearing back from everybody else. Find it yourself and step into your life and live that way. Because I think when you are confident in yourself and your contribution and your value, then you can use moments like that to shine the spotlight on other people because you don't need it.

But if you don't feel confident, you don't feel valuable, you don't have that, then you're going to take every single opportunity that you possibly can. You're going to take every bit of credit ever and you will not be thinking of others. But that is an evolved way of thinking. I think the reality is it's almost baby steps to get to that. And Tim Cook is responding in an expert level way. Like his default subconscious response is one of humble confidence. I just think it takes a lot of us a lot of reps to get to that point.

Annie: I was about to say that's decade's worth of running a business.

Tim: Yeah.

Annie: So Tim, then my next thought is, how do we instill that value into everyone who works for us? Church pastors who have a big staff or... I mean, I have staff that I'm like, "The thing I want them to feel is how much I value them. Like how many lunches can I buy? How many bonuses can I...? What does it look like?"

I literally was thinking over the weekend, I feel like we buy lunch a lot, which is great. But I'm saying that to say is there is that even telling them I value them? How do we know? And how do we make our people who work with us feel valued?

Tim: A friend of mine is a guy named David Novak. He's the co-founder and former chairman and CEO of Yum! Brands, which is the parent corporation for KFC, Taco Bell, and Pizza Hut.

Annie: My Mount Rushmore of sorts. So I appreciate that you are gonna bring him up. If Taco Bell is in the chat, me too. I'm interested.

Tim: So David grows the business in his tenure as CEO from \$4 billion to \$32 billion.

Annie: Jeez.

Tim: Their market cap goes up eight times. It's incredible.

Annie: That's unbelievable. He must have been maximizer big time on Strengthsfinder.

Tim: So I think for a lot of people, they look at that and they're like, "How in the world did they do that?" And how they did it was David and the people at Yum! created a culture of recognition because they wanted every single person to feel valued and for every single person to feel like they matter.

Because going back to even the concert, right, this whole idea of if we're doing our job well if we become invisible, this creates problems. Because if people don't understand all that we do, they're not going to recognize us for having done that work and over time we don't feel valued. The reality is we all need a little recognition to feel valued.

Annie: Yeah. Because if the spotlight guy does it perfectly for 30 concerts, and his boss never says anything, that's problematic. If the only time the spotlight guy gets noticed when he misses your guy, it's not great.

Tim: So I think too recognition, though, needs to go both ways. It's not just for leaders giving recognition to their direct reports. I think that for us to actually make an impact in our businesses or our families or our friend groups, what would it look like if we recognize one another more often for how we show up?

Annie: Wow. Even employee to boss?

Tim: Yes.

Annie: So even people who are listening that are teachers to the principal, not waiting on the principal-

Tim: Exactly.

Annie: Interesting, Tim.

Tim: And I think that if we are waiting until this leader gives us recognition, I just feel like we're setting both people up to fail. You're setting you up to fail because you're expecting something you're likely not going to get. You're setting them up to fail because the reality is they're probably just not even thinking about it. And these aren't bad people. It's busy.

Annie: Right.

Tim: Dan Heath wrote a book called *The Power of Moments*, and he talks about in the book this study where they interviewed leaders and said, "Do you regularly recognize your direct reports for the work that they do?" 80% of those people said yes. They then-

Annie: Asked their employees.

Tim: ...asked their direct employees. Only 20% of them said yes.

Annie: Oh, my COO Ashley says to me all the time, the person at the top thinks things are going better than anybody else in the ecosystem.

Tim: So he calls that the recognition gap. So I think that for us, how do we make people feel valued? I think it starts by creating cultures of recognition. We have to just call out the work that we see being done that otherwise may have gone unnoticed or unrecognized. And I just don't think that you can do it too often.

Annie: And do you believe in scheduling it and kind of like being... everything I write down on my calendar, I do. So after I finished your book, I made a note to have my Lilly and my Chief Annie Officer put everyone's work anniversaries on my calendar. I mean, is it supposed to be spontaneous or can it be planned?

Tim: Oh, I love me some calendar.

Annie: Okay. Okay. One of my favorite things is celebrating people's birthdays, anniversaries. I have all that on my calendar.

[00:22:58] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our incredible partners, [Rothy's](#). We're all about fun around here. You know this. Well, it's definitely fun when you get a compliment on an outfit you worked hard to put together. Just be forewarned. When you wear Rothy's, people are gonna say to you, "Cute shoes. Where did you get them?"

