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**Annie:** Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. Happy Thursday. 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, a quick word from one of our absolutely amazing partners, [Cru](#). Y'all, I love Cru so much. The Bible changed my life. Y'all know this. On the MiniBFF podcast, I tell the kids every episode that the Bible is my favorite book. And it is.

But imagine for a second if you couldn't get a Bible or if you couldn't afford a Bible, or think about what it would feel like if it wasn't legal to have one. Honestly, sometimes we forget there are people, lots of people, well, I forget, there are lots of people all around the world who simply can't get a Bible. That's why we're thrilled to partner with Cru.

Cru is one of the largest evangelical organizations in the world. They have over 25,000 missionaries and in almost every country. Cru is giving bibles to people around the globe in their own heart language and sharing the hope of Jesus.

But here's where they need our help. For just \$21 a month you can provide three people with Bibles each and every month. How cool is that? And when you sign up to provide three Bibles with a monthly gift of \$21, you'll also be partnering with Cru to provide meals for five hungry families through their humanitarian aid ministry, and you get a free copy of my new book *Chase the Fun* as a thank you. You can start stacking things up for Christmas gifts.

Hey, simply text "fun" to 71326 to help today. Think about how the Bible has changed your life and imagine just how much this gift could change someone's life. So text "fun" to 71326. That's "fun" to 71326 to help now or visit [give.cru.org/thatsoundsfun](http://give.cru.org/thatsoundsfun). Message and data rates may apply.

**Intro:** Today on the show I get to talk with Deb Liu, y'all. Deborah Liu is a seasoned technology executive who is currently the CEO of Ancestry and has been a leader at both Facebook and PayPal. Yeah, no big deal. She's just the founder of Facebook Marketplace and has had a hand in developing multiple functionalities of eBay.

Add to that distinguished list of accomplishments, she is the author of the new book *Take Back Your Power: 10 New Rules for Women at Work*. She's brilliant, and she's inspiring. She's wise. Whether you're a woman at work, or you work with women,

or you've ever had a job before, I think you'll find the conversation fascinating and empowering.

I mean, literally, I took my copy of her book, and drove it after this interview to a friend of mine who's going back to work. And she has loved it. So you're gonna love this too.

Here's my conversation with Deb Liu.

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**Annie:** Deb, welcome to That Sounds Fun. Thanks so much for being here.

**Deborah:** Thanks for the invitation. It's wonderful to be here.

**Annie:** Oh, this was such an easy invitation for me, my friend, because every single time we talk about business on this That Sounds Fun podcast, it is like the people have their mouths open dying to be fed. Have you experienced that as a woman in leadership at work that there are so many women hungry to know how to do this well?

**Deborah:** Yeah. I think that's actually why I wrote the book. I got so many calls and requests over the years, like, "What advice do you have for me and my career? How can I have a successful family, have it all, have a successful work life?"

And I realized that there wasn't a definitive guide to actually especially people of faith to really have a conversation around what work means and what power means, and how difficult it is to navigate. I mean, we were told all of these things when we were growing up, how to be a good girl, how to do things right, how to have a successful life, but I think sometimes we don't talk about the workplace.

By the way, we spend more time than we do asleep or with our families. And it's such a big part of our lives and yet often we shy away from having that conversation. So I wanted to kind of put that conversation in the forefront, which is why I wrote the book.

**Annie:** Will you give people a little bit of your bio? As we're jumping in, I want them to realize... I mean, I'll read it if you feel weird about it but I would love for you to kind of say what are some of the jobs you've done so that people can kind of have a little history of you as we're going into this conversation?

**Deborah:** Yeah. I kind of stumbled into tech. I actually joined a startup called PayPal. It's now a very big company-

**Annie:** Just this little startup called PayPal.

**Deborah:** When I was there, I actually kind of joined a tiny team, and then suddenly we were bought by eBay.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Deborah:** And I led part of the eBay PayPal integration over the several years and then eventually went to corporate strategy. I built the social commerce and charity verticals of PayPal, and then I went over to eBay. After I had my first child, I went over to eBay and I led the buyer experience for a time.

And then after I had my second child, I went to Facebook. And there I spent 11 years working on a number of different products. I think the most famous one is Facebook Marketplace. But I worked on Facebook Pay, which is now called Meta Pay. I worked on the games business, I also worked on the ads products. So I've done a number of different things.

Then about 18 months ago I actually got a call about a new job. And that was for the President and CEO of Ancestry—this incredible company, 35 years old, that really helps people discover their family history and tell their family story. And an opportunity couldn't pass up, and so I've been here for about 18 months.

**Annie:** I need you to know the other night at dinner, my two girlfriends and I pulled up our ancestry app and all we did over Mexican is talk about what percent we are of everything. So it is like the most fun thing y'all are building. What a gift to give to so many families!

I have another friend who found her biological grandmother, her mother had never met her biological mom, and found her through an Ancestry moment. I mean, it's incredible. I bet you hear those stories all the time.

**Deborah:** I joke that I can't go to a party without hearing an amazing story. But I tell people where I work and they're like, "Here's the story of somebody..." And it's just so incredible that Ancestry has kind of opened a whole new world of people connecting with their family in new ways. You know, first cousins and biological parents, adopted children, but also people have surprised discoveries too.

**Annie:** Oh girl, we got surprised on both sides of my family of like, "Oh, that wasn't actually your dad." I mean, back in the history, it's like all those secrets from 1912 are no longer secrets.

**Deborah:** Part of the journey is really a journey of personal discovery. And that's what we really focus on. So that's what I've been doing recently. And then also the book.

**Annie:** As two businesswomen talking to each other, I know that people are listening to us, but I'm like, "Deb, let's talk about this." Because I do not know a lot of people talking to women working in the mainstream world that are women of faith, saying, "Here's how you lead well."

Because honestly in the church, women aren't—in a lot of places in the church, not all of them—women aren't given places to lead. So they're leading out in the world, but there isn't a leader telling us how to do it sort of. Has that been your experience?