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and soccer games. And yes, I walk all over creation. And my feet are always comfortable. I've washed it multiple times in the washing machine you guys and they come out looking and smelling like new.

Your new favorite shoes are waiting. Discover the versatile styles you can wear absolutely anywhere and get \$20 off your first purchase at Rothys.com/soundsfun. That's Rothys.com/soundsfun for \$20 off your first order.

Sponsor: And one of the things that continually amazes me about our guests, Tim included, is how generously they invest in the lives of others and how they're building their legacy. Our friends are the actual best, am I right? They inspire me to be thoughtful about how I steward my legacy too. It's why partnering with [Epic Will](https://EpicWill.com) matters so much to me.

Epic Will is the easiest and most affordable way I know of to create an estate plan. The experts at Epic Will have developed an efficient and user-friendly platform that helps you think through things like who you want to be your financial power of attorney and who you would trust to take care of your children. In a few simple steps, it also helps you designate who your belongings go to and create your advance directive so your loved ones aren't left making healthcare decisions on your behalf without knowing your wishes.

Basically Epicwill.com empowers and guides you or you and your spouse through each step of making these important decisions. And I love this. But the team at Epic Will is dedicated to caring for single moms, and orphans. In fact, they provide single moms with kids under the age of 18 with access to a free will and they are donating 10% of their proceeds to organizations helping orphans find a home. That's the mission you're helping support when you use Epic Will to create your will.

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And now back to our conversation with Tim.

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Annie: What did y'all do at StoryBrand for people's one year, two year? Do you do it every year? Do you do one in five and 10? Or how did y'all celebrate?

Tim: We try to make a big deal of every single one. And even big deal could be simply a note in Slack to everybody say, "This is their one year anniversary, whatever." So on the five year anniversary, Don would buy everybody a nice watch.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Tim: He wrote me the sweetest note-

Annie: You put the whole thing in the book.

Tim: I want to read it.

Annie: Okay, read it. It's so nice.

Tim: I gotta find it here.

Annie: I wonder if I can find it first. Oh, I didn't know that. Oh, wait, hold on.

Tim: Come on.

Annie: Oh, 76.

Tim: Gosh. Okay-

Annie: I'll give you recognition. You wrote this book. I would never know what page I was on if you hadn't written it.

Tim: So Don gives me this note for my five year working anniversary. It's just kind to even acknowledge, but to then write something like this totally took everything to next level.

"What you have accomplished in the last five years has been stunning. You have built a company but more than a company, you have built a community. At StoryBrand, people love each other because of the tone you have set and the person that you are. It's a very hard thing to build a company. Only a small percentage of those who try succeed. But you didn't just make it, you built a company that thrives. It is growing and we are all growing with it. You make things better when you walk in the room. We are who we are, a loving, competent community because of you. I got you a gift to remind you of this milestone. But it's not really for you, it's for your son. If in the distant future he ever has a challenge, you can give it to him and remind him that it is in him to do a hard thing well. Love, Don."

Annie: That's beautiful.

Tim: I've thought so often the moment when I'm gonna give Judson that watch. But I just don't think that we can recognize people enough. I would rather err on the side of too much recognition. I'll be the guy who says, "Tim, we're celebrating people a little bit too much," and that's often been kind of my Mo. Versus being somebody who would in any way make people feel like they were invisible, that we didn't notice and recognize them. And it can just be so simple.

So going back to that idea of, I think, recognition goes both ways. So think of a business leader who may have revenue that's not what they want it to be. And maybe it's been down for a long time. Imagine what would happen if an employee just pulled them aside and said, "Hey, I know our revenue has been down. I can only imagine the sleepless nights that you've been having. But I also know I get a paycheck every two weeks. So I just want you to know I see you, I'm in this with you, and I'm gonna do whatever I can to help us get back on track." I mean, what does that take? 15 seconds?

Annie: Right. But if we can just help people feel seen... I mean, imagine. And I just love this quote. There's a quote from Oprah. She says this: "We all want to be seen. We all want to know that we matter. And the most you can ever do for somebody is to show up and allow them to know that they have been seen and heard by you."

So I just want to be somebody... And also I'd say what it looks like to live in the way the secret society is to be somebody who makes it a point to recognize others. What if that is success?

Annie: Can I tell you a weird soundtrack I have about this in my head?

Tim: Yeah.

Annie: Have you read *Soundtracks* by Jon Acuff?

Tim: Oh, love that book.

Annie: I mean, we use that language all the time now here. We're like, "Here's the soundtrack." I have a soundtrack in my mind that if I'm as appreciative verbally as I feel that my staff is going to think I'm trying to be Miss Congeniality, that it's not going to be believable. That if I express and do things to the level that I feel appreciative, they're gonna be like, "Annie, shut up. We get it." You know? Is that a weird soundtrack?

Tim: If we think about soundtracks, most people don't have positive soundtrack spinning in their heads.

Annie: Yeah.

Tim: So I am somebody who is just going to be the person who's going to put positivity in people's heads always because they're probably not getting much of it. So sure, you may risk showing up and then almost rolling their eyes like, goodness.

Annie: That's my fear is that they're gonna be like, "She's so dumb."

Tim: It's just so kind. I think this is part of it. It's not great job. It's when you did this, this meant this to me.

Annie: Okay.

Tim: So I think that if recognition is vanilla, it doesn't mean as much. When it's thoughtful, when it's personal... That's why I love handwritten notes so much, because it's somebody taking time out of their day to write a note. And what I always like to do is say true things about them to them. It is calling out a truth about them. I want to be somebody who is feeding them soundtracks.

Actually on my phone, I have a whole thing that I just call soundtracks. And I copy and paste text messages that people say... When people say kind things to me about me, I copy and paste it because there's days when I just am not in a good headspace. But isn't it great to just be reminded of that truth? Because it is just harder to stay in that good headspace. So I just want to be somebody and-

Annie: It's just a risk we take, right?

Tim: Take the risk. Take the risk.

Annie: I think that's one of the hard parts about being the leader of the companies I lead here. So I lead Downs Books. I'm the leader by myself. I co-own the network, the That Sounds Fun Network. So that's a different complication. That one of my companies, I get to spearhead culture and one company I have to share spearheading culture. And it's two different people, who lead a little bit differently.

But I think there's just the thing about being the person who is in that role is you're like, Well, if I look stupid, I look stupid. But I'm the one who has to jump either way. Like I have to jump either way.

Tim: In that book, John talks about replacing broken soundtracks with better ones, different ones. I would call yours broken soundtrack.

Annie: You think? You're like, "Hey Annie..."

Tim: So what if the soundtrack is, when I say kind things to people, it matters to them?

Annie: Yeah. Yeah. That is a better one. That feels better.

Tim: I mean, you can customize that to be whatever. I just think it's so much of our lives goes unnoticed. And I try to be so intentional, even just to my wife.

Annie: You have a lovely wife. Here's a soundtrack for you. Katie is a gem.

Tim: She's the best.

Annie: She's the best.

Tim: I'm also trying to teach my kids what this looks like. So often when we sit down for dinner, I say out loud, "Hey, thank you for making us this yummy food." And then I want Judson and in our two-year-old Elle to say, "Thank you for making us this yummy food." Because we need to acknowledge one another.

So many of us are showing up in each other's lives, and so much of it just doesn't go noticed. I just think if you even just send text messages to your friends... we just don't do this enough.

Annie: I know.

Tim: We're on the soapbox about it-

Annie: I love it.

Tim: Just people don't... they just feel lost. And I just want to continue to call out and encourage people to call out the truth about one another that we see. Because we can't get it enough.

Annie: *The Secret Society of Success* is what you're saying is and what you say in the book is it's not about being recognized, it's about doing the recognizing. That's success if you've taken time to recognize someone. I mean, Jeff Henderson, who you know and love, and I know and love from Atlanta, I don't know a person who sends more handwritten notes than Jeff Henderson. Oh, he's just thoughtful.

So in your secret society of success that you're inviting us to, the men like Jeff Henderson, he's not doing the spotlight thing. He's sending notes in the mail constantly.

When I was on tour, our promoter Cordell we call them Uncle C, Uncle C every day at a certain time he would say, "Okay, now I need you to stop selling tickets to tonight's show and start planning to serve the people who already bought tickets.

Tim: So good.

Annie: Right? So it would switch my mind. Because I was like,-

Tim: Who am I here for?

Annie: ..."I'm in Sacramento, let's make sure my in Sacramento knows." And he was like, "I'll give you some of the morning to do that. And then we're serving the people who are already decided to come." And it was so good for my brain to go like, "Who can I serve that is..."

I mean, the same is true of this podcast. Like how do we serve the people who have already put this in their ears. I'm not trying to go find everybody on the internet to hear this. I want the people who are already our friends to be blessed by this, you know. It's different.