**Deborah:** Well, I think that's hard because the church's relationship with women in leadership is difficult, right? One of the things I recounted the story of when I was doing pre-marriage counseling. So my boyfriend at the time, who's been my husband for over 20 years, and I were doing pre marriage counseling at our church in Atlanta.

We were about to move. I just gotten to Stanford for Business School. And the pastor asked, Why would you follow her there? Why is she getting a graduate degree? She doesn't need it."

And I just remember thinking... I was really crushed. Because think about somebody who's, you know, the leader of your church telling you that maybe you're wrong, maybe you're not following God's plan. I just remember being both humiliated, upset, and angry at the same time.

And as we were talking about it afterwards, my boyfriend at the time said, "You know what? That's why you're named Deborah. She was a leader."

**Annie:** Wow.

**Deborah:** I think we were about to get engaged or already engaged. So we were just talking about just... he said, "And by the way, the Proverbs 31 woman, she is a leader in her family and she's an entrepreneur." He said, "You know, honestly her husband's probably sitting at the gate, you know, spitting in shoes and touching the thighs of men making contracts." We started laughing. And he said, "You are meant for more, so it's okay." And we went to Stanford.

In the end we actually went to the Chinese pastor of the church. He's a senior pastor of the church. And he said, "Have you seen my wife? She's incredibly successful woman." So I recently reached out to him just to thank him for really changing the course of my life. He actually married us in that church, and we got married and the next week we moved out to California.

**Annie:** Wow. I love guys. I'm not married yet. I would love to marry one and live with him. I'm very into men. I think they're wonderful. So I don't ever want people to feel like this is an anti-male conversation because it's not at all. It's just paying attention that there are a lot of women who are gifted to lead and historically haven't been given the opportunity. And now that we do, it's almost like we don't have the language or the tools but we know we have the power. Does that feel right to you?

**Deborah:** Well, I mean, God gives us different gifts and He gives men and women leadership abilities, and the ability to succeed. And you look at the women who influenced in the Bible, you know, the Deborahs, the Proverbs 31 woman, Priscilla, like you look at these women who shaped the early church, you look at women who change the course of history, like Rahab, and you think about these women who, you know, God mentions some by name in the Bible—their names are recorded.

And it was back then when they actually didn't record the names of the genealogy, right? So these are women who changed the course of history and changed the course of what our faith is. And yet we often say, well, maybe women should be quiet and sit in the back. But God does not make mistakes. He does not raise a woman to be the judge of Israel and then say, "Oh, actually, I don't mean women to lead." He didn't have to have her.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Deborah:** He didn't have to have Deborah. So I just think it's incredible that we today even struggle so many years later after that story was written that she was a leader of... The general came to her for advice, right?

**Annie:** Yes.

**Deborah:** And so you think about that. God ordained her to be a leader. And He ordained all of us to lead in our own lives, whether it's at home or at work.

**Annie:** I love Lydia in Acts because it's like she's hanging out with her friends on a Sunday, she runs a business, she's got a family to take care of, and she even talks about her having religious practices. But then when Paul tells her about Jesus, she's like, "Oh,

well, now y'all can meet at my house." So I'm like, "This girl does it all. Lydia does it all." I just love it. I think it's awesome.

One of the things that really jumped out at me in the book is you have a section where you're talking about power and you're talking about how misunderstood power is between men and women. And you have this list of all these power words that we talked about that are masculine, and then the comparison of women's words.

I'm going to give some examples. The right-hand man, that says boy. People say grow a pair. When people say man hours, right? And then for women, it's stuff like diva or mean girls, or RBF (resting certain face), drama queen, Debbie Downer.

Another phrase, I would love for you to talk about this: girl boss. How do you feel when people say girlboss and ladyboss?

**Deborah:** Well, I just think that for every single time... By the way, I collected that list over an 18-month period. So I actually sat down and all I did was as I went through the day, if something masculine or feminine came up in a meeting, I just wrote it down.

And at the end I looked at the list and I thought, "Wait a minute. The way they talk about men and women is completely different in our workplace." And this was all at work. And I realized that, by the way, the thing we say about girlboss is how much of a backlash there is against women leaders. We don't talk about the women who succeed. We criticize.

Recently there's an our New York Times article about Emily Weiss stepping down from Glossier. But she built a billion-dollar company in a tough industry and she built something incredible. And her stepping back is actually a success. She has built what she wanted to build. And yet it says, "Well, maybe this is end of the era of the girlboss." And I'm like, "What does that mean?" She's choosing her own path. She should be incredibly proud of what she built.

And they talk about, you know, the end of the lean in era. At the end of the day, the work doesn't end. We are in the workplace and we are succeeding, and we're making progress. And women should have choices, whether you choose to stay at home, whether you choose to step back from a company you founded, whether you choose to join the C suite. We should praise women for the choices they make. We don't criticize men for those choices.

I remember recently I posted something on LinkedIn about the help I have and the support network, and people said, "Well, don't you feel like you missed out on your

children's childhood because you worked?" Things like that. And my husband goes, "No one's ever ask me that."

**Annie:** No one ever say that to dad. No one ever say that to dad.

**Deborah:** He goes, "Why do people criticize you for something which I do?" And I said, "I'm not sure." But for each of my children when I was on maternity leave, before I left, people on my own team reported to me, said, "Are you coming back?" And he said, "why would anyone ask you that? No one asks me that." And it's just that our expectations are so different. And so it's these small things.

Again, none of these things were huge stumbling blocks, but they just remind you, just like my pastor reminded me, "Maybe you're doing something wrong. Maybe you are missing something, missing out on their childhood, or maybe you should be doing something different." And these are the signals we're sending to women across their careers.

**Annie:** So what do you think we lose when women aren't given the opportunity to lead or are told that they can't lead?

**Deborah:** Well, think about all of the intellectual capital, the creativity, the innovation that's not happening when women aren't at all... when they're written out of the equation. There's a quote I put in the book that drives me absolutely crazy. And that is, "I would hire diverse teams but I don't want to lower the bar." That absolutely mean something.