Tim: And I think if we are doing our jobs well we get out of the way. I really do not care if people finish hearing an episode like this and be like, "Tim Schurrer is incredible." I really don't care. What I hope people walk away thinking is, "Wow, I need to redefine success in my life. Because maybe I've been chasing a path that just hasn't felt right but I didn't really know what to do about it."

Annie: Yes.

Tim: And if I'm doing my job, well, I get out of the way. And I just want to believe that if you just continue to put good things into the soil, things will grow. And the things will grow in the way that it should grow. I don't have control over that. I want to be somebody who is focusing on the process, not a result. All we can do is show up with a headspace of how can what we say, how can what we've learned be communicated to people in a way that they too can learn from some of that? To not have to make the same mistakes, and then just get out of the way.

Annie: So how do we balance that though, of like in a business, there is still a bottom line? We still have to set goals. Because one of the things you write about beautifully I can't wait for people to read is your chapter on learning from failure. Well, we actually can only call something a failure if we have set an actual metric that we don't hit. So how do we do that? Like not loving the results and living for the results, but we have to acknowledge results? How do we balance that?

Tim: It's a fair argument and a question. Because if you think about a lot of what I feel like I'm trying to say is that we find contentment with our lives with the role that we play with, the amount of visibility we may have in our lives, and not obsess over these various scoreboards. But what I'm not saying is that to be in the secret society means to kill all of your ambition.

Annie: Don't burn down your scoreboards.

Tim: Yeah. So if you think about Michael Collins, for him to even have had one of the seats on that mission, he was incredibly talented. Best in class. He just didn't walk on the moon. So much of what you talk about, it's both AND. It's being content AND striving for excellence whatever seat we may find ourselves in, driving results. But it's both. It's such a hard question. I wish I had this beautiful answer for you.

Annie: No, you did great.

Tim: Because it is just learning to live in the tension. Because I think that there is a person who's running a small business that could say, "Tim, I've been serving people. I operate out of the mindset of the secret society. I'm all about helping others win and my business is about to shut down." So... I don't have a great answer for that.

I agree that there's a little bit of the, Okay. Cool. Cool, cool. But what about the hard dollars? I cannot control the result. And I think every single person situations would be so different. So for me to try to put a blanket statement "and here's exactly what you would do." If I was sitting with a particular person, I would probably be able to customize it for that person.

But I just would continue to say I just think that in the long run that the more we give to others, the more that we are focusing on the process, the things that we can control versus obsessing over the number of tickets sold for an event, I just would have to believe that in the end that will take care of itself.

Annie: Yes.

Tim: I want to believe that. I do believe that.

Annie: I want to believe that too. One of the things I hope I say out loud here, but a soundtrack in my head is we set goals to celebrate. And when we don't hit them, it's to ask questions, not to punish. It's to go, Oh, what didn't? Why? Why did that

metric not hit? Versus here's the line and either the ship is sailing or sinking? It's like no, no, we're either celebrating or we're asking questions.

Tim: And why did we have that goal in the first place?

Annie: Yes. Where did that goal come from?

Tim: Because I had a really good friend of mine, still have him.

Annie: After this I got rid of that friend.

Tim: And he saw all that we were doing at StoryBrand and he's looking at it like, "Holy smokes, I want that." He's like, "The revenue, the growing, the team, all that stuff." And I look at his life and I'm like, "Dude, you're living the dream right now. Don't screw this up."

So I think we also have to ask, why is it that we want the thing in the first place? Do we want more team members? Do we want a higher revenue for our company so that we can talk to people about it and feel successful? Is that the motivation? Because I think if it's that, then, no matter what that number is, it's never gonna be enough.

Annie: It's never going to be enough.

Tim: It's not.

Annie: That's right.

Tim: Don released a book in 2015 called *Scary Close*. And about a week and a half after the book comes out, y'all, you know this, but you find out a few of hit bestsellers list. So, Don, he's in the office, gets a call from the publisher. We knew this was the phone call that we'd find out. He gets off the call, raises his hands in the air, we hit number five in the New York Times, we high five, we hug. I mean, we celebrate the moment and then something really beautiful happens. We all went back to work.

Annie: Right. Right.

Tim: And I think some people would look at that and say, "Y'all just don't know how to celebrate. You're dysfunctional." And I actually look at it very differently. I look at it as this is an entire company, more concerned with showing up and doing the work whether or not the validation of a bestsellers list ever was the reality. We're going to show up the exact same way whether hit the list or not. So what's the motivation? I just want to do good work. And I'm fine being recognized and

validated for it. But if our motivation is the thing, the attention, the recognition that we get from people, that's the problem.