**Annie:** I folded the corner of that page by the way. I did.

**Deborah:** I hear that so much. I work in a male-dominated industry, so I hear it at conferences, I hear it in closed rooms. And I said, "You know, that says a lot about what you think, which is that every single person, especially diverse who are women in particular, are less qualified to do the job."

So you think that absolutely, by hiring a woman or someone who's diverse, they're absolutely less qualified than a man in the same position. Think about what you just said." And I say, Actually, instead, we're actually opening the aperture, increasing the funnel, the people we can choose from.

You're actually going to pick someone better because maybe it's someone you had never considered before. Maybe it was somebody who's going to bring a different point of view to the table." Diverse teams outperform. Those that are not diverse

because people are challenging those ideas, they're actually looking at the problem in different perspectives.

So it is that kind of thing where when we shut out half the world, you think about all the products that weren't built, all the solutions that we didn't have because we had shut out women from leadership and the opportunity to really have their voice heard.

**Annie:** So let's talk to a couple of different groups of people. Let's start with our friends who are in their 20s. These women are finishing up college maybe or they didn't go to college, they jumped right into the workforce, and they are coming up against for the first time this like, "Oh, wait, he's getting paid more than me. Oh, why didn't I get an opportunity for that? You got passed over a couple of times for a job." So talk to those women.

What's some gospel encouragement for instead of going, "You know what? Forget it. I'm not gonna even try. I'm just gonna be happy and be done with it"?

**Deborah:** There's an interesting stat that I saw and I put it in the book, which is women used to negotiate less than men because they were turned down more. But recently a lean in organization did a study and it said women now negotiate as much as men. We taught women to kind of come to the table, which is amazing.

But men get the raise 20% of the time and women get 15% of time. So you're gonna get a raise less often than a man who asks the same question. Is that fair? Absolutely not. But if you don't ask, what's the percentage you're gonna get that raise? Zero.

**Annie:** That's right.

**Deborah:** So I said, "Look, don't look at the difference between 15 and 20. Look at the difference between 0 and 15." Which is if you don't learn to ask, you don't learn to raise your hand, you don't learn to step up and speak up, yes, you're gonna get it less than men. And that's going to happen. Statistically, that's true. However, not asking means you don't get it at all.

And I tell stories of some amazingly powerful women who almost got passed over because they did not raise their hand. One woman is Maeley Tom. She worked for Willie Brown but she actually hired her boss who reported to Willie Brown three times. And each time she would hire a boss, train them, and then that person would be. She did it again, she did again.



This is when he was a speaker of the House in State of California. And this is the number one non-elected position in the Senate... actually in the legislature. And in the end, what she did was, you know, after she trained her third boss, she went to Willie Brown and said, "Hey, have you ever considered me?" And he said, "Maeley, I thought you'd never ask."

**Annie:** Wow. Wow.

**Deborah:** She had to raise her hand and he was waiting for her. But he wasn't sure if that's what she wanted. And I realized that sometimes you're sending mixed signals rather than just saying what you want. "Hey Willie, what would it take for me to take this role? What do you think the gap is between me and you offering me the role?"

**Annie:** "And the three guys I've trained."

**Deborah:** Yes, the three guys I've trained. Clearly, she knew how to do the job. And she did have that job for many years and she was very successful.

[00:17:49] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation real quick to share about one of our amazing partners, [Indeed](#). Hey, speaking of running some businesses, here at Downs Books and the That Sounds Fun Network, we are always looking for ways to get better and really putting our energy toward improvements that's snowball, right? Like getting better at hiring.

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**Sponsor:** And I have a more amazing partner to tell you about, [ZocDoc](#). Okay, you've probably heard me sharing about my little knee issue. And honestly there are multiple appointments that I have needed to schedule that have had me playing calendar Tetris with my doctor schedules and mine. Thank goodness for the way that ZocDoc helps us find the doctors we need.

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And remember the show notes have every link you need to our sponsors, transcripts of the show, and a place for you to sign up for the AFD Week in Review. It's all right there for you.

And now back to our conversation with Deb.

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**Annie:** So your book is titled *Take Back Your Power: 10 New Rules for Women at Work*. So I'm thinking now about our stay-at-home moms or the women who are not working. And they know, yeah, "I've got power and I've got ideas but I've chosen this or this life has chosen me." Both are true for some of our friends listening.

So when I read this book, I thought of some of my mom friends who I'm like, "They are going to love this book." So will you talk a little bit about the women who are not out in the workforce right now and why this conversation still really matters?

**Deborah:** I've been in several Lean In groups. And one of the Lean In groups is fellow moms in this area. And I just remember half of them actually were stay-at-home moms and half of them were out in the workforce. And it was incredible how powerful both groups were.

The women who said, "You know what? This is not the right time for me to be at work, I want to take a step back. This is the calling I have is to stay home right now. And this is a season of my life. You know, maybe I'll go back, maybe I won't," I just think they were some of the most powerful women.

Because they were the women who were the community organizers. They were the ones who actually organized the campaigns, they were the ones who influenced the schools, they were the ones who are making our community an amazing place. And so they have so much more power than they ever imagined. They were the ones who are helping people run for school board and campaign for safety for our kids. And I just realized that they have so much to give. And it wasn't just about the time it was about their influence. Their voice was so incredible.

And I just think sometimes we think, "Oh, yeah, she's a stay at home mom," and we discount them. I consider it and I talk about this, I consider staying at home at one point after my son was born, and I just think that we just underestimate. We're like, "Well, she's not in the workforce, she can't be a leader."

Somebody said that mothers are the shock absorbers of our society.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Deborah:** They're the ones who fix things. They're the ones who advocate for things. They're the ones who help our schools. And I just think we underestimate the value that they're creating in the world. And I think for all of those moms who are staying at home, for this season of your life, you have so much to give, and so much of your community needs you because, you know, those who are in the workforce do not have the time. And you are the people who actually make the schools, the communities work.

And I feel like it's this invisible labor that we have. But imagine our school systems, imagine our communities without these powerful women who are out there actually making a difference.