Annie: That's true with money, too. You think if you get this number in your company or in your bank account, all will be well, and that is... Then all of a sudden, that number is not enough. It's never enough, Tim.

Tim: And that's the restlessness that we feel. This constant striving for a thing that we will never get.

Annie: Yes. I mean, it is the hardest gift to receive as a business owner is the gift of realizing it will never be enough. It will never be enough. You'll never have enough followers. You'll never have enough book sales. You'll never have enough listeners. You'll never have enough money. Because when you get to your yesterday's enough, suddenly it isn't enough.

Tim: Ben Rector talked about this on your episode you guys did recently. It's just there is no plateau. There isn't.

Annie: That's right.

Tim: So the important thing-

Annie: If that's what you're judging by. Yes.

Tim: Totally. The important thing I think for all of us is to have a very clear definition of success. If I were to ask you, okay, fill in the blank, success is__?

Annie: Right now? Oh, I will. Success would be people buying your book. That's my success is everyone buying your book.

Tim: But also think about... So to anybody listening in their lives, even just larger macro, success is__ because for so many of us this definition of success, shapes our behaviors, shapes how we show up. If success for us is building this massive company, then we're going to do things that head us in that direction. And I've just never met a person that I've been truly inspired by that would fill in the blank with money.

Annie: Oh, my gosh, money.

Tim: That's not that interesting.

Annie: That's what we say a lot about money is not our favorite currency.

Tim: It's not the enemy but it's also not the stuff that really gives us that meaning and fulfillment, right?

Annie: Yes. Yes.

Tim: So I think for so many of us, we actually just have to answer that question: what is success? So I worked with Don for almost a decade. It's like three months short of a decade.

Annie: You're like, "I'm out of here before that, whenever that 10 year gift is. I don't want it." Three months. Tim!

Tim: So I now have been navigating this new career where I'm jumping in as an author and a speaker. And-

Annie: A coach.

Tim: Wow. You know, we'll see.

Annie: Okay.

Tim: But just asking myself, what is success for me in this season?

Annie: Wow.

Tim: So I know some things that I want to do. I want to speak, I want to write, and I want to host a podcast. So I've now done all of those things so far.

Annie: Today you did a speaking event.

Tim: That's right.

Annie: Your first one.

Tim: First one on The Secret Society is success.

Annie: Are you going to celebrate today?

Tim: I had a Pokeball for lunch.

Annie: There you go.

Tim: I came here to hang out with you. That's great celebration.

Annie: We'll do a confetti popper after this, I promise. So we'll pop confetti.

Tim: And I think in every situation we find ourselves in, we need to ask what is success? Because for a lot of people success is doing a bunch of speaking events.

Annie: Sure.

Tim: Jon Acuff loves him at some speaking events. And if I were to try to live off of Jon Acuff's scoreboard, I am going to fail in my family. For Jon, it's exactly what he needs to do. For me, my wife and I have talked about this. What is success? And we said one or two a month feels like what we can do right now. I have a four-year-old and a two-year-old. I want to be around at the ages that they are right now.

So we all have our own scoreboard. So I get to ask what is success on speaking? Okay, what is success on book sales? What is success on podcast? Whatever. And then to just get really clear about what the goal is and then also why it is that we want that.

Because I launched this podcast a few weeks ago called Build a Winning Team, and so much in me wants to set my own baseline based on what I have seen in StoryBrand numbers and friends that I know. And I've just allowed myself to ask a different question for myself, which is, what is success? Because if I'm measuring myself against those numbers, I am going to fail. Success for me in this season is showing up and putting out an episode once a week.

Annie: And they are really good. We're gonna link to the show notes. I love that show. And I want to have really great conversations. Why I want to do podcasts in the first place is I love to learn. It forces me to research, to read books, to do all that preparation. And I just really consume the content with the guest. And I am getting a masterclass in business education and life education from just sitting down with people like Becca Stevens. Holy smokes.

Annie: I know.

Tim: Success to me is getting to sit with these people. It's not numbers in terms of downloads. But we get to choose. Maybe downloads is a thing for somebody else. It's fun.

Annie: It's fun.

Tim: We could have whatever version of success. You live however you want.

Annie: Yes. Yes.

Tim: I just want to give people... If you're maybe struggling with a definition of success that is not working for you, I have some ideas.

Annie: Yeah, yeah, that's right. And you're like, "Anything's fine except here as both, money is not fine. Don't make money your only..."

Tim: If that's it, go for it. I just don't know if you're gonna want this book.

Annie: I just don't know if you're gonna want your life in a year. If the thing you go after top above everything else is money, you are going to be disappointed. Because money is just not that interesting in the long run, as far as proving whether you are who you think you are or who you want to be. It's very helpful for buying food and clothing. I will give you that.

[00:48:07] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation one last time to tell you about one of our incredible partners, stamps.com. Inflation is a good thing when it comes to hashtag TSF best summer ever and Pearl my summertime Pegasus because we got to blow her up to put her in the pool. But not so much when you've got a small business and you want to cut cost in this crazy economy. Inflation is not our friend then.

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Anchor even has ways that you can monetize your podcast with no minimum number of listeners. It's everything you need to create a podcast in one place. We hear from people all the time who have great ideas and are looking for how to get their podcast started. Well, Anchor is what we use all across the That Sounds Fun Network. And we are just huge fans of how easy they make it to create a great podcast.

So just download the free Anchor app or go to anchor.fm to get started. Again, that's anchor.fm or you could download the free Anchor app.

And now back to our conversation with Tim.

[00:50:53] <music>

Annie: The thing I love about your book, Tim, I just am like, I am such an evangelist for this book, because I think the thing our friends get to do is sit with their small groups or their families or their company. I mean, you say in the back, you write a whole thing about like, sit down with your company. And y'all read this together. The questions we're gonna get to ask are going to help us shape a healthier life. But you did that without having to burn out first, which is really impressive.

Tim: Well, I just have seen enough through the media or elsewhere, friends. I just don't want to have to experience a moral failure, relationships crashing, marriage fail... I don't have to experience that. And what's fascinating to me is that so many of these things happen, these failures happen because people haven't gotten clear around their definition of success.

One of my favorite stories, Michael Hyatt, who a lot of people are familiar with, he's an author, speaker. In one of his books, he talks about a particular failure from his career where he was given the opportunity to run a division at a book publishing company. So at the time, this particular division was ranked 14 out of 14 in all the significant metrics:

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Tim: Morale, revenue. They were at the bottom. He tells the CEO, "Give me three years, I'm going to turn this thing around." Well, in only 18 months he turns the thing around, and his division was at the top, revenue, team morale. They were number one. They couldn't stop winning. Michael gets a bonus check that he says was larger than his annual salary.

Annie: Wow.

Tim: He couldn't wait to get home to talk to his wife about it. His wife is his biggest fan. He knew she'd be thrilled. And he gets home and has a very different conversation with her than he was expecting. She says, "We need to talk," which is not a great start.

Annie: Right. I haven't been married yet, but I know enough to know that's not a great start.

Tim: And with tears in her eyes, she goes on to say, "Our five daughters need you now more than ever before. And in fact, I feel like a single parent." So here he was having all the success he could imagine at work and yet relationships with the people that matter most to him were suffering because of it. What I love about this story is it is a past failure of Michael's. He has defined success very differently these days. And his book is actually called *Win at Work and Succeed at Life*. He calls that the double win.

Annie: Wow.

Tim: You can do both.

Annie: Yes.

Tim: And he really models how to do that. So it's just important for us to get on the same page as our families too and our friends. Bob Goff says this a lot. Is it working for the people around you? It's a really great question to ask.

- Annie:** He always leads like this. "Sooo is it working for the people around you?" It's always a long so? I'm always like, "Oh, Bob, you got me." I think that's beautiful. We got a couple of questions from people that are on our AFD Week in Review email list. Can we bust through those real quick. We're running low on time for your sake. But I would love to bust through these if you don't mind.
- Tim:** Yes.
- Annie:** So speed round, if you will. But take your time. Kristen wants to know do you have a morning routine that sets you up for daily success?
- Tim:** I fill out a gratitude journal every day and I write those three things.
- Annie:** That's it. That's your routine.
- Tim:** So I write three things down that I'm grateful for. And going back to the whole kids' thing, I started doing with my kids too.
- Annie:** Really?
- Tim:** I wish I had the book with me because... Elle too... she says some words but she has no idea what we're saying. But I write them down because it's the sweetest thing. So the other day it was like cheese.
- Annie:** I mean, aren't we all?
- Tim:** Mommy. This could be my list.
- Annie:** I'm too for two so far.
- Tim:** So I do that. I love the gratitude journal. It just puts me into a really good headspace.
- Annie:** That's a beautiful thing to do in the morning, too. I hear people do it at night. But wow.
- Tim:** So let's just talk about the things that we're grateful for because it just puts us into a posture of being grateful for the things that we have rather than in the endless pursuit for the things that we don't. But I also have a daily affirmation as a part of this. And the one for me lately is I do less with more focus so I can show up as a better dad and husband. I do less with more focus so I can show up as a better dad and husband.