**Annie:** Yeah, advocating for student's needs and just being available if somebody needs something in any area of life. I mean, so many of my friends—I'm 42—and so a lot of my friends are in that place where they have elementary aged kids or middle school aged kids, and staying home is the right thing for their family right now.

But I also am at the age—maybe you're too—where some of my friends who've been home for a long time are ready to get back in and are like, "Okay, now that all my kids are in school or now that my kids are graduating, I want to get back into this." Will you give some encouragement to those women that are listening that hear those whispers of like, "Do you want to go back to work? Do you want to go back out there and get in the workforce?" Should they do it?

**Deborah:** I think that women have so much to give. And these moms who have had this experience are leaders in so many areas that sometimes you underestimate. I hear a lot of women say, "Well, maybe my skills are rusty or I'm not ready for the workforce."

But I've had so many mom friends who actually took time off and said, "You know what? That was the season of my life. Now that my kids are in middle school or in high school, I'm ready to get back into it," but they're really worried.

One of the things I love is that a lot of companies are now starting what they call returnships or kind of onramps back to work place.

**Annie:** Returnships. That's brilliant.

**Deborah:** And you're looking at human capital that has been devoted to family and home for a long time, but they can also deliver for companies too. I mean, think you shaping your narrative around the time you took off and what you did during that time, the

leadership that you had. I think sometimes we're like, "Well, I was just staying at home." But you were doing so much more than that.

And I think sometimes we underestimate the leadership you are demonstrating in your community, in your home, in your family. And we don't value that. But a lot of companies are learning that these are valuable employees, these are valuable people who are going to be huge contributors because now they have the passion to come back, they're fresh, and they're ready for a new challenge. And so now it's the time.

I would go to companies that are very family-friendly. Not every company is really open to this, but there are many companies. And there are many companies who say, "You know what? We want to bring this human capital, we want to bring this talent in. So let's find a way to actually onramp them back."

**Annie:** When I'm thinking about who I'm hiring for my company, I'm like, "Oh, you mean she was able to schedule meals for a lot of people at home every day and do laundry, and get the oil changed and run the bake thing at school? Like, I'm interested, she's very organized.

**Deborah:** Absolutely. Juggling a life is hard. And I think sometimes we just say, "Well, she hasn't picked up on the latest technology." Those skills are learnable, but actually being able to multitask and figure out how to solve huge problems, that's exactly what companies want. And so really kind of having those skills.

And then figuring out the technical skills that you need to actually fill in the gaps. Those are easy because anyone can learn those skills. But actually having experience of spending 5, 10 years managing a household, managing communities, you know, volunteering for the PTA, helping with the community, those things are invaluable.

**Annie:** As I was reading through your book, each of the 10 new roles for women at work... I mean, I found myself rising up to meet each of them have going like, "Oh, yeah, that does matter." But you wrote a whole chapter on forgiveness. When you're thinking about women in the workplace and that being a new rule, why does forgiveness matter at work?

**Deborah:** You know, that was one of the first chapters I wrote.

**Annie:** Really?

**Deborah:** Yeah, because so many women live with so much regret. And I talk about how regret can be a poison if you're not careful. We talk about this. When I first had my

son, I saw the moms talk about regret. And I just remember I said, "You know what? I'm not going to look back. If I couldn't spend time with him this week, I'm going to spend more time with him next week. Let's look forward."

And I realized a lot of forgiveness is forgiving those... People will hurt you in the workforce, people will hurt you at home. But if you don't forgive, it's a poison on you. It's like someone said, you know, lack of forgiveness is like drinking poison and hoping the other person dies. You're the one who's hurt.

And I talk a lot about different experiences or people who had to forgive not only others but also themselves. And I think sometimes our lack of forgiveness on ourselves is also one of the biggest things, because we say, "Well, if only we had done X, if only we had done Y." And we think the road less traveled might be better.

But as one of my friends had told me in an interview for the book, she said, "You know, all of those scars, all of those journeys, all the stumbling blocks, that's what made me who I am today. And I can't regret that. I can't regret the family I have. I can't regret where I come because all of those things add up to who I am."

And I just realized that that's exactly... You know, the richness of your experience is what makes you who you are today. And going forward you get to choose what to do with that. That's why I include the quote from Chuck Swindoll that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I choose to react to it. That is exactly it. And if you can't forgive, that 10% becomes 90%. It's like your life becomes only what happened to you.

**Annie:** I mean, it's that 0% to 15% or 15% to 20% thinking. Because I can even find myself... if I hear in the faith space of a man and I doing the same job and he gets better pay, I can find myself getting worked up at everyone involved.

I'm worked up at him because he doesn't know I got paid less this. He does one Sunday preaching, I do the next Sunday, he doesn't know he got paid more. So I'm mad at him. I'm mad at the church who paid us different.

I can feel unforgiveness rising in me when the better response is to go, "I'm grateful for the opportunity, not because I'm a female but because anytime we get to do work, I'm thankful." And to let go of that. As I was reading that chapter, I thought, "Man, there are so many times where I get Joan of archy about things at work. And it's actually unforgiveness. It's not just power, it's unforgiveness.

**Deborah:** And I do hope it by the way if they are paying a man and women differently that you call it out too. One of the things I think we are taught is to be good girls. Never make it awkward. But you know, if you just say, "Hey, I just wanna let you know... thank you for this opportunity. It was wonderful. But I recently heard that you're paying men and women differently. It's something you should consider for your policy for the future."

I just think calling it out and actually just saying that and making them think, "Well, why don't we do that?" Because a lot of times it's actually subconscious. I don't think people are thinking in the top of their head, "Okay, I'm definitely gonna pay her less." It's just maybe he asked for more. Maybe you didn't know. Maybe there are other reasons. And they said, "Well, you know, his team asked for more," or "we didn't negotiate it or maybe he's doing something else."

Absolutely just call it out, and then make them think, "Well, why don't we do that?" And I think just putting that bug in their ear and saying, "Hey, maybe we should consider this for next time," or "maybe we should make this right," gives them the opportunity to make it right too. I think sometimes we're angry. But that lack of forgiveness is also because we haven't said anything and we just wish someone else would fix the problem for us. But instead of just saying, "Hey, I just thought this was something you should know. And we can talk about what the best way to kind of reach reconciliation is."