So really that comes down to how I define success, how I want to show up. I want my family to be on this journey with me. It'd be very easy for me to drive, drive, drive, you know, take on so much but then I'd be showing up at home pretty miserable. And it's attention that I have to live in. But it's I want to remind myself "do less" so I can show up better.

Annie: Yeah, with more focus. Jessica says, "I know my gifts and I'm pretty clear on my calling. But how do I know if there's room for me to build a business around them in the marketplace?"

Tim: Businesses are created around solving problems for people. So it'd be great to test out how much people need your solution.

Annie: Yes, yes. Find a way to test.

Tim: Because if it is solving a problem for a lot of people, you will not have a hard time selling the thing. If you're not selling it, I'm not saying it's sunk. But what I'm just saying is pay attention to that. That may be an indicator that there's something here or maybe try to solve another problem.

Annie: Yeah, yeah, adjust somehow. That's why I think people are going to love *The Secret Society of Success* is you have tested this on so many of us in friendship for so long, of helping us redirect what matters most that I'm like, "Well, yeah, we know it works. It's been tested in our lives."

Brianna says, "What's one thing you find most formative to keeping your right priorities at work and home?"

Tim: Oh, can I just read you a quote?

Annie: Yes.

Tim: This for me is a North Star. And it's a North Star that I would imagine will be around for a very long time. It's this quote. Albert Schweitzer said, "I don't know what your destiny will be. Some of you will perhaps occupy remarkable positions. Perhaps some of you will become famous by your pens or as artists. But I know one thing, the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve." I think that's how we get there. We just show up with this kind of posture and headspace.

Annie: Okay, last one. Cameron: "I'm one year into building my business with my husband while still working full time and raising four kids with special needs."

Tim: Say that one more time. That's a lot of things.

Annie: Building a business, in year one of building with a husband, working full time, raising four kids with special needs.

Tim: Wow.

Annie: Wow. She's running out of steam. What advice would you have for her to not give up? "I believe this is the word God has laid before me but I'm struggling to balance it all."

Tim: I'm somebody who doesn't often like to ask for help. That sounds like more than anyone could bear.

Annie: That's right.

Tim: So just acknowledging that you're human and getting a little bit of help. At least just saying out loud when you're drained. But, man, that's a hard one.

Annie: I think that's it. I think asking for help. I mean, even if you can afford-

Tim: And giving yourself some grace too. It's a lot.

Annie: If you can afford an assistant at 10 hours a week, it gets some of those things off... Because to me the things you can't take off your plate, no one else can be your husband's wife, no one else can be your kids' mom, you can have help at home but those two things you have to do. Getting help at work, you can pay someone else to do.

Tim: And also feel too look at everything that you're doing, and seeing if it actually is moving everything forward. Is it necessary? There's a guy named Greg McKeown and he wrote this book called *Essentialism*, but then he has a follow-up called *Effortless*. And Greg says, Why is it that we have this belief that in order to do anything significant it has to be hard?

Annie: Ah, right.

Tim: So he says, What if we actually would look at it as what is the most effortless way that I could do this thing? So here's a perfect example of how I'm showing up and maybe this will be helpful for this person and how they show up and do their business.

So I have a podcast and I feel the pressure to have a blog post for every single episode. It's got the transcription, it's got bla, bla, bla, bla. I just don't have the bandwidth and the capacity. So I give myself some grace and I just post the episode. And I try to make it effortless. How can what I do just be done a little bit simpler? Do you really have to go the extra mile on that thing?

And I'm not saying to not do things with excellence, because that is also one of my key pillars. I love doing things really well. Pick and choose what you do really, really well. But also just think, is there an unnecessary waste? Are we doing things that we don't really need to do? Because it's not actually giving us any results. Just stop doing it. Focus on less.

Annie: Right. I mean, I'd like you to know... you know this because you've run a lot of podcasts, but I'm gonna say to your face. For us to record a show, release a show, have a blog post with the links and a transcription, it takes five people.

Tim: So much. So much.

Annie: There are five people besides me. So it is not me. So I think that's great for our friends who have shows, have podcasts or who are building things to be like, Oh... Like Half Baked Harvest, the chef on Instagram, she has a team. And a lot of people have teams. And you think, how am I ever gonna get all those reels made? Or how am I ever gonna get the transcription done? Nobody does those by themselves that does that as their full-time job.

Tim: My publishers like, "Hey, Tim, we're gonna need you to post on social media a little bit more." And I'm like, "Guys, I'm trying."

Annie: It's just me, you guys.

Tim: You just focus on the few that thing and just do that. And let the rest just kind of slip away.

Annie: Man, I'm stoked for people to get this book. It comes out tomorrow. So they can get it everywhere tomorrow. I mean, I told you I took notes and immediately made some changes in what I want to do here. Can I make a request of your podcast?

Tim: Please?.

Annie: Will you do some shows... we hear from so many people who have one employee or two employees. And I think that's such a critical place in building a company and building culture. So will do some episodes on building teams? Or do you already

have some that we can listen to if we have a small amount of people that work for us right now?

Tim: One thing that I love is the interview with Becca Stevens, founder of Thistle Farms, where my favorite human beings on the planet, she talks about how when they were starting Thistle Farms, they just operated and she still operates this way, with that idea of one life at a time, let that be enough.

I think as you're running a small business, you have so much control over how your company culture, how your company is going to operate, how you're going to show up? What a beautiful time to be reminded of some of these foundational elements one life at a time. Building a culture of recognition.

So there's some of these things that can scale with you as you go. But that episode, the one with Becca, I think it'll put you in a really good headspace and have you operating in a really good way. But yes, absolutely.

Annie: You're just one of my favorite business coaches. So I'm like, will you help us with this and this and this and this? Okay, is there anything we didn't say about Secret Society of Success you want to make sure we say?

Tim: Really the summary of everything that we've been saying, what it looks like to live in the way the secret society is just helping others win. And if we show up that way more often I just think the rest is going to take care of itself.

Annie: You have lived this so beautifully. Truly. I mean, I knew you when you're with Steve. 13 years ago?

Tim: Yes.

Annie: So it has been a really long time I've watched you live this. So I love when my friends write books on the things I've gotten to see them live. Because then I can shout it from the rooftops that this works. So well done. Okay, the last question we always ask because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

Tim: I would love to go play some golf right now.

Annie: I knew it was going to be golf. I was gonna guess golf. I got to watch a lot more of the Masters than I normally do this year.

Tim: Beautiful.

Annie: That and Tiger playing with his son. I've turned into a golf person this year.

Tim: Going to Augusta is one of the most incredible experiences ever. If you were to ask me to drill down even deeper, what I really want to say is I just want to go walk the grounds of Augusta National because truly it's the most beautiful-

Annie: Even right now when it's not Masters?

Tim: It's just a beautiful place. I walked down to Amen Corner, and Amen Corner is holes 11, 12 and 13. It's like a little slice of heaven. And Jim Nantz who's the voice of the Masters, he talks about how every year he has a moment of reflection, just grateful to be on the grounds again. So I've started doing the exact same thing. And even leading up to go into the Masters I could get teary just thinking about showing up.

So when something like that matters to you, I don't know... It's strange. I don't know why it matters so much to me, but there's a part of my soul that's just... I calm and at peace when I'm there. And you don't have your cell phone. All the distractions are gone. And you just get to sit and be reminded of the gifts that God has for us and that He cares. And getting to go to the Masters, that sounds way fun.

Annie: Okay, well done. Good answer. Can you get pimento cheese year round? Can we go today and get a pimento cheese sandwich?

Tim: You can only go during the Masters week, during the term as the only time that they'll let anyone non-

Annie: Pretend like I had a way. Is the cheese there?

Tim: I'm sure.

Annie: I mean, surely we can get...

Tim: Surely it's there.

Annie: Tim, we can get there if we need to go there. Tim, friend, thanks for this. I love you. I'm grateful for you and Katie.

Tim: I love you.

Annie: I'm thrilled for people to get this book tomorrow. So I hope everybody reads it and shares it. We all need it for the things that we're doing. So well done.

Tim: Thank you.

[01:05:55] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, isn't he just the best? I learn so much from him every time we talk. That conversation you just experienced is being friends with Tim. That's how helpful he is all the time. It's unbelievable. And now you can get that in your life too when you grab a copy of his book, *The Secret Society of Success*.. Follow Tim on social media, tell him thanks so much for being on the show.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, at Twitter, Facebook. All the places you may need me, that's how you can find me. 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 actually is Tim Schurrer's book launch party this week. I'm really excited about it. It's gonna be so fun. So that has me excited. That's what sounds fun to me. Y'all have a great week. We'll see you back here on Thursday with my friend and one of my favorite pastors, Jeanne Stephens. Will see y'all on Thursday.