**Annie:** Deb, if you and I were just getting coffee or just like having a drink or something, I'd be like, "But Deb, the problem is, is that I still have this narrative in my head, even though I lead two companies and I'm a very public woman in leadership, I still have this narrative in my head that says, "Don't be the B word." And if you speak up for yourself, they're gonna say, "Well, you know Annie F Downs is kind of a... right?"

So even though I'm having this conversation with you, I read your book, and I loved it and I love being a leader of my company, I have to confess that that narrative is still in my head. I don't think men have that narrative.

**Deborah:** I don't think they have that narrative. But actually there's something that I found works for a lot of women as well. Women are really bad at negotiating for themselves but they're really good at negotiating for others. And so one thing is, maybe you don't solve the problem for yourself, but by calling out for the next woman who comes to that pulpit, for the next woman who gets that contract. You say, "I'm gonna fight for her because she doesn't know. But I do."

And so if you actually reframe... and one of the things I talk about is a lot of world, the world and how you see the world is how you frame it. If you look at those 15 to 20 and how unfair that is, well, you could look at the 10 to 15.

So the thing I would say to you is, maybe you can't solve it for yourself. But for the next woman who gets in that pulpit, you want to make sure she's treated fairly. And then you're not now being difficult. You are being an advocate. You are now a helper. You are now somebody who's actually making the world fair for the next generation.

So I have also had that problem where, "What if I'm too demanding? What if they say I'm aggressive?" But instead one of the things is... I tell a story about how these women were like, "Well, we do want to say anything because it's awkward." Well, what if we all made it a little awkward for each other? Because for the next woman who comes, she will have so much more ability to negotiate if you've already set the table.

**Annie:** It's that narrative in my head that says, "Well, not only are you a Christian, you're also a girl. So you have to be double nice because a female has to be nice. And if you're like Jesus, you're nice." Jesus was very nice but that just is not... We're also allowed to be strong and have power.

**Deborah:** Well, I do agree with one thing you said, which was the difference between when we say good guy and good girl, think about what a good guy means. He's a good guy. I'm vouching for him. I'm his-

**Annie:** High integrity.

**Deborah:** High integrity is great, right?

**Annie:** Yeah.

**Deborah:** What does it mean to be a good girl?

**Annie:** She's quiet. She behaves. She stays in line. Yeah, I know. I hear it.

**Deborah:** But the word good and the modifier is the same. But when you put "guy" in front of it... And we're telling our daughters to be good girls, right? I have two daughters. But when we say, "Oh, yeah, you're good..." Do we say good boy? Not in the workplace. We say, "Hey, he's a good guy. I vouch for him. He's great."



Aileen Lee actually brought that up. She's a venture capitalist. She's one of the few early female and venture capitalists. She's like, "In those rooms, they're always like, "Oh, he's a good guy." And the men are just like creating this network.

But I said, you know, we hear all the times, like, "Be a good girl." What does that mean? Don't rock the boat. Don't raise your hand. Don't negotiate. And I think we're teaching the wrong lessons here, which is we're a bit in our language. Think about how we're coding gender and coding our biases into our language accidentally.

And again, this is not intentional. It's just how it's evolved because of the way that our workplaces have been for a long time. And we're still going past that. But it's a good reminder just to hear that language and reminding ourselves, "Wait a minute, when I say I should be a good girl, don't rock the boat." But that's not really what we say when we say good guy.

**Annie:** Yes. Man, that is messing me up. You are so right about those two, Deb. Oh my gosh. Okay, speaking of guys helping each other, one of the things I loved in your book was you talk about finding a mentor but also finding a sponsor. Or how you find a mentor but a sponsor find you.

So many women I talk to who are in the business world or who are in the faith space but run small businesses like I do are saying like, "How do we find a mentor? How do we find a mentor?" Will you kind of describe mentor and sponsor and what the difference is?

**Deborah:** Yeah. Mentor somebody who gives you advice. So you go and Annie you're like, "Hey, I need help growing my business. How can I find somebody to help give me advice and coach me?" That's an advisor or somebody who can help you.

A sponsor is somebody who says, "You know what, Annie?" I heard your program and I want to help you succeed. What if we get you on three more distribution platforms? What if we do a partnership? Here's some opportunities. I want to introduce you to three people. Like there's a huge differences saying, "Annie, you should get three partnerships," and "Hey, here are three people I'm going to contact on your behalf."

**Annie:** That's right.

**Deborah:** Think about the difference between those two things. And the first one is a mentor, and it's very useful. You should get more and more platforms, you should amplify your voice. That's awesome. But someone who actually does the work for you.

"Annie, I've contacted three people on your behalf. I'm going to set the introductions up. I think you can get on these platforms."

But I think sometimes we kind of mixed those two things up because the sponsor now has put their name on your credit... their credibility on yours. They say, "I'm vouching for this person and I'm going to open that door. And if something goes wrong, my name is on it because I sent the introduction." But that's what a sponsor really is, which is why it's really hard to ask, "Can you be my sponsor?"

**Annie:** Perfect.

**Deborah:** But really building that relationship, not only to get advice but then to start having that person open doors. And your job then as the person being sponsored is just to say each time, "Thank you. And here's what I did with it."

**Annie:** "Thank you. Here's what I did with it." Yes, yes.

**Deborah:** Close the loop. I have mentored a lot of people, but I haven't sponsored all of them. Because the mentors, you know, you give advice and it's great, you coach them. But sponsorship is really a long-term relationship where you're opening doors, you're putting your credibility in the line. And so a lot of people only do that for people, they say, "You know what?" She took every opportunity that I gave her and she made something with it."

[00:36:47] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! Just interrupting one more time to tell you about another amazing partner, [Jinjer](#). I'm all about using natural products and keeping harmful chemicals away from my skin and out of my air. And that's why I've been loving Jinjer. That's Jinjer with two J's. It's an essential oil.

Jinjer is a high quality, 100% natural essential oil made from the ginger root. It's free of micro impurities and it comes pre-mixed with carrier oil, so it's safe to use directly on your skin. I got it just before I was out during the month of July and I've already seen the benefits of adding Jinjer's rejuvenating self care kit to my routine.

Using the Jinjer oil with the gua sha stone, oh gua sha stone, you guys, it's the best massage because the Jinjer root has a natural heating sensation to it, so massaging it into my skin helps to reduce swelling and inflammation. And it just smells so good, you guys.

Trust me, I know you'll love Jinjer essential oil as much as I do. And right now is the perfect time to order because Jinjer is having a summer sale blow out. Plus, my friends get an extra 20% off your purchase.

But to get this limited time offer, you have to visit my special URL, [Jinjer.us/thatsoundsfun](https://Jinjer.us/thatsoundsfun). That's Jinjer.us/thatsoundsfun. Don't miss out on this summer sale blowout plus an extra 20% off. Remember, just go to Jinjer.us/thatsoundsfun.

**Sponsor:** And one last incredible partner to tell you about, [Policygenius](https://Policygenius.com). Here's the thing. Mortgage payments, private student loans and other types of debt don't just disappear if something happens to you. I'm sorry to tell you.

Having a life insurance policy can provide your loved ones with a financial cushion that they can use to cover those costs. And it can provide you with peace of mind that even in a worst-case scenario they'll be protected.

Policygenius is an insurance marketplace that makes it easy to compare quotes from top companies like AIG and Prudential in one place to find your lowest price on life insurance. They'll help you understand your options so you can make the choice that's best for you.

You can save 50% or more on life insurance by comparing quotes with Policygenius. Options start at just \$17 a month for \$500,000 of coverage. So just click the link in the show notes or head to [Policygenius.com](https://Policygenius.com) to get personalized quotes on minutes and find the right policy for your needs.

The licensed agents at Policygenius work for you, not the insurance companies. That's a huge deal. They're on hand through the entire process to help you understand your options so you can make decisions with confidence.

Policygenius has thousands and thousands of five-star reviews across Google and Trustpilot so you know from other satisfied customers that you are in good hands. Head to [policygenius.com](https://policygenius.com) to get your free life insurance quotes and see how much you could save.

And now back to finish up our conversation with Deb.

[00:39:34] <music>

**Annie:** So I'm thinking about our friends who like have an Etsy shop or who have written their first book, or who are back in the workforce and not on the C suite level but

could see themselves moving up at the company they are back at, how do we find the mentor? And is that what we look for first? Is that what we're looking for, a mentor before a sponsor?

**Deborah:** Usually, people start out as mentors or managers actually before they become your sponsors. So that's a good place to start. If you Etsy shop for your book, people are so much more generous than you think they are.

I just reached out when I was doing this book, I just said, "You know what? Who are some interesting people that I could reach out to?" And I just started sending emails and asking around. And I interviewed some incredible women who I could never have thought it would say yes to an interview and to be included in the book. And by the way, very few people said no.

And so I realized that people say yes so much more than you think they will. And people are extraordinarily generous with their time. One of the things I think we often do is we don't ask. We don't say, "Hey, here's somebody I really admire." Just reach out to them say, "Hey, I just really admire you, I want to learn from you. Would that be possible?"

My daughter has recently started a blog where she wants to learn from authors. So I share with her my author experience. And so she said, "I just want to interview authors." And I said, "Okay, let's go ask people." And everyone said yes.

She has 24 published authors on her list. She's interviewed about two of them. And she said, "Here's what I've learned so far." The amount of time people have spent helping her, shape her narrative, you know, talk about what they've learned has been incredible. And I think you wouldn't be surprised that so often we are worried what people think, but learning to ask is the first step.

**Annie:** One of my questions for you personally is, should I be looking for a mentor in different areas of expertise? When I think about my current mentor, Nancy, I mean, we talk about work, but really, we're talking about my life and my spiritual life and my emotional life. And she knows our world really well, so I can bring work things to her. But then I also have a business coach who coaches me with my work. Should this be one person or Should there be eight of them?

**Deborah:** I think you should have different mentors for different areas of your life, because different people have different expertise. Just like you have an accountability partner for our faith, you know, you probably have a group of mom friends if you are a mom that you kind of ask questions to, especially with kids who are older than yours.

So you want to build these allies, as I call them in the book. You want to build these circles of allies, whether it's mentoring and sponsors. But also your team and your circle, right? You want to be able to actually take each of these groups of allies to fill in different parts of your life.

And I think it is those relationships that are really critical to both your success and your life, your happiness, but also being with think through problems at work, too.

**Annie:** Yeah, I actually only even started figuring out that I needed a business coach when I started realizing like, no one knows how to answer this for me. I did that, Deb. I called two of my friends who are significantly more successful than me, but not in the faith space. They are faith people who are out in the mainstream workforce. And I was like, "How'd you do it?" And they gave me the same guy's name. And I was like, "Very interested." I was like, "I am calling him." Is it okay that my business coach is a guy? I mean, is that like antigirl power if I'm being coached by a man?

**Deborah:** Some of the best coaches and sponsors can be men. Actually, women should support each other, but some of the most powerful people who can help you are those who are already in power or have experience. And you couldn't just say, okay, like, what is it that you're trying to get out of it? And they both said it was this man. And that's incredible.

Some of my most powerful sponsors, the people who really transformed my career were women, but a lot of them were men, too. And I think sometimes if you just say, "Well, I'm only focused on having mentors of this type or sponsors of this type," you're actually closing the door to a lot of people who can add a lot of value, but also that you can have a wonderful relationship with.

**Annie:** Yeah, I mean, you'll love, Deb. So both these guys give me this guy's name and then I'm like trying to decide, "Should I do it." And that weekend I go to a Nashville soccer club match and I turn around and the coach is in line behind me to get a soda.

**Deborah:** Oh my gosh.

**Annie:** And I was like, "You know what? This is it. This is God. We're done."

**Deborah:** I think God was telling you something. I was like, "I am listening." I mean, I saw his face, I was like, "Oh, my gosh." I was like, "I'm gonna email you on Monday."

**Deborah:** That's incredible.

**Annie:** It was incredible. And he's been so helpful. I mean, it's been really, really amazing. Okay, the other thing that I thought was really interesting is one of your 10 new rules for women is the whole chapter on creating balance at home. Because it is imbalanced if both parents are at work, there are different expectations on the mom than on the dad. I mean, that has to be one of the most pulling things for our friends that are moms and a workplace.

**Deborah:** Well, I think that's the one thing which... I wrote that chapter on purpose and I talk a lot about my incredible husband. I wrote this book on creating balance at home because I started out with the quote that the most important career decision you ever make is who you choose to marry.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Deborah:** And that is absolutely true. Because think about whether you have a spouse at home that says, "You know, I'm not supportive of your career. Do you really have to travel this weekend?" Or okay, who drops the ball on the kids' activities. You have to take care of all their school pick up and drop off, all the summer camps. And then they say, "Well just tell me when you need help." And you're suddenly the household manager, you have the mental load of taking care of everything.

So think about that versus like you doing everything yourself, you know, or somebody who's actually there to support you. My husband and I have an incredible marriage. We call it the swim lane marriage, which is you each have a swim lane, you do your own thing.

If you had a business partner... And I say this very clinically because it's just easier to. Our marriage is incredible but we have a partnership as well. And so your partnership is that you're partners in your household. And sometimes you wouldn't micromanage your partner. If you had a business partner or if you had a law partner, you wouldn't micromanage them, right?

But how many times are mothers and women expect you to micromanage husbands? Well, you know, if only you told me I had to do that. And so one of the things we do is we have rebalanced it out. We've renegotiated that. He's a lawyer, so we negotiate things all the time. And, you know, we balance it out.

So one thing is he does all the summer camps. So when the kids were small, I did all the summer camps for many years. And now he does all of it. He makes sure that the kids show up. I do nothing but make sure that they actually get to the camp,

does all the preparation, the packing, everything. And I just make sure that they actually arrive. And it's incredible. I never have to think about it. But think about both people having to worry about it.

The same thing on vacation. He plans all of our trips, he's incredible at it, and I show up. But my job is to make sure that kids are patched, that we have food. I take care of all of those things, like where we eat, all of those things. But he plans all the activities, books all the tickets, and he sends me an itinerary. He sends me a great Google Doc with all the details.

And we just go back and forth. So there's just so much that... I take care of all the kids' doctors' appointments, dentist appointments, and things like that. He makes sure that they get picked up and dropped off. We just have such a great partnership where it's a fluid activity where the handoff is... it's like a relay. We just handoff. And I don't go, "Well, you know, you didn't run fast enough in your section," or "your stride should have been different." The handoff is done and we move on to the next thing.

So I do think sometimes we just don't have that balance in a lot of relationships. And who picks up the slack becomes the person who ends up having to frantically kind of clean up everything, you know, the behind-the-scenes.

So I do think marriages need that balance. And I think that you negotiate in something, having really clear, you know, what is it that you do versus I do? And then there's no management of each other, no nagging, no reminding. That is exactly how you want a workplace to be, and yet we're okay with that at home. And why is that?

**Annie:** That is fascinating. I'm not married yet, don't have kids yet, and I just went on vacation with a family. And I watched how beautifully the mom and dad both were in their lane. Like the dad was exactly in charge of all of our tickets and the car. Like he had handled all that. And she made sure we were fed. She made sure the kids had their shoes on. But she did not know the information about the tickets to the parks or to the soccer match we went to. She didn't have any of that information; he had all that. And I was so impressed watching them.

So for our friends that are listening that are married and maybe they haven't done the renegotiating, how do you start that conversation of going like, "Hey, I'm back at work and this isn't working," or "hey, I would like to go to work but I don't know how to keep doing all the laundry and start this business."

**Deborah:** I think that's part of the sitting down and actually saying, "Here's numerating everything that you're doing." Because I think sometimes there's an invisible work, right? The laundry gets done, it shows up in the drawer and nobody thinks, "Wow, that was a lot of effort." Or dinner just shows up on the table and nobody does anything.

So for a long time the kids' dinner showed up on the table. And then I made them cook with me and they realized the process that goes behind making a meal. And they realized, wow, this is a lot of work.

One of the things is really kind of taking off the covers and not saying, Hey, this is easy. But to say, "Hey, this is hard. Let's talk about how to do some of these things." And I think sometimes we take for granted the invisible work that happens behind the scenes that make a household work.

So instead of actually writing down, just spend one week, write down what you're doing and how much time you're spending doing those things.

**Annie:** Wow.

**Deborah:** And then actually saying, "Hey, here's this list of things that I'm doing. How do we actually divide this so it's going to make sense?"

With the kids actually what we did was during COVID we didn't have any help. No one could come to our house. And so one of the things we did was we listed all the chores in the household and then they rated how difficult it was based on their opinion. And then we allocated based on points. And they took the choice over. Actually, they did an incredible job because we're so engaged.

**Annie:** That's brilliant.

**Deborah:** The one thing nobody wanted to do was the dishes because it's a lot of work. And so the other two kids were like, "We will do all the other chores if you can get Danielle, our youngest, to do the dishes." So we did. So they negotiated it themselves. And if three kids can do it, I think we can do it in our marriage too.

**Annie:** That is such a good idea. That is really smart. Okay, now help me as the Annie, who's not married yet. If the biggest decision we make for our career is who we marry, what am I looking for that I haven't found yet?

**Deborah:** I think the biggest thing is someone who's supportive of your dreams, that you can be supportive of their dreams too. This is the person that God ordained for you that



you're building a life together. One of the things we did was we did a pre-marriage counseling kind of session with Family Life. It says you and your partner are in two sides of a triangle. And if you're moving towards God, you're moving towards each other, because He's at the top of the triangle.

And one of the things is, are you moving closer together or not? And one of the things we talk a lot about is... You know, in the Bible it talks about iron sharpening iron. Is this person going to challenge you? Are they going to support you? Are they gonna be there carrying you when things get hard? That is something we so take for granted.

We just think, "Well, this person is somebody I can have fun with." But you know, sometimes life is not fun.

**Annie:** Right.

**Deborah:** Your parents get cancer, you're taking your parents to hospice, you have a colicky baby. And the question is, Who do you want by your side? Not the person who is having fun with you, but the person who is going to be there to pick you up when you fall, and to encourage you.

I think innately we know that, that sometimes what we're looking for in dating is somebody who's a lot of fun to be with, but maybe not there for the long term. So really thinking hard about what it is that you're looking for 20 years from now, not just the next two years. But like 20, 30 years, who can you grow old with? And how is that going to feel? You're binding yourself with a person that's going to be in your life for the next 50, 60 years. How do you want to think about that?

**Annie:** There's a rumble in a lot of my friendships with single women who are leading in places... And I just would love for you to say true or false and talk about it for a second. And people say this to men, like, "You chose your career over family."

And there's starting to be a rumble for women of like, "Well, you've put all your energy in your career and you've missed your chance. You've missed that window." Do you think that's true for women more than it is for men?

**Deborah:** I don't think that's true for anybody because you never know. Maybe it was not the right season of your life to find the right person. I happened to have met my husband when I was 18. That was very fortunate. We met at church. I met him in my first weekend in college.

**Annie:** Oh, my gosh.

**Deborah:** It was just a fortuitous thing that happened to us. But also I think maybe God ordained that. But maybe that's not the moment for you. And I think sometimes we think, "Well, you missed your chance, but God is a God of chances, of different opportunities. And different opportunities will come throughout your life. And so the question for you is, are you ready for that? Are you open to it? And are you listening for what He's offering?"

**Annie:** I just finished reading a book that dovetailed really beautifully with yours about like, Okay, are you doing your part to meet and to have the life you want? If you're doing your part to have the work life you want, are you doing your part to have the life life you want? So as I read her book along with yours, *Take Back Your Power*, I was like, "Okay, God, I'm hearing you. I'm hearing you. There's a balance here."

Deb, is there anything we didn't say about your book or that you want to make sure we talk about that we didn't cover?

**Deborah:** One thing about the book is it's published by Zondervan. It's a book for all women, not just women of faith. But I do talk a little bit about my faith in the book, because I do want to share that that's important part of who I am.

But I think that these are lessons for both women of faith and not and for women who are at work and who are at home as well because I think power is not limited to just making it to the C suite in some company or growing a billion dollar business. It's really about every single day you're making choices. And are you making the choice to take back your power in the areas that you own.

And I think sometimes we just say, "Hey, we're just gonna sit back and take a break." And that's okay too. But, you know, at this moment in your life, there's so many opportunities that we sometimes pass up because we say, "Well, I don't want to be difficult. I don't want to be that person." And I think sometimes we're doing ourselves a disservice, but also women ahead of us.

And we do have work to do. The world isn't fair today. History bends towards fairness, and that's absolutely true, but we're not there yet. This is a journey that we're all on together. And so if we each take our part and kind of make it a little bit more fair, I think we'll get there together.

**Annie:** It's beautiful. You did an incredible job on this book. I'm excited for book clubs to get to read it. There's a discussion guide for book clubs that they can download and get. It's beautiful. I can't wait for women all over are sitting down with their co-workers and their friends and the people from the neighborhood and talking

through this one together because it's just really well done, Deb. It's changed me. So I'm really really grateful.

**Deborah:** Thank you.

**Annie:** So the last question we always ask. Because the show is called That Sounds Fun, Deb, tell me what you do for fun.

**Deborah:** Okay. I write. I actually write for fun, which is interesting.

**Annie:** Do you?

**Deborah:** If you had told me when I... I used to hate writing. It was such a chore. And now I usually write to process things. And I write in the evenings just for fun. And I just love that. That's one. I'll do one that's a little more interesting.

**Annie:** No, that's very interesting. You don't have to shame your fun.

**Deborah:** Okay.

**Annie:** That's great. But give us another one too. But I just don't want you to ever shame your fun with me.

**Deborah:** One of the things that I do with my kids is we debate a lot. My husband's a lawyer as I said, and at the table we will bring up topics and we'll debate them. So it is incredibly fun to kind of hear their perspectives.

We will talk about different topics, both about faith, about politics, about work. And it's really fascinating to hear their points of view because they're 16, 13, and 10, and they just see the world so differently than we were when we were growing up.

So we have just entertaining and wonderful conversations, deep conversations around how the world's works. It's just been something we've always been doing. Dinnertime is a lot of fun at our house. And we make sure to sit down to dinner every night if possible.

**Annie:** And your mom lives with y'all as well, right?

**Deborah:** Yes, my mom lives with us. And so she joins us in the conversation.

**Annie:** So the 10-year-old is like, "I'd like to argue about how many dishes I have to do during the entire covid."

**Deborah:** That's right. She just gets to say, "I don't have to do anything else." Every time I say, "Hey, who needs to wash the dog tonight with me?" And then she goes, "Not me because I'm doing the dishes."

**Annie:** I kind of like her stance. I'm impressed with it. Deb, thanks for making time for this today. I cannot wait for people to pick up *Take Back Your Power*.

**Deborah:** Thank you. Thanks for the invitation, Annie.

**Annie:** Of course.

[00:56:17] <music>

**Outro:** Oh, you guys, don't you love her? I can't quit. Deb Liu. I just love her. What an incredible conversation! I'm telling you that book was so impactful for me and this conversation was too. Make sure you grab your copy of *Take Back Your Power* and follow Deb, tell her 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, 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. You know what sounds fun to me today? Your girl is packing up suitcase and flying to Vegas tomorrow because I'm going to see Shania Twain. So I will see you there Saturday night. If you're seeing Shania Twain on Saturday night in Vegas, it's gonna be fun.

Y'all have a great weekend. Sing some Shania Twain loud for me. We'll see you back here on Monday with my sweet friend who y'all know and love, Jordan Lee Dooley. See y'all then